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Sismondi's Forgotten Ethical Critique of Early Capitalism

Ross E. Stewart

ABSTRACT. The purpose of this paper is to bring attention to Sismondi's forgotten ethical critique of *laissez-faire* capitalism. It is a forgotten critique because Sismondi has to a large extent been neglected in the literature. He has been too quickly labelled an 'economic romanticist'. It is ethical because Sismondi questioned what he called chrematistics, which to him was becoming the chief end of economics. Chrematistics is the science of the increase of wealth conceived of abstractly and not in relation to man or society. This was opposed to the provisioning principle which Sismondi saw as the key principle of economics. To Sismondi the object of economics is man not wealth. His critique of *laissez-faire* capitalism was from this perspective. This led Sismondi to propose state containment of capitalism so that the well-being of the whole community was attained. This proposal is an alternative to Marx's complete liquidation of capitalism. Sismondi's ethical critique is important not only from the point of view of the history of political economy but also for an insight into what values and principles should be given priority in our economic systems today.

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I. Introduction

Jean Charles Leonard Simonde de Sismondi was an historian and economist who was born in Geneva, Switzerland in 1773. In the history of Economic Thought he gave the first ethical, liberal critique of early capitalism. It was a liberal critique in the sense that public policy should be relied on for the solution of economic problems which in Sismondi's view the market mechanism could not overcome.¹

The significance of Sismondi and his ideas, as suggested by A. Anikin,

is determined first and foremost by the fact that in the age of the industrial revolution and the triumphant advance of capitalism he was the first to give a profound and penetrating criticism of this social system and its economic mechanism.²

The aim of this paper is to examine the nature of Sismondi's critique and how these views were formed by his overall views on man and society. To do this, it will first be necessary to examine the nature of property within an economic system such as capitalism. Then secondly, Sismondi's critique will be examined in detail with particular reference to his ideas on industrialisation, the division of labour, competition, and other economic matters.

II. Property within capitalism

Sismondi's critique was of early Capitalism which was based on private (absolute) property. As the capitalist society developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries people had the right to acquire and trade property in a free market, to

start and build enterprises without fear of government intervention and confiscation and thus expand and languish according to their own abilities.³

As this development took place the individual became the focal point of society. A person's status or wealth came to be seen as not immutably fixed for life but could be improved or squandered by his actions.⁴ Adam Smith stated that by pursuing self-interest, the so-called 'invisible hand' would lead the producer to produce as much as was profitable, which through competition would result in the lowest price for consumers.

Under this kind of economic system it can be seen that any notion of 'common property' became a contradiction in terms.⁵ The concept of property was reduced to private property – an exclusive, alienable, absolute right in things. It is an absolute right in the sense that "it is a right to dispose of, or alienate, as well as to use; and it is a right which is not conditional on the owner's performance of any social function".⁶

This of course was exactly the kind of property concept the capitalist economic system needed in order to operate.⁷ If the market was to operate fully and freely it was necessary that all labour and resources had to become or be convertible into, private property.⁸

In examining Sismondi's critique it is also important to see that at one level there is property of consumption and at another level, property of production. Property of consumption can be seen as consumable property which is needed to maintain life. However, property of production, such as in land and capital, which when held in sufficient quantities, means power in some measure to control the lives of others. C. B. Macpherson states: "so that property in land and capital stands in rather more need of justification than does simple property in the consumable means of life".⁹ As we shall see Sismondi did not approve of large accumulation of capital and thus the power this can give for the oppression of workers.

III. Development of Sismondi's economic thought

Sismondi wrote two economic works of note. In 1803 he published *La Richesse commerciale*; and in 1819 the *Nouveaux Principes de l'Economie politique*.

