

Book Review

Milan Petrović,
Science of Public Administration
as a Prerequisite of Administrative Policy (the General Part)

Faculty of Law Publication Centre, Nis, 2006, 404 pages

"Whatever the future holds, science of public administration will be of crucial instrument for humanity's welfare" (C. A. Beard, *Public Policy and General Welfare*, New York 1951, 150).¹

The new book by Milan Petrović, LL.D., professor of the Faculty of Law of the University of Nis, one can say that it is by no means another work of standard "intellectual mass publication", i.e. a so-called "university-produced" textbook. Rather, it is a serious monograph, an excellent scholar work that, in the words of the doyen of administrative law and science of public administration in this country, the late professor Slavoljub Popovic, is "the first serious scientific work of the kind in our country".²

This book is also a specific "course" in the science of public administration, meaningful in its numerous dimensions, connecting what at first glance might seem incommensurate. On the one hand, the book is intended for the students, providing an introduction into the subject matter of the field and thematic wholes that students are not in theoretical sense fully prepared for, and, at the same time, the text offers much more than a mere textbook, opening up new horizons for the reader to think about, providing them with tools for possible independent theoretical work in the future. On the other hand, the book before us will also be very intellectually useful to experienced scholars, including those who feel at home with the theoretical framework of the science of public administration,³ and also to the so-called creators of administrative and political measures within Serbian system of government.

¹ Quoted after: M. Petrović, *Science of Public Administration*, p. 13.

² Such a position of the late professor becomes even more relevant, if one bears in mind that with that statement he debased his own theoretical effort (and the work of our colleagues B. Markovic and R. Kuzmanovic, the co-authors) to shed light on the problems of science of administration, as presented in the work "Foundations of the Science of Administration". (Belgrade, 1994).

³ Which is another reason to support the argument that the book should have been published in Latin script – this way it would have become available to those basing their knowledge on the science of administration on the foundations laid out by the famous academician of the former Yugoslavia, Eugen Pusic, and his monumental achievement in the theory of administration science, a book with which the work discussed in this text stands shoulder by shoulder.

The author's approach to the subject matter of his study is strongly problem-oriented, while he also uses the historical and descriptive approach when appropriate. Petrovic has put in enormous effort to systematize the huge material and make a coherent, ten-part whole out of it. In these segments he defines the science of public administration as a technical science; discusses its historical development and current condition; defines the subject and method of the science of public administration; analyzes basic issues of administrative organization and institutions; covers principal tendencies in the development of administrative institutions and organizations; discusses the problem of management and leadership in administrative organizations; defines the systems of administrative activities; lists the means of public administration; explains the way major contemporary (rational) administrative systems work; and, finally, ends the book with the discussion of external control of administration.

Each of the segments is then divided into a series of subsegments (essays on particular issues in science of public administration) that cover all relevant topics in the field, but in such a way as to simultaneously provide answers and pose new questions. Further text singles out some of the most relevant subsegments.

Within the first segment "Science of Administration as a Technical Discipline (Administration Technology) and a Prerequisite of Administrative Policy" the following issues are addressed: the concepts and types of techniques, theoretical and dogmatic sciences, technical sciences, the essence of the science of public administration, science of public administration and administrative policy, legal technique, theory of legislation, and technology of governance.

Subsegments of the second part "History and Condition of Science of Administration" are: the age of cameralistics and police science, the extinction of the original science of public administration and the teaching of Lorenz von Stein and Max Weber, as restorers of the science of public administration, restoration of administration science through communal science, restoration of administration science in the United States, theory of organizations and systems, science of public administration in Russia, science of public administration in Serbia and formerly in Yugoslavia, sources of science of public administration and name of the discipline.

The third segment, "The Subject and Method of Science of Administration", contains subsegments covering the following problems: the subject of science of public administration, science of organization and business of enterprises (operation economics), cybernetics, the general and specific part of the science of public administration, primary and supplementary methods of science of public administration.

The fourth segment, "Tendencies in the Development of Administrative Institutions and Organizations" analyzes the concept of tendency, the tendency to enlarge administrative institutions and organizations and the welfare state, tendency to differentiate administrative institutions and organizations, tendency to extend the role of public services and diffuse power in the state, tendency to bureaucratize and technocratize the administration (in its historical and contemporary western form) and tendency to internationalize management.

The fifth segment, "Fundamental Issues in Administrative Organizations and Institutions" contains the following topics: the concept of organization, organizations and institutions; the organization of management (hierarchy and collegiality), typology of organi-

zations – structure, delineation of administrative authorities, communication and information in administrative organization.

In the sixth segment, "Management and Leadership in Administrative Organizations", the author discusses the concept of guidance, management and leadership; management and leadership styles; management models; management and leadership tasks (functions) in administrative organizations; motivating personnel; organizing and conducting meetings in public administration; centralization and decentralization; concentration and deconcentration.

The seventh segment, "Systems of Administrative Activities", offers the following main subsegments: tasks (missions, goals, purposes, functions) of public administration; privatization and quasi-privatization of administrative tasks (administrative quasi-market and total quality management); the decision (concept and types) and decision making; the problem of rational basis for decisions and decision making; decisions as resolutions to conflicts within the administration; decision making procedure; decision making techniques; plan and planning (general issues); plan and planning typology; program evaluation; planning administrative personnel (administrative staff); administrative supervision of administration (administration self-control); control of economicity of the administration (cost and benefit research); moral responsibility of public officials (the problem of administrative morality or ethics of officials); moral responsibility of public officials and the interest group (pressure group); moral responsibility of public officials and the political party.

