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The Yale Political Monthly

An Undergraduate Publication

Criminals, Russian Nationalists
and Dostoevsky

An interview with a Russian nationalist

Il Purgatorio: Argentina Fights for its
Tortured Soul

*A troubled past hampers attempts to reform
the political economy*

Feminist Economics: An Introduction
A critique of neoclassical economics

Ethics, Politics and Economics: Strange
Bedfellows?

A look at one of Yale's interdisciplinary majors

VOLUME 17, NUMBER 1 ☪ NOVEMBER 1995

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The Yale Political Monthly

An Undergraduate Publication

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Dostoevsky
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Criminals, Russian Nationalists and Dostoevsky

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Grant Felgenhauer

While in Moscow on August 18, 1995, Grant Felgenhauer met with Yevgeny Tuinov, a Deputy in the Duma, the lower house of the Russian Parliament. Tuinov, a member of Vladimir Zhirinovsky's extreme right wing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), won his seat in the December 1993 Duma elections. He currently serves on the Duma Committee on Geopolitical Affairs. In this interview, Tuinov discusses the origins of Russian organized crime and its effects on the Russian macroeconomy and society. He also makes predictions for the December 1995 Duma elections and the Russian Presidential elections scheduled for June 1996.

Today, organized crime has replaced the communist party of old and now controls the allocation of most economic resources within Russia and the rest of the Soviet Union.

Tuinov claims that organized crime has replaced the Communist Party of old and now controls the allocation of most economic resources within Russia and the rest of the former Soviet Union. Russian criminals exist in two basic forms: first, there are the members of the bureaucratic Mafia who use their position in govern-

ment to take bribes and smuggle state property and natural resources out of the country; second, there are gun-toting bandits who travel door-to-door demanding protection payments and engage in territorial gangland skirmishes with other groups in Russian cities. These two types of Russian criminals often collaborate. Even more frightening than the ubiquity of these "Mafia" gangs is their multiplicity: there may be as many as 5,000 in Russia alone.¹ Law enforcement officials, in targeting one band of crime lords, miss handfuls of others.

Some experts estimate that as much as eighty percent of all private business and banking in Russia is controlled by organized crime. Organized crime stifles foreign investment, expropriates billions of dollars in natural resources, and is the driving force behind the credibility crisis in Russia's banking system. Moreover, organized crime threatens the national security of the Russian state, as was recently evidenced by Russia's involvement in Chechnya,

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long a hotbed of organized crime and weapons smuggling.

Tuinov asserts that, under the old Soviet regime, police and other armed forces were continually involved in trying to stem the flow of weapons from Moscow to Grozny, the capital of Chechnya. The Chechen criminals, unlike the Soviet police, survived the collapse of the USSR in 1991. In so doing, these criminals stood on the threshold of an extremely lucrative business. With the state authority and legal structure in flux due to the USSR's dissolution, the Chechen criminals were able to expand their weapons trade significantly, using their wealth to enter the world of high-stakes financial crime. It is not unusual to read about the arrest of Chechen nationalists for counterfeiting or for money laundering.² In order to address these problems, Moscow dedicated more security forces to the containment of Chechen crime. This policy is exemplified by the 1992 "Operation Python," in which Internal Affairs Ministry troops and a special force of Moscow militia encircled Moscow, cutting off all ground traffic to or from the outside. The Kremlin counted on Python to devastate the Chechen trading networks within Moscow.

Felgenhauer's interview with Deputy Tuinov follows:

Grant Felgenhauer: There has been a lot of discussion in both domestic and international media concerning the rise of organized crime in post-Soviet Russia, the so-called "Mafia." What influence do criminal agents exert on the Russian economy? What effects will the Mafia have on Russia's future?

Yevgeny Tuinov: It has the most direct influence, and very, *very* serious effects.

GF: Do these effects include, for example, inflation? Do the protection payments that retailers are forced to make to the criminal groups translate into localized inflation in areas where the Mafia exerts its presence most strongly? That is, in order to preserve their profit margin, do these retailers raise their prices to account for the protection payments?

YT: Inflation is not the issue here. That's actually quite a minor consequence of the Mafia's effects on the economy. Initially, I think I should say that it's strange that you should be so interested in the Mafia's effects on the economy because the Mafia arose from the reforms and policies implemented in Russia following the abortive 1991 hard-line Communist coup.

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It is strange because these models of reform and privatization all came from you people in the West. With this in mind, I find it very strange that you are studying the consequences of your actions *after* the fact. One always needs to study the effects of his actions *before* he acts. Investigations into the possible consequences of reform should have accompanied the reformers' initial decisions. This is just simple logic.

Unfortunately, the consequences for Russia are extremely regrettable. We have witnessed the *complete* criminalization of the economy and of the commercial structures. Even the Mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, is impotent in the face of Mafia influence. For example, he is unable to thoroughly investigate the importation of foreign goods. Around Moscow we have Russian industries which attempt to sell their products at a much lower price than that of foreign goods, but the Mafia controls the sales outlets of foreign goods and therefore prevents our domestic producers from entering the Russian market. Our citizens are thus forced to buy your more expensive foreign goods; it's economic oppression of the first degree. The Mayor does nothing to stop this oppression because he is simply unable to do

"We have witnessed the complete criminalization of the economy"

GF: In what other spheres is the Mafia presence strongly felt?

YT: In every sphere. It's a ubiquitous presence in the so-called "new Russia." Not long ago, I was thumbing through a Moscow real estate journal. In the Moscow suburbs, a two storey cottage costs around \$350,000. That is our price. In Spain, it is possible to buy a much better house for only \$70,000! For \$40,000 in Finland! *Do you understand the difference?* Let me tell you why this difference exists. Western advisors are trying to transform — and have almost succeeded in transforming— the economy of our country. If another country besides Russia had experienced this type of transformation — this humiliation at the hands of the West — there would have been a great deal of bloodshed. The tools and methods which were employed against us would have destroyed any other country. In fact, the agents of Western influence still occupy the upper echelons of our government.