La Richesse commerciale in general followed the ideas of Adam Smith. It is a systematic presentation and elaboration of the principles scattered through the *Wealth of Nations*.¹⁰ The book attracted considerable attention and met the needs of French speaking countries. In the book he accepts fully both the theoretical structure of Smith's work and its practical conclusions and political philosophy. *Laissez-faire* is described as the best possible economic policy. It has been pointed out, however, that included in *La Richesse commerciale* were some original features of economic analysis.¹¹ E. Roll comments, however, that even in this *laissez-faire* world Sismondi allows certain doubts to enter. "He is not completely reconciled to see the labourer's lot remain permanently that of producer of everything and consumer of only a small part of what he produced".¹²

In his next work *Nouveaux Principes*, Sismondi departs from a repetition of Smithian doctrines. His economic ideas had changed due to his historical research and travelling. In Italy, Switzerland and France he came into direct contact with the first economic crisis of the nineteenth century. In England, a country which he loved, he saw the severe depression that it experienced in the early nineteenth century. He saw that the plight of the workers had deteriorated. Spiegel states:

Sismondi was profoundly disturbed by what he considered the ravages of the factory system, which divorced ownership from work and created an industrial proletariat made up of unemployed and poorly paid employed labourers living in misery, toiling long hours and continuously exposed to the double threat of machinery which replaced them and of competition which depressed their wages.¹³

These experiences had left their mark. Sismondi, however, still retained his respect for Adam Smith and did not break entirely with the classi-

cal school of economics.¹⁴ He felt that although there were unavoidable differences with Smith at least Smith's theories appealed to experience and fact. He objected to later classical economists, in particular Ricardo, who desired to transform economics into a science of principles. He accused Ricardo of being too abstract. He suggested that Ricardo and his English followers had thrown themselves far more "into abstractions which make us lose sight completely of the man to whom the wealth belongs and who should enjoy it".¹⁵ Thus, to Sismondi, economic theories should not be developed in a vacuum.

IV. Sismondi's economic analysis and critique

A. Anthropological perspective

For Sismondi the object of political economy and economics is man and not wealth. Wealth is but the means to procure the happiness of all. "Wealth may therefore be considered as representing all that men can do for the physical well-being of each other".¹⁶ Barucci quotes from the *Nouveaux Principes*: "...political economy becomes on the whole, the theory of beneficence, and all that does not bring about men's happiness as an end result, does not belong to this science".¹⁷

Sismondi had a great love for the human race. M. Mignet has stated:

The love of the human race was in him so sincere, so lively, so universal, that it had the power of giving him the greatest delight and the deepest affliction. It governed him to such a degree that it affected the theories of his mind as well as the dispositions of his soul.¹⁸

This genuine love for his fellow-men led Sismondi to see that economics has to be concerned with satisfying human needs and have the happiness and well-being of the whole community as its controlling principle. He saw economics as the provisioning of the household and on the societal level the same provisioning principle "of the house applied to the city".¹⁹ Yet, Sismondi saw what he called chrematistics becoming the chief end of economics. Chrematistics was the

"science of the increase of wealth" conceived of "abstractly and not in relation to man and society".²⁰ It "was the striving for unlimited wealth, economic activity not for the sake of consumption but for the sake of the accumulation of wealth".²¹ Sismondi states:

This (chrematistic) school, pursuing as it were abstractedly the increase in wealth, without asking in whose favour this wealth ought to be accumulated, has proposed as the object of nations the production of the greatest possible quantity of work at the cheapest rate. Wealth, it says, is so much of the useful product of labour as is not consumed, which accumulates on earth.²²

From Sismondi's point of view wealth related to man not to things. "Wealth is a modification of the human condition, an expression of the relationship of things to men, it is only in relation to man that one can form a clear idea of it".²³ The mere growth of material things was not a true growth of wealth, since "utility was the essential character of wealth".²⁴ So that for Sismondi there can be an increase in quantity without there necessarily being a corresponding increase in wealth. Thus, running right through Sismondi's critique is the perspective, that many classical economists of his day were "forgetting man for things".

B. Specific analysis and critique

P. Barucci writes: "Sismondi was a prominent figure in one of the liveliest debates of the classical school".²⁵ This debate in which Malthus, Ricardo and Say were all prominent, was over the reasons as to why a 'glut of goods' in the market occurred. Sismondi suggested that it was more than just special circumstances of the time which caused a glut of goods;²⁶ there was a general universal theory of the glut of goods. He stated what is called the under-consumption theory of crises. He observed that as the economy goes from one equilibrium position to another it is done so only through "terrible suffering". He therefore placed great importance on these transitional states and that they were by no means just incidental phenomena. They were

important because Sismondi saw that the economic process is chained to certain sequences that will exclude certain forms of adaption and enforce others.²⁷ Barucci comments:

In particular, Sismondi underlined the fact that the transfer of capital between the various sectors of production came about through friction and after a time lag; these two conditions concern in the first place the workers, for whom they entail heavy costs in human terms; and in so far as they involve a waste of capital, of technical knowledge and of human capacity, they also represent a loss for the whole community.²⁸

The economic process then is a system of periodicities and lags and because of this it harbours a world of problems in going from one equilibrium position to another. Through this type of 'dynamic analysis' and in particular 'period analysis' which Sismondi used he saw "the disturbances, discrepancies, and hitches that result from the fact that economic life is bound to sequences of which every unit is determined by the past and in turn determines the future".²⁹

This uncertainty not only concerns the behaviour of consumers but also that of competing producers. Sismondi identified several factors which create disequilibrium and caused the gulf to widen between production and consumption and caused the inability of the working class to absorb the increased production. These are factors such as competition, the separation of property and labour, industrialisation, and the fact that capital and not want determines production. The paper will specifically examine some of these factors.

1. Competition

The principle of competition is one of the basic tenets of the 'law of the markets'. Sismondi had harsh words to say of unbridled competition. He sarcastically states the 'chrematistics' who favour competition argue like this:

Seek your own interest before everything else; you will find it in being preferred to your rivals whether as relates to selling or to working.... (In the process)

perhaps you will reduce them to indigence, perhaps you will ruin them, perhaps you will destroy their health or their lives. That is not your business; you represent the interests of the consumers; now each one is a consumer in his turn; therefore you represent the interest of all, the national interest. Thus listen to no consideration, let no pity stop you, for perhaps you will be called on to say to your rivals, your death is our life.³⁰

Competition means the process of minimising the private cost of production and, therefore, wages in order to reduce the price of the product and to increase sales. This then leads to increased exploitation because every capitalist is after the greatest profit; it also intensifies overproduction. Competition also leads to the profitable employment of capital, which is not necessarily determined by the needs of the consuming public.³¹

2. The separation of property and labour

Ricardo says this of Sismondi in writing one of his many letters; "He holds that the great cause of the misery of the bulk of the people in all countries, is the unequal distribution of property, which tends to brutalize and degrade the lower classes".³² This separation of labour and ownership makes the labourer completely dependent on the capitalist. The division of labour means the creation of a labour force which to Sismondi is a social organization "with workers devoid of property, whose wage is fixed by competition, and whose employer can dismiss them as soon as he no longer needs their work".³³

Thus Sismondi was one of the earliest economists to speak of the existence of two social classes, (the rich and poor, the capitalists and the workers) whose interests he regarded as opposed. He considered the workers *proletarians*,³⁴ who being without property like the lowest class in ancient Rome, had only the function of providing "offspring", or *proles* for the factories of capitalist society.³⁵

The supply of labour is entirely determined by the demand of the capitalist for wage-labour. This separation of property and labour means

that revenue is under the control of the capitalist. Thus the capitalist's revenue increases, whereas that of the labourers who form the mass of consumers does not. This is a major cause of disequilibrium because the products of industries which cater for the labourer cannot grow uniformly with producing power, because it is only the revenue of the capitalist which increases proportionately with production. The capitalist will exercise a greater demand for luxury goods but this cannot make up for the other demand which has shrunk. This in turn causes changes in the distribution of productive resources which bring about fluctuations in economic activity and aggravate the difficulties of over-production.³⁶ Also the progressive concentration of capital and property aggravates this disparity of demands. While material wealth increased, human happiness and enjoyment at the disposal of each individual diminished. The wealthy grew wealthier and the poor grew poorer.

3. Industrialisation

With the creation of a large labour force, Sismondi saw a modification take place in the structure of occupations, as increasing percentages of the labourers moved from agriculture to the industrial sector. Large-scale industrialisation, he suggested, had complete disregard for the old social order and also facilitated the substitution of labour by machinery.³⁷ Sismondi suggested the "chrematistic school utters cheering cries of admiration" when a factory can produce in mass, "but what a strange forgetfulness of humankind never to enquire what becomes of the man which the great factory has displaced!"³⁸

Sismondi, then looked at the ravages of industrialisation and the terrible sufferings by the proletariat. He was particularly angered by child labour.³⁹ Sismondi hit out at the human suffering of *laissez-faire* capitalism. The law of the markets did not give economic justice. He states "It is not true that the contest of individual interests suffices to produce the greatest good of all".⁴⁰ Just as the head of the household regulates production and consumption so in the administration of the public sector it is neces-

sary for an authority to watch over and restrain particular interests to make them subservient to the general interest.⁴¹

V. Sismondi's solutions

For Sismondi government's task is to regulate and moderate the pursuit of wealth. The government is the "protector of the weak against the strong, the defender of him who cannot defend himself and the representative of the calm interest of all, against the passionate interest of the individual".⁴² The government's role is more than just a technical one, rather it must have a responsible influence on economic choices because of the ill-effects of the market mechanism.⁴³ Sismondi's idea of state containment of capitalism provided an alternative to the liquidation of capitalism proposed by Marx. The government must protect the poor because they are in such a precarious condition. Yet it was not the 'equality of ranks' that Sismondi advocated but rather happiness in all ranks. This is what the government should have in view.⁴⁴

Concerning wealth, Sismondi suggested the economy should be dominated by 'landed wealth' because the intrinsic value of the goods expresses the very essence of wealth. 'Landed' wealth is definable as a group of goods destined to satisfy the needs of those who produce them.⁴⁵ So that the availability of goods means their capacity to satisfy needs and, therefore, the availability of wealth. Such a system, states Barucci, aims to make the 'value in use' coincide with the 'value in exchange'. Yet Sismondi saw difficulties in this because of the uncertainties of demand and the inability of the large-scale producer to in any way predict such demand.

Sismondi viewed the agricultural based economy as a good model for the industrial sector to follow. He was a firm believer in a widely diffused private property. He wanted to see a reunion between labour and property and so aimed to maximise the number of worker-proprietors. Sismondi suggested that there will be

no real and lasting progress for the working classes until a means has been found to establish a com-

munity of interests instead of an opposition between the entrepreneur and all those whose work he directs; when peasants are called to participate in the harvest, the industrial workers share in the products, when the proprietor, feeling himself in solidarity with the workers he employs, will recognise that he can gain nothing by reducing their wages, and will seek on the contrary, himself, to gain their co-operation and to make them participants in the profits of his enterprises.⁴⁶

Sismondi wanted to see that the property of production never accumulated into large holdings.

Regarding the situation of the workers, Sismondi wanted by means of legislation a guaranteed annual wage which would include allowances for such common hazards as illness, unemployment, and old age dependency. These are to be considered part of the enterprise's cost of production rather than a burden on society at large. He also recommended a ceiling to be placed on the hours of work and a floor on wages.⁴⁷

Concerning the poor, Sismondi suggests that they have a right along with the rich to education for their children and other benefits acquired by intelligence. He suggests that it is the participation of the poor in the advantages of progressive civilisation which should be the object of political economy. He states that this is an object completely neglected by the chrematistic school. Thus, he further states that it is "a fundamental idea of civil society is the right of every man to improve his 'station in life'".⁴⁸

The rich, to Sismondi, find that their wealth secure them food, clothing and lodging and also another element, leisure. Yet Sismondi also states that wealth also secures to the rich two great prerogatives, the advantages of which are reflected throughout the whole of society "one is the development of their leisure in the development of their intellectual faculties; and the other, their superfluity in the relief of all kinds of wretchedness".⁴⁹ He further states that when the rich forget this second prerogative their beneficial influence on society diminishes "not only with the diminution of their number, but with the increase of their wealth, when it goes

beyond a certain point".⁵⁰ The lack of exercising this second prerogative is the influence of the chrematistic school states Sismondi.⁵¹ He also disapproved of luxury goods because only the rich can buy them.

VI. Criticism of Sismondi's analysis

Sismondi by wanting a return to the small, independent producer, has been accused by V. I. Lenin of 'economic romanticism' in which the idealisation of small production is a feature.⁵² Also the Marxist writer Anikin states that Sismondi's criticism of capitalism was petty bourgeois and although he saw the hