

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

by Daniel Silvermintz

Issue 82 of *Philosophy for Business* features three articles that approach the economy from a moral point of view. Despite the different perspective adopted in each article (utilitarian, Protestant, and Russian Orthodox), all three authors argue that economic agents are not merely anonymous cogs in a machine of production and consumption, but rather form an interrelated ethical community.

J. Mikael Olsson challenges us to consider the hiring process as an ethical responsibility in 'Ethics in Hiring: Nepotism, Meritocracy, or Utilitarian Compassion'. In a competitive job market, hiring managers generally employ objective criteria in evaluating an applicant's qualifications. Although this process avoids the inequity of nepotism, certain applicants, such as those with periods of unemployment, may systematically be at a disadvantage when judged objectively. Not only does the standard hiring procedure perpetuate these individuals' ability to find employment, employers may be overlooking exemplary job applicants who have understandable reasons (e.g. illness) or admirable reasons (e.g. childcare or elder care) for periods of unemployment. Adopting a utilitarian approach aimed at the general good of society, Olsson argues for employers' compassion to counteract the persistent bias against applicants who might not look as good on paper.

In our remaining essays, two Russian scholars appeal to different religious traditions as a corrective for the unbridled capitalism that has emerged in their country following the fall of the Soviet Union. Their urgent concern for addressing business ethics in their country only serves to remind us of similar issues concerning the economy across the globe.

Prof. L. S. Embulayeva's 'To Work is to Pray: The History of Protestant Business Ethics' examines the radical shift in the Protestant understanding of

business over time. Beginning with a discussion of Max Weber's thesis regarding the role Calvinist doctrine had in shaping the capitalist spirit, Prof. Embulayeva concludes with a discussion of the critical approach to the economy adopted by the Social Gospel movement. Rather than waiting for salvation in a world to come, the Social Gospel movement sought political and economic reforms in order to manifest the Kingdom of God in this world.

Prof. M. I. Danilova's 'Russian Philosophy of Business' introduces readers of *P4B* to the rich history of Russian business ethics. Tracing the development of the merchant class, Prof. Danilova contends that entrepreneurship in Russia always had a sense of public mindedness as a result of the influence of the Orthodox Church. The author concludes with a discussion of the philosophic ideas of Vladimir Solovyov and Sergei Bulgakov, who offer a philosophic challenge to economic determinism from an idealist perspective that regards the economy as an ethical and spiritual relationship.

Daniel E. Silvermintz, PhD.
Associate Professor of Humanities
University of Houston-Clear Lake

© Daniel Silvermintz 2017

Email: Silvermintz@uhcl.edu