But, in spite of all this, we somehow live on. Somehow I have become a member of the Duma. I am not an agent of Western influence; I am a *patriot*. I don't have any ties with the United States but I have nevertheless attained a seat in the Russian Congress. To the West, this is a riddle. Do you understand

CRIMINALS, RUSSIAN NATIONALISTS AND DOSTOEVSKY

why I am here? Do you understand why Zhirinovsky is here? To the Americans, this is a riddle.

We have an expression in Russian politics: "The people are not fools." *The people are not stupid.* When you give the people the right to vote, they vote correctly. This is why the LDP won in 1993 and this is why we will win again this year. However, it is possible to deceive the common man as the West and Yeltsin have tried to do: filter his information, manipulate his perceptions. Yet given the truth, he will always choose wisely as he did in 1993.

GF: Returning to the criminal structures, which of the policies pursued by the Western advisors contributed to the rise of the Russian Mafia?

YT: The Western advisors came up with this program of privatization. This was supposed to give the common man a stake in the economy of his country, but it is now possible through criminal connections to buy a \$5,000,000 factory for \$5,000. Who is to blame? Who is the privatization minister? Anatoly Chubais. Who supports Chubais? The West, your government, your President!

I understand that this support of Russian privatization and a weakened Russia is in America's best interests. However, in supporting privatization, *you have engineered the rise of the Russian*

Mafia. Nothing was done to prevent criminals or bureaucrats from selectively allocating Russia's assets. Nothing was done to prevent popular methods of illegal privatization.⁵ These criminals have already made their way to America. America's experiences with the Russian Mafia will not end well for her. *Our Mafia is coming to you.* Indeed it has already come.

GF: Are you referring to the recent arrest of the Russian crime lord, Vyacheslav Ivankov, "Yaponets?"⁶ The American press is claiming this as a bold victory against the émigré Russian Mafia.

YT: Yaponets is completely frivolous. His arrest is completely meaningless. There was great commotion and headlines across America but it is always important to remember: American society revolves around the media. Yaponets is simply sensationalist. The real criminals are the big smugglers, those who export natural resources to the West: oil, coal, gas, tin and aluminum. These people lower the domestic prices of resources by working through their contacts in the government. In the international market, they sell below the established world price levels and become fabulously rich.⁷

Let's study this dynamic: our smugglers sell these natural resources to the West at absurd

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"By the way, do you drink beer?"

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"These people distribute their profits in Western banks and develop a large stake in the American economy."

prices. Fine. This appears to be in your best interest. You are receiving something at a great price. But look at it closely: these people are providing the West with resources. *They* fill the role of suppliers. *These* people receive a profit too. *These* people distribute their profits in Western banks and develop a large stake in the American economy. *These* people, in the end, will command America's economy! The money and supplies they control will ultimately dictate the courses of economies worldwide.

The Mafia has ingratiated itself within Russia. Remember the fall of 1993, when Yeltsin destroyed the Russian Parliament Building because the Parliament failed to obey his order to dissolve? The day following the arrest of Parliament Speaker Khasbulatov and Vice President Rutskoi, former Prime Minister Gaidar and Minister of Trade Shumeiko signed several orders for the "exportation" of natural resources to private foreign bodies. These were orders the Parliament would never have approved of had it still been in session! Gaidar and Shumeiko seized the opportunity to line their pockets when there was no authority to stop the export of these products. You ask me how far the Mafia has penetrated Russian society? Look at our Prime Minister!

GF: If the Mafia were indeed

involved with Gaidar and Shumeiko, they would do anything to make sure they stayed in power. As we both know, Gaidar has long since fallen from the higher levels of Russian politics, after Yeltsin ousted him in late 1992, seemingly without a fight.

YT: Exactly. That means we are dealing with an even more serious type of Mafia than Gaidar's. By the way, do you drink beer? I never drink while I'm officially at work, but it's already late Friday evening and it is only natural to have something with a guest.

[Deputy Tuinov sends an aide out to buy some peanuts and bottles of beer. The assistant soon returns with six pints of Russian ale. Tuinov lines the bottles up in a row on his desk, forming a little wall between he and Felgenhauer.]

GF: Thank you. From a slightly different angle, I would like to ask you about the longevity of the Mafia's grip on the Russian economy.

YT: That is not the way to consider the problem in Russia. It is not neatly bounded by a certain number of years in the future. In Russia, everything depends upon who is in power - *everything depends on that*. Those in Yeltsin's current administration are completely

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corrupt. The greatest fear of those in power is that they will some day lose that power. The loss of power means the loss of money. Russian bureaucrats are now placing the security of their positions before all other priorities: before the people, before their peers, before the law.

The Russian system is completely different. In America you have a strong judiciary. One can work through the courts and receive a credible decision. Here the assumptions are different; no judges are needed. Moreover, no one is able to judge in the first place. You see two bandits walking in the streets with automatics. They are carrying out a contract killing. The issue is decided without judges. Here we see the prevailing philosophy: if this person is gone, the problem is gone. Why would one seek judicial decisions in such an environment? The criminal method is much cheaper. Several Russian Deputies and bankers have been killed because of this method. To become a Deputy or banker in Russia is simply suicidal. Don't ask me why I do it. *Like a Kamikaze*. One becomes a banker, and one surely can't expect to live very long!

GF: With such a strong grip on Russian financial and governmental affairs, the obvious question

becomes: what can the Russian government do to beat the Mafia? When will it disappear?

YT: The Russian Mafia will disappear only when a normal government and a responsible President come to power. The current Duma and President are incapable of beating the Mafia. I don't know Boris Nikolaevich [Yeltsin] well; maybe he is ignorant, maybe he is naive. Anything is possible with such drunkards. You can simply put a fifth of whiskey in his desk drawer and he is satisfied for the day. But I don't want to blame the President. The citizens of our country elected him and I must respect that. *But I can blame his staff*. I'm not talking so much about the security ministers, Korzhakov and Barsukov...

GF: Are you blaming Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin?

YT: You have most likely read Dostoevsky's novel, The Brothers Karamazov. It's no coincidence that "Chernomyrdin" is a variant of the family name "Karamazov." When I see Viktor Chernomyrdin I am reminded of Fedor Pavlovich.⁸ This is the type of bureaucrat we now have in Russia. We are witnessing the slow and quiet death of a country. These men

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"Russian bureaucrats are now placing the security of their positions before all other priorities."

have methodically killed our Russia. You know, Yavlinsky, Gaidar, Chubais, Fyodorov...they are America's team, carrying out the destruction of Russia. *The West has prepared for everything.* The West has killed everything.