The eighth segment, "Means of Public Administration" introduces the following relevant subsegments: real estates and technical accessories; carrying out administrative tasks with the help of information technology (computers); budget based financial planning and budgetary principles.

In the ninth segment, dedicated to administrative systems in Europe, the author presents: the Prussian-German administrative system (its historical development and current condition), the civil service system in France, the UK, and Russia.

The final, tenth segment, "External Control of Administration" provides the following subsegments: direct parliamentary control of administration, control of administration over courts of audit, and control of administration via the ombudsman.

At the very beginning, one realizes that the author has put in a lot of effort to avoid the usual interpretive patterns in defining the science of public administration. In this, he has gone very far, and, as rarely done, he has determined the position of this scientific discipline among other sciences, generally classifiable as technical, theoretical, and dogmatic. The science of public administration finds support both in these and in a number of "auxiliary disciplines"; Jhering's legal technique, Bentham's theory of legislation, and Machiavellian technology of governance. Thereat, we must stress that there is no theoretical maximalism here. Rather, in case we have forgotten, the author wishes to remind us of the fact that strict divisions between disciplines are untenable in modern legal and political thought. It has never been enough to plow just one's own 'land', without any awareness of the position of this land in the 'cosmos' of other 'lands'! The author also shows that "specialist" issues in the science of public administration become meaningful and justified only after one relates them to the fundamental issues of the science of the state and dogmatic jurisprudence.

Petrovic did not shun some of the most difficult legal matters, where he attempted to disentangle issues which most theoreticians cautiously avoid. Thus, in the beginning of the text, we find the definition of the state as the (spatial, temporal, and personal) validity of law, and the definition of law (following Hegel's footsteps) as the real (spatial) system of subjective rights.

In analyzing the role of administration in society, the author starts from the assumption that the advent and development of administration is connected to overall economic, cultural, and social development, where the twofold role of administration in society is noticed: at the same time, it is an instrument of government and a set of institutions carrying out a series of socially useful tasks, which satisfy the needs of citizens. For this reason, the author contends, in addition to the administrative-legal point of view, the study should also include the administrative-technical segment, supplemented by insights from political science, sociology, and social psychology, and also by modern research in theories of communication, information, decision making, systems, etc. Weberianly detailed, based on rich material from comparative history (from the administrative systems of ancient Egypt and China, over the administration of European absolutist monarchies and Ottoman Turkey, to the administrative systems of developed countries such as the USA, the UK, France, Russia, and Germany), the author follows the general currents in the growth of administration.

In this process, Petrovic's goal was not to present every detail from the rich and diversified domain of administration, but rather to build a consistent conceptual and categorial apparatus which would help one understand this, sometimes confusing, field, and thus, indirectly, to contribute to the overcoming of the epoch of layman administration towards the professional advancement of students, cherishing of specific ethics of administrative officials, and affirmation of rational management methods and techniques.

Aware that true scientific thinking can never end in itself, in a readable and modern way, the author provides an extensive list of literature from various fields relevant to the problem presented. The literature used and pointed at cannot always be considered foremost literature of science of public administration. Yet it is not given as a set of authoritative sources, but rather as the author's material for understanding modern trends and checking his own theoretical anticipations – as such, it provides an additional perspective in appreciating problems the author has covered.

Another significant characteristic of Petrovic's work is the interplay of various aspects of theoretical consideration varying from initial information and introduction into the systematicity of presentation subject, over lucid connections between different thematic domains, not always immediately visible, to skillfully composed historical reminiscences and analysis of the most recent history and current events in the international stage - all this is persistent, exceptional, and typical of his style. Without any theoretical reluctance, in the text the author allows the mixture of purely legal jurisprudence, political theory in the broader sense, and elements of political analysis, where typical of his style is the fact that he does not refrain from calling a spade a spade.⁴ Not only in the narrow, profes-

⁴ This may be well illustrated with a quotation: "The dictatorship established in 1944-45 had numerous similarities to the Soviet regime, but it also differed from it in some relevant points. It was not the USSR-type of Communist party dictatorship, but rather the dictatorship of one man, who used the party as an ideological indoctrinator and means of mass control, without which a totalitarian regime could not survive. This dictator-

sional sense, Petrovic is gifted with a rare ability to observe theoretically relevant material, even in things that, at first sight, seem quite distant from legitimate scientific thought.

In addition to this commendable combination of shrewdness and erudition, a valuable virtue indeed, and we should state this once again in assessing this book, one should also mention that this work is unusually interesting, which is not usually expected of the highly theoretical genre the book belongs to. Finally, the profundity of the approach to the topic, the overwhelming amount of material incorporated, makes this book not only a testimony of the author's diligence and dedication to research work, but also a piece of literature that could provide the most diverse intellectual benefits to the readers – primarily those already pursuing or wishing to pursue serious theoretical work.

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ship relied primarily on the peasantry: "We do not talk about the peasants as the strongest pillar of our country in order to possibly win their votes, but because they indeed are this pillar." (Josip Broz Tito in Zagreb, "Borba" daily, 2 November 1946). These differences, including Tito's enmity with the Soviet Union, resulted in the conflict between the Yugoslav regime and Bolshevik-type parties. Tito became closer to the West. In the Resolution of the Information Bureau of Communist Parties on the Condition in Yugoslav Communist Party, of 28 June 1948, Titocracy was characterized as a "Turkish terrorist regime". And the November 1949 Informbureau Resolution reads: "As a result of counter-revolutionary politics of the clique Tito-Rankovic, which has usurped power in the party and state, in Yugoslavia an anticommunist, police state regime of fascist type is in power." (see p. 49-50).