A great criminal revolution has occurred in Russia. *This is undeniable.* But for this to happen, some other factors must also exist. At the highest levels of the Russian government, a small cultural revolution of the type we witnessed in Mao's China is taking place. During the Chinese Cultural Revolution, adolescents were encouraged to challenge the assumptions of their professors, parents, etc... We now see the same phenomenon here. A group of extremely young technocrats, all of whom are less than 40 years old, have become drunk with power and have carried out what I call the Great Criminal Revolution.

"Mafia investment affects America more than it does Russia."

GF: What effects does this Criminal Revolution and the governmental Mafia you mention have on the Russian economy? How does the Mafia's economic involvement affect foreign or domestic investment? Is any of its influence redeeming?

YT: The Mafia cannot have any redeeming qualities. *It has no positive economic aspects.* Mafia investment affects America more

than it does Russia. Our Mafia invests virtually no money in Russia. It invests abroad rather than at home. The only financial involvement in Russia is through the laundering of money in Russian banks. Our financial system here, as you surely know, is extremely porous. The manipulation of financial receipts and the laundering of money make up a large part of the Mafia's involvement in Russian financial markets. This involvement has exhausted our economy. It is now simply comic to see how far the ruble has plunged in value.⁹

Moreover, the Mafia does all its dealings in dollars. This has become the principal currency of the Russian Federation. One only needs to compare the relative value of products to the prices of products in order to understand the distortion imposed on the Russian economy by the dollar. This artificial valuation of the dollar is engineered and motivated by only one pursuit: the purchase of Russian real estate and land. Organized crime groups are now purchasing great quantities of land and real estate both here and around the world; *this is the real power of the emerging Mafia.*

GF: What type of plan does Zhirinovskiy's party have to beat the Mafia? What do you intend to do should you find yourself in a position to influence more directly the war against the Mafia?

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YT: We know what to do. Our plan hinges on one central concept and principle: if a man is found at the scene of a crime, with a gun smoking in his hand and a corpse at his feet, capital punishment should be exacted there and then. No judges or courts are required. The problem is solved efficiently and quickly. Understand, we would only do this when it is completely evident. This puts some teeth into our police's ability to fight organized crime. All of the main criminals are well-known. No courts are required to convict them of past or current crimes. This is a slightly uncivilized solution but things here have come so far that it is impossible to proceed by any other means. Only by such drastic measures can we act responsibly to save our country. Unfortunately, we will need cruel punishments for a period of time.

GF: How would you ensure that such an enforcement system would be in place only for a limited period of time? It is very easy for such a system to grow beyond the original intents and boundaries of its actions.

YT: I agree. However, you need to understand that this is a very dangerous moment for our country and law enforcement should also be viewed only as a function of the moment. I have been speaking about temporary solutions. Of course there are other ways to beat

the Mafia, but such methods take time. There is an economic path we can follow to weaken the Mafia's power, but that solution takes time. For example, we must begin to demand declarations concerning the sources of wealth used to buy prominent assets. When you travel to the outskirts of Moscow, you can see gigantic homes, built in the past two years. When such homes are built, we must demand documentation specifying the sources of wealth. If these people are unable to explain their wealth, we must place them in jail.

There are many civilized paths to solve the problem of the Mafia. However, those currently in power are not implementing any of them. Why not? They are simply afraid.

GF: Afraid of losing power?

YT: *Afraid of death.* Like I said, this is a tragic moment in the life of our country. But it is nothing new. You had the Wild West, when a gun could command more respect than a judge. Now we have our Mafia, where an assassin can solve any problem.

The Russian Mafia can conceivably seize the entire world. The solution is not as simple as you in the West may think. You have your politicians who are playing a game, deciding who to support, deciding whether a war on the Mafia is a politically viable

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"We in Russia have fallen into a cruel, cruel world. Unfortunately we need cruel punishments now...for a period of time."

pursuit. In Russia, there is only one politician who is determined to kill the Mafia and who is convinced that this is currently a top priority. That man is Zhirinovsky.¹⁰

The LDP is looking forward to the chance to deliver Russia from this stage in its history, but we are relying on the people to call us to greater power. We only obey proper elections; we are a parliamentary party. We will always stand behind the laws governing the elected officials. We refuse to use coercion, violence or threats. Only through elections will we be given the chance to fight the Mafia effectively.

GF: You mentioned earlier that you expect the LDP to win the Duma elections this December. What implications would this have for the presidential elections slated for next June?

YT: Presidential elections will not occur in June because the LDP will win in December. They are conducting these parliamentary elections as a sort of test, to see whether the presidential elections in June will be too "dangerous." The LDP will win in December. Yeltsin will not hold presidential elections when he learns the real extent of the support we enjoy. I said the same thing to a correspondent in 1993, but she looked at me with great surprise. I say it again today; the LDP will win in 1995 as

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it won in 1993.

¹ "Mob Rule in Russia," Boston Sunday Globe, (11 June 1995.)

² McCoy, Mike. "Crime Watch!," St. Petersburg Press, (18 April 1995.)

³ Handelman, Stephen (1995), Comrade Criminal, New Haven: Yale University Press.

⁴ Tuinov's portrayal of Luzhkov as an ardent opponent of the Mafia provides a lesson in Russian political acumen. The identity of the true Mafia varies according to the circles in which one moves. Foreign businessmen attempting to do work in Russia often call Mayor Luzhkov the biggest bandit in all of Russia. Moscow city ordinances are replete with ludicrous taxes and laws explicitly prohibiting private property within city limits. This is certainly not a city administration actively concerned with the distribution of wealth. Nevertheless, Luzhkov is undoubtedly one of the most powerful men in Russia and if there is anything one needs in order to survive in Russian politics, it is a keen sense of timing when it comes to criticizing powerful politicians (i.e. "As long as Luzhkov is in power, hold thy tongue."). In this sense, Tuinov's defense of Luzhkov is understandable, albeit a bit farfetched.

⁵ There are many means by which privatization may be carried out illegally, curtailing the egalitarian goals of the privatization program. One of the more popular methods involves the creation of a holding company by the directors of, for example, a factory. The factory might lawfully issue shares to its workers, in correspondence with the privatization program; but soon after the issuance, the owners' holding company might offer the workers a competitive price and buy back the shares. Essentially the ownership of the firm would have remained unchanged.

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The workers would have no stake in its success, but the firm would still be considered officially "privatized."

⁶ In July 1995, FBI and Commerce Department officials raided an apartment in the Russian enclave of Brighton Beach, NY to capture the Russian crime lord "Yaponets." He played an instrumental role in the Russian underworld and in the internationalization of the Russian Mafia's activities.

⁷ Indeed, profitable smuggling does not only involve natural resources such as aluminum and gas. As the 23 October 1995 issue of U.S. News & World Report explains, the Russian stores of elemental nuclear warhead building blocks are drawing an astronomical demand on the world's nuclear black markets. (See: "The Russian Connection," U.S. News & World Report, 23 October 1995.)

⁸ The character of Fedor Pavlovich Karamazov is the patriarch of the Karamazov family, the investigation of whose murder forms the book's main plot. He is known for his greed, drunkenness, gluttony, manic depression and dreams of lechery.

⁹ Approximate exchange rates for the ruble are as follows:

November 1990:

\$1.00 = .057 rubles

July 1991:

\$1.00 = 1.81 rubles

December 1992:

\$1.00 = 500 rubles

December 1993:

\$1.00 = 1,250 rubles

December 1994:

\$1.00 = 3,306 rubles

[taken from Handelman, Stephen.

Comrade Criminal. (1995), New Haven: Yale University Press.]

¹⁰ The implications of Zhirinovsky's assuming greater power in the Russian government are grave indeed. Commonly portrayed as the Duma court jester, he is on record as advocating the reacquisition of Alaska and the Central Asian Republics for the Russian empire, as well as regions of modern Turkey. He also proudly publicizes the names of soothsayers and mystics whose advice he regularly seeks. Zhirinovsky recently instigated a brawl on the floor of the Duma when he tackled a female Deputy who was trying to defend dissident priest Gleb Yakunin from the punches of a Zhirinovsky crony. (OMRI Research Report, 11 September 1995.)

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YORKSIDE
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AND
RESTAURANT

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Il Purgatorio: Argentina Fights for its Tortured Soul

Jame Donath

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The corruption and mismanagement of the past have created an aura of administrative incompetence.

Sometimes one wonders if nations have their own karma, a kind of slate which records all events as they transpire and lends countries an unmistakable national identity. The metaphor of karma can explain how a nation can begin to acquire a character which is readily understood both at home and abroad. But how powerful a hold does this karma exert? And what happens when it proves inescapable?

The inescapability of bad karma suggests precisely the predicament in which Argentina is currently immersed. A legacy of national government replete with widespread corruption, mismanagement and oppression is coming home to haunt the progressive modernizers of the 1990s. Repeated attempts to rescue the country from the throes of this bitter tradition have met with nothing but reminders of a painful past. In the process, Argentine

officials are learning just how exacting national karma can be.

Bad karma in Argentina reveals itself most conspicuously in the realm of political economy. The corruption and mismanagement of the past have created an aura of administrative incompetence from which the reformers of the 1990s are finding difficult to escape. The persistence of memory, however, in this part of the world, as elsewhere, remains strong.

Unlike many of their Latin American counterparts, Argentines are endowed with a phenomenally rich country. From extensive oil and gas reserves to arable soil and mineral deposits, Argentina is a veritable treasure trove of natural resources. Around the turn of the century, Argentina had effectively channeled these resources into a national wealth that placed it among the richest countries of the world. However, decades of economic mismanagement by military regimes and fledgling democratic governments squandered these resources as they generated hyperinflation combined with

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"every badly executed permutation of exchange rate policy that the human mind can invent."¹ The frequent result was economic and political chaos.

With the election of Carlos Menem in 1989, Argentina's economic skies finally cleared. After several bouts with hyperinflation, the economic program engineered by finance minister Domingo Cavallo reduced inflation and produced impressive growth for the first time in years. One critical development was the installment of a currency board, which pegged the Argentine peso to the U.S. dollar, thus imposing a virtual monetary strait-jacket on the local economy. The government simultaneously underwent an ambitious privatization program that has been globally commended for its success in dismantling the state-sponsored regime and promoting a free-market approach. The use of the Argentine model in conducting recent privatizations in Eastern Europe and other parts of Latin America attests to the government's achievement.

Just when it looked like Argentina might actually escape the shackles of its tattered economic legacy, along came the Mexican economic crisis of December 1994 which threatened to derail the entire Latin American liberal-

ization process. With the Mexican peso's precipitous fall, the influx of foreign capital across Latin America dried up even faster than it had poured in on account of renewed fears of regional instability. What followed was the real threat of currency devaluation, "the artificial competitive tool" traditionally shunned by those officials wishing to attract much-needed foreign investment.² Indeed, when Brazil devalued its plummeting currency in early March, the question loomed: would Argentina follow?

It did not. Through a stalwart verbal defense of their currency (and the help of a seven billion dollar loan from the International Monetary Fund), Cavallo and his ministers faced down the speculators worldwide who had predicted that Argentina would not weather the Mexican storm. Foreign investment returned, and with it, the optimism of economic reformers across Latin America.

Currency crises, however, do not come without their costs. A monetary shortage, like a nuclear meltdown, tends to produce lingering effects which can prove devastating to the general welfare. As a result, "few people can say that the stability process has been solid, for stability in the present system is in no way guaranteed."³

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*A
monetary
shortage,
like a
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*Impressive
reform
programs
...have
failed to
extricate
the
country
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its former
quagmire.*

In the case of Argentina, the lack of available consumer and business credit has translated into falling demand. This drop, in turn, has constrained growth and pushed the unemployment level upwards of twenty percent in some parts of the country.

One senses that Argentina's karma has strengthened its grip on the political economy, as the liabilities incurred by a troubled past have crystallized into a collective and possibly indelible perception of Argentina's economic insecurity. Consequently, impressive reform programs which have proved valuable in producing growth and providing long-sought stability have failed to extricate the country fully from its former quagmire. Great progress has been made, but a shadow of pessimism lingers over the reform efforts.

This lingering pessimism is not entirely unjustified. While Argentina's current predicament was exacerbated by forces beyond the government's control in the Mexican debacle, one must remember that Argentina had certainly contributed to the image of Latin America as universally incompetent and chaotic in economic matters. Although Argentina's economic situation remains distinct from that of

Mexico, the mere specter of financial chaos was enough to bring Argentina's economic engines to a grinding halt, as was demonstrated by the Mexican crisis.

Perhaps an even more troubling inheritance of the country's haphazard past has been the wholesale waiver of certain policy initiatives. While notions of self-determination and national autonomy are usually mainstays of Western-style democracy, there are some exceptions to this rule in the Southern Hemisphere. This is especially true within the realm of currency management.

One of the curious things about a currency board is that it essentially forces governments to relinquish control over monetary policy; that is, once Argentina ties its currency to the U.S. dollar, it must follow Washington's monetary policy rather than that of Buenos Aires. Under a currency board, Argentina has essentially forfeited the ability to control its economic destiny through monetary policy. Such economic impotence, however, does not trouble those who have suffered from past incompetence in the realm of monetary economics. As one central bank official admits, "We have shown ourselves incapable of managing our own affairs in this area in the past."⁴ Using another

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nation such as the United States to drive economic policy thus becomes an attractive option. The loss of autonomy in this realm, and the attitude that forfeiting such autonomy is ultimately in the national interest, must be viewed as one of the more disconcerting aspects of the Argentine karma.

Beyond the economic reform spearheading Argentina's modernization, there is a sense that the country and its leadership have made concerted efforts to open up what was until recently a fairly insular regime. Within the international arena, the present regime has chosen to rely on negotiation and diplomacy rather than repression and militarism. Notable are the "number of little instances of regulatory goodwill" concerning Argentina's relations with some of its traditional enemies.⁵ The recent spate of negotiations with Britain over the future of the Falkland islands, a territory whose fate Argentina tried to determine with warships a little over a decade ago, serves as evidence in this regard.

The situation on the domestic front, however, is more ambiguous. Even as the government reaches out to embrace the political and social groups it has traditionally persecuted, the specter of the leadership's troubled history continues to return to haunt their

efforts. A number of recent attacks on journalists critical of the present regime remain unsolved. The government's failure to apprehend those responsible for the bombings of prominent Jewish targets, including the Israeli embassy, is a painful reminder of Argentina's neutrality in the Second World War and its infamous reputation as a haven for Nazi war criminals.

At the same time, images of the repression created by the old military leadership figure prominently in the Argentine psyche. The rash of kidnappings and executions in the late 1970s, termed the "Dirty War," is still commemorated by the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who gather every Thursday afternoon in remembrance of the thousands who "disappeared" during this period. This past April, the confession of an officer of the infamous Naval Mechanics School confirmed the long-suspected practice during the Dirty War of murdering political prisoners by throwing them from helicopters into the Atlantic Ocean. One wonders how a country can successfully pursue policies of liberalization when crimes such as these continue to haunt the public consciousness.

So a country fights for its tortured soul. However much it labors to atone for a legacy of

...the present regime has chosen to rely on negotiation and diplomacy rather than repression and militarism.

Argentina remains suspended in a cultural purgatory reserved for those who have yet to be absolved of their sins of yesteryear.

neglect and oppression, Argentina remains suspended in a cultural purgatory reserved for those who have yet to be absolved of their sins of yesteryear. A jaded people with constrained ambitions pine for their land of seemingly limitless resources and opportunities.

This state of affairs may be illustrated, however quixotically, by Argentina's performance in the World Cup competition last summer. Argentine fans were optimistic following the rehabilitation of Diego Maradona, a global celebrity in a sport most Argentines consider as sacred as the Catholic church. When Maradona, who shed thirty pounds in a matter of weeks to join his former teammates, was suspended in the middle of the competition on account of a positive drug test, the team quickly collapsed. It is difficult to ignore the parallels between the dashed hopes of soccer enthusiasts and those of reformers in the political and economic spheres.

Still, President Menem's reelection in May represents a great achievement in terms of registering widespread public support for the goal of political and economic liberalization. Many analysts predict that Argentina will emerge from its economic doldrums sometime next year

with its reform program largely intact. A new regional trade pact with Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay testifies to the national resolve to face the next century with a commitment to international participation and integration. Says one government regulator, "We are coordinating in matters we never dreamed of five years ago."⁶ This conciliatory attitude contrasts with the introverted ways of the old order, whose members created the karma which still haunts the reformers of today.

Argentina needs a catharsis of sorts if it is to break the vicious circle of tradition. A clean slate, combined with a renewed emphasis on reform, are imperative if the country wishes to enter the twenty-first century uninhibited by the ghosts of old. Only in this way can Argentines hope to release themselves from the burden of their collective memories.

¹Ernest Brown, "Argentina and Brazil: The Lessons of Mexico," *Morgan Stanley Emerging Markets Investment Research*, 23 March 1995.

²Author's interview with Dr. Miguel Maito, Director of Economic Integration, Economics Ministry of Argentina, 7 June 1995.

³Author's interview with Dr. Roberto Bauzas, Professor of Economics at FLACSO Institute, 1 June 1995.

⁴Author's interview with central bank official, 6 June 1995.

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⁵Author's interview with Dr. Francisco Susmel, vice-president of Argentina's National Securities Commission, 7 June 1995.

6. Author's interview with Dr. Jorge Livingston, chief advisor to Argentina's National Mortgage Bank, 9 June 1995.

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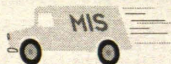
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Simply put, the feminist critique holds that mainstream models do not accurately describe women's experiences.

In virtually every intellectual discipline, the post-modernist question, "how can we know what we claim to know?" has generated heated debate. Various critical social constructionist, feminist and interpretive perspectives maintain that the supposed objectivity of the scientific method itself is permeated with value judgments and the expression of power relations. Interestingly, economics, a social science comparable to the hard sciences because of its calculative and empirical characteristics, is the last of the social sciences to enter into dialogue with its feminist critics. What are the issues in this debate? In the field of economics, models of how individuals allocate scarce resources are formulated on the basis of empirical observations and are valid insofar as they describe the "real world." Simply put, the feminist critique holds that mainstream models do not accurately describe women's experiences. Feminists question main-

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Feminist Economics: An Introduction *Emily Satterthwaite*

stream neoclassical economic assumptions and challenge the conceptual underpinnings of conventional economic "knowledge."

The emergence of feminist economics lagged behind that of related critical perspectives in the social sciences for several reasons, perhaps primarily because relatively fewer women work in the field of economics than in other social sciences. As more women have entered the profession, however, organizations and forums for discussion specific to women's issues have been established. These groups ensure that, under the umbrella of feminist economics, women economists will have support networks which will facilitate their incorporation into academia and the dissemination of their ideas.

The notion of a feminist economic perspective is a relatively new development which became formalized at about the same time that the issue of gender in the natural sciences came to the fore. In 1990, the Committee on

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the Status of Women convened for the first time at the annual meeting of the American Economic Association. At this first session, Professor Diana Strassmann of Rice University and fellow economist Jean Shackelford of Bucknell distributed a sign-up list for those interested in feminist economics. The International Association for Feminist Economics (IAFFE), of which Shackelford was the first president, was developed by those whose names appeared on this list. In addition to this formal organization, Strassmann recognized the need for a publication of feminist economic thought in order to "stimulate dialogue and debate on feminist economic perspectives among diverse scholars worldwide."¹ In May 1995, the first issue of *Feminist Economics*, the official journal of the IAFFE, was published. Strassmann, who edits the publication, states, "We created the journal so there would be a place where it would be possible to publish articles of a format not normally accepted by other more traditional journals. Other kinds of theorizing may take different forms, and if you have to conform to a certain model of theorization, you can't express certain ideas."² When asked what sparked their interest in a feminist perspective on economics, Strassmann among

others emphasize their dissatisfaction with what they perceive to be an absence of women's perspectives in the teaching and discussion of economics. Strassmann cites an experience during her first semester as a graduate student at Harvard University when a professor "argued forcefully in a series of seminars that the marriage tax was both efficient and equitable."³ Strassmann, disagreeing with the professor about the implications of his mathematical model of intergenerational equity for children of married couples, later began to think that perhaps the reason that her male instructor was so adamant about the conclusions of his model was because his wife, who had a Ph.D. in economics herself, stayed at home with their children.⁴

Rebecca Blank, a professor of Economics at Northwestern University, does not consider herself perceived as a feminist economist, but views feminist economics favorably.⁵ Echoing some of the sentiments expressed by Strassmann and others, Blank maintains that it is "hard to be a woman in economics and not at some time feel isolated. Being an economist has certainly raised my feminist awareness."⁶ In order to make the discipline a more friendly place for women, Blank has chaired

"Being an economist has definitely raised my feminist awareness."

Just as each individual's reality is unique, there is no economic truth.

the Committee on the Status of Women at the American Economic Association, which organizes mentoring programs for young women economists and works on establishing female role models within the field.

What are feminist economists writing about, now that they have gained some recognition within the mainstream economics intellectual community? The behavioral model of mainstream neoclassical economics assumes that individuals, self-interested by nature, attempt to efficiently allocate scarce resources in order to maximize their happiness. Feminist economics challenges many of the corollary values of this model. For example, those adhering to the feminist credo question whether maximum efficiency necessarily brings about maximum happiness; whether maldistribution of resources is a more pertinent problem than actual scarcity; and whether individuals' utility functions are as truly independent from one another as neoclassicists maintain.⁷

Feminist economics raises these and other basic questions in order to determine whether the "facts" and assumptions presented by mainstream economists, most of whom have been male, accurately describe the world as it is seen

THE YALE POLITICAL MONTHLY from multiple perspectives. The feminist critique of how neoclassical economics conceptualizes group situations extends to a reconsideration of the university settings in which economic thought has been carried out. Feminist economists argue that the notion of the intellectual community as a perfect marketplace where "the best ideas bubble to the top...untainted by partial interests or exclusionary practices"⁸ must be modified. Instead, feminist economists, regardless of gender, hold that the economic theories selected in the marketplace only represent the "truth" insofar as their models mirror the reality of sometimes irreducible personal situations. Just as each individual's reality is unique, there is no economic truth—truth can at best be represented by the average of the aggregate individual truths. Does this relativistic stance call for a radical reorientation of the discipline of economics?

Feminists claim that by using such explanatory tools as scarcity, selfishness and competition rather than abundance, cooperation and altruism, neoclassicists do not address significant motivations for human economic behavior. Two examples illustrate this critique. First, feminist economists point out that the relation

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between the perception of scarcity and previous expectations of abundance has not been critically examined. Mainstream economics assumes that supply and demand exist independently and determine equilibrium output when analyzed together. This notion, however, ignores the fact that late capitalist phenomena such as advertising can manipulate demand, thereby creating a state of scarcity that does not fit neoclassical models. Marketers of designer cosmetics, for example, will portray their products as "necessary" for a healthy and young-looking face and body.

Second, feminist economics maintains that neoclassical economics is incorrect in its assumption that all individuals will consistently act selfishly and competitively. The feminist position holds that people are intelligent enough to realize that cooperation can often generate the best possible combination of resources, and that economists must complicate their views of human rationality to take into account situations in which collective enterprise is likely to reap a greater benefit than individual effort. One of the most commonly cited contexts for altruistic behavior is the family. Traditionally, mothers' actions in particular do not seem to fit the

model of rational self-interest.

The issue of altruism in the family has been addressed by the conservative economist and Nobel-laureate Gary Becker. His account is premised on each family acting as an economic unit, with its actions being dictated by a single rational agent (typically, the male breadwinner), who optimally allocates resources among family members. Becker, in effect, proposes a tenet which is opposite to that which holds in the marketplace: the rational agent in the family is perfectly altruistic. Although Becker's theory of the family takes into account the notion of altruistic behavior, feminists doubt his model is an accurate one because it fails to tally with women's collective experience. They point to studies that demonstrate that women throughout the world are short-changed within the family on a systematic basis: in times of famine, women suffer more from malnutrition than men and, on average, women receive less of the household income without the compensation of greater leisure time.⁹ Feminists view these harsh realities as proof that perfect altruism within the family is anything but universal.

What, then, is the feminist position on altruism and its effects on distribution in the family?

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Neoclassical economics is incorrect in its assumption that all individuals will consistently act selfishly and competitively.

Feminists view household decision-making as a bargaining situation, in which power relations play themselves out.

There are many different vantage points that feminist economists may take, but they usually challenge the idea that the family is a single economic actor which makes decisions as if it had a single utility function. They are quick to point out that the conceptualization of the family as a single unit violates one of the core assumptions of neoclassical economics: the individual, whatever his or her social situation and constraints, is an autonomous decision-maker. Instead, feminists view household decision-making as a bargaining situation in which power relations play themselves out and, in the words of economist Rebecca Blank, a "negotiated outcome" is achieved. Feminist economists offer alternative models of family decision-making that depend on asymmetries between men's and women's labor supply which arise from differences in wage rates and preferences for leisure and which, in turn, may depend on the existence of children.¹⁰

Another element of some feminist models includes something called a "threshold," which, in one instance, might be defined as:

The maximum amount of untidiness, dirty dishes and so on that [each member of the household] can tolerate. Small variations in the

THE YALE POLITICAL MONTHLY thresholds of family members can lead to large differences in the amount of housework performed.¹¹

Feminist economists introduce the concept of a threshold to explain actions which are not premised on some impossible or ideal expression of altruism but yet do not wholly conform to what might be expected of a fully rational agent. In this way, the issue of resource allocation in the family is addressed without assuming absolute altruism, which is viewed by feminists to be as psychologically unrealistic as absolute selfishness.

The political dimension of feminist economics is revealed when the implications of broadening economic models to incorporate women's realities are fully expressed. As models are refined and women's economic position within the family or the marketplace is taken more into account, the reasons for women's perpetual second-class economic position can be properly understood and policies to rectify the nearly global welfare imbalance between men and women can be more thoughtfully considered. To the extent that feminist economics achieves the goal of improving the welfare of women as a class, it will have achieved the goals of many of its proponents.

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In order to evaluate the validity of the feminist critique, it is necessary to ascertain the extent to which the assumptions of mainstream economics do not apply to women. To the extent that neoclassical economics does not explain the behavior of a huge segment of the population, and, some would say, fundamentally misconstrues the human subject, feminist economics must be taken seriously even if it is unable to offer more complete models than currently exist. Historically, the economic intellectual community has not taken challenges to existing models seriously until a viable alternative model has been formulated. Feminist critiques have not been given much credence because satisfactory alternative models are difficult to establish under feminist analysis. After all, the crux of the feminist critique is that knowledge is not an abstract universality, but rather that it is situation-dependent. If such a position is accepted, then any alternative model that feminists might offer would remain open to their own charge that the vantage point of the observer had biased her or his conclusions.

This paradox may, however, be the hidden message of the critique. By recognizing that all models are incomplete and by

striving to include the experiences of those who are currently marginalized or even excluded from the intellectual marketplace in which economic models are judged, perhaps economic models can be improved so that they reflect more than the realities of the white men who made them.

¹ Stated purpose of *Feminist Economics* and call for submissions, sent to author by Professor Diana Strassmann, 23 October 1995.

² Author's interview with Professor Diana Strassmann, 22 October 1995.

³ Strassmann, Diana L. "Stories of Economics," *History of Political Economy*, (1993: vol. 25, no. 1, p. 159).

⁴ Author's interview with Strassmann.

⁵ Author's interview with Professor Rebecca Blank, 21 October 1995.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Strober, Myra H. "Rethinking Economics Through a Feminist Lens," *American Economic Review*, (1993: vol. 84, no. 2, p. 143).

⁸ Strassmann, Diana L. "Stories of Economics," *History of Political Economy*, (1993: vol. 25, no. 1, p. 149).

⁹ Wooley, F.R. "The feminist challenge to neoclassical economics," *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, (1993: vol. 17, p. 487).

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 494.

¹¹ *Ibid.* The threshold component is part of Torunn Bragstad's 1989 model.

Feminist economics must be taken seriously even if it is unable to offer more accurate models than currently exist.

Ethics, Politics and Economics: Strange Bedfellows?

David Kraut

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EP&E attempts to combat the skepticism which permeates society regarding the compatibility of ethics and politics.

The presidency of Richard Nixon brought an end to America's innocence. No longer did people believe that their leaders were men and women of character who served in public office to help the nation. Instead, a new mood of cynicism and anti-government sentiment set in which portrayed government as a corrupt bureaucracy managed by criminals. The Ethics, Politics and Economics (EP&E) program, Yale's six-year-old experiment in combining the study of public policy with that of morality, challenges this viewpoint. Through its contributions to the academic community, EP&E attempts to combat the skepticism which permeates society regarding the compatibility of ethics and politics.

Indeed, this skepticism alone illustrates the value of the major. EP&E students focus on complex social issues from a new perspective — one based on moral-

ity — and, in the process, demonstrate the possibility of solving political problems without sacrificing ethical ideals. With applications for the EP&E class of 1998 due in early December, it is worthwhile to explore how the major functions and how students benefit intellectually from this hodgepodge of the social sciences.

Similar in concept to the Philosophy, Politics and Economics program at Oxford University which Bill Clinton was enrolled in as a Rhodes scholar, EP&E arose from the wreckage of one of the largest and least respected programs at Yale: Economics and Political Science. As Ian Shapiro, the architect of the EP&E program and its current director, explains, the Economics and Political Science major was crowded, unwieldy and had a poor academic reputation. "It was considered a gut major by both students and professors,"¹ asserts the world-renowned political theorist. With no courses especially designed for the double major, students simply took a certain number of econom-

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ics courses along with a set number of political science courses. "It was easier to fulfill the prerequisites for it than for either the economics or political science major by itself," claims Shapiro. As a result, the students involved with the major were less motivated and tended to produce lower-quality senior essays, which discouraged professors from mentoring them. According to Shapiro, there was "no core of faculty who cared about the major, so its direction suffered."

At that point, Shapiro decided to design a program that would be similar in theme to the Economics and Political Science major, but would allow for more in-depth interdisciplinary study of social policy. Shapiro additionally hoped to aid the ailing Philosophy department which was going through a period of crisis from which it still has not fully recovered. The Philosophy department, previously one of the best in the nation, slowly lost its veteran professors during the 1980s and failed to tenure new ones to replace them. The result was a shrinking faculty and an inability to mentor graduate students. By both inviting visiting faculty to teach and appointing new faculty whose speciality would be studying social policy

from different disciplinary viewpoints, Shapiro planned to revitalize Yale's social sciences in general and the Philosophy department in particular.

Obtaining funding for the new program was the next challenge. Shapiro discovered that the Ford Foundation, a private philanthropic organization, was accepting proposals for a competition to promote the study of the social sciences in the nation's universities. Shapiro submitted the EP&E proposal and Yale was selected for the grant. The funding supported the creation of the EP&E program, which draws its faculty from various Yale University departments, as well as the law and business schools, and offers its own core courses along with cross-listed courses from the Political Science, Economics and Philosophy departments.

Housed in Yale's Institution for Social and Policy Studies, an independent interdisciplinary research organization, the EP&E program has become one of the most popular majors at Yale. EP&E receives over eighty applications a year for fewer than forty openings. "It is one of the most coherent majors at Yale and that explains part of its appeal," says former Director of Undergraduate Studies Norma

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Shapiro planned to revitalize Yale's social sciences in general and the Philosophy department in particular.

After a cursory study of each area, students are forced to analyze issues without extended knowledge of any of the disciplines.

Thompson.² Students apply at the end of the fall term of their sophomore year, submitting a transcript and statement of purpose along with a writing sample. Strong academic potential is one requirement for successful applicants; a clear conception of what one's concentration will be is another. The concentration is an area of policy that a student studies thoroughly, enabling him or her to frame an important problem within conceptual schemes that draw on analytical methods taken from each of the three disciplines. For most students, however, what they predict their concentration will be at application time differs from the concentration they will ultimately pursue.

EP&E majors fulfill their requirements by taking a variety of classes from the Political Science, Philosophy, and Economics departments. Introductory microeconomics and macroeconomics are required, as is intermediate microeconomics. Various political philosophy courses and an introductory course on ethics round out the foundational basis of the major. Students also enroll in required "core" courses which examine social issues from the three viewpoints of the major. These semester-long courses may range

THE YALE POLITICAL MONTHLY from an investigation of affirmative action to a comparison of different forms of political economy.

Students complete the program with a senior essay on a topic in their concentration, defined as an area of study consisting of four additional courses that can be selected from any department at Yale. The essay, generally thirty to fifty pages in length, represents the intellectual culmination of the student's work in the major and examines a social issue from an interdisciplinary perspective. In the past, seniors have written on topics ranging from the reform of the American penal system to an examination of the German welfare state.

Detractors assert that while this disciplinary diversity provides students with new tools with which to examine policy issues, it does not allow them enough time to build expertise in any one of the three disciplines. After a cursory study of each area, students are forced to analyze issues without extended knowledge of any of the disciplines. Consequently, the ensuing investigation may be excessively general and unfocused.

While EP&E does not provide for in-depth study of all

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three aspects of the major, it does however grant students the luxury of small seminars with well-known professors. Shapiro predicts the major will not expand to admit more students, a forecast which pleases most EP&E students. "Most of the required courses are small seminars," explains Keith Christian, TC '96, "which allow you to interact with tenured professors who are experts in their fields." Were more students admitted, the department might be compelled to use a seminar selection method similar to that of the History department, which does not guarantee students their first choice. In the current system, EP&E students are able to choose their courses based on content rather than availability and can therefore study subjects of particular interest to them. The result is a stronger attachment to the courses students take as undergraduates and thus a deeper satisfaction with the major itself.

This satisfaction, however, does not translate into unanimous student approval. Overall, students' responses have been mixed. Some have enjoyed their experience and cite the caliber of the participants in the program as a main asset. "I have really benefited from the intellect and camaraderie of my classmates,"

says Dinesh Parakh, TC '96.

"They are a self-selected, highly motivated group and, combined with the high quality of the professors, they are what make EP&E a great major." Parakh adds that majoring in EP&E is helpful in preparing students for graduate school: "It covers the most important material in economics, philosophy, and politics in a comprehensive and lucid way, which builds a solid foundation for anyone going on to graduate school." Christian notes that what makes the major so valuable is its synthetic approach to solving complex social problems. "By only studying one discipline, you miss important parts of the decision-making process," he explains. "With EP&E, you get the full picture."

The breadth of the major has generally not disappointed students, even though examining so many issues so quickly may not provide students with the opportunity to make informed choices on specific aspects of a policy issue. For example, a student who does not select more philosophy courses than those that are required may be unable to adequately examine moral issues correctly when writing his or her senior essay. The

"With EP&E, you get the full picture."

*EP&E
remains
an impor-
tant
option for
students
pursuing a
liberal arts
education.*

complaints regarding EP&E, however, tend to involve the repetitiveness of the material rather than the lack of focus on each discipline. This redundancy may not allow students to move beyond a certain topic or author in their study of EP&E, thereby creating a mundanely homogeneous background for their analyses.

Despite the problems inherent in studying a diversity of viewpoints, EP&E remains an important option for students pursuing a liberal arts education. By allowing students to explore important policy issues from several points on the intellectual spectrum, EP&E provides students with experience in making policy choices as the ideal government should make them; that is, based on ethical, economic, and political considerations. Powered by a talented and distinguished faculty and filled with highly motivated, accomplished students, EP&E has demonstrated that ethics, politics, and economics can and *do* belong together.

1. Author's Interview with Professor Ian Shapiro, 5 October 1995.

2. Author's Interview with Professor Norma Thomspson, 4 October 1995.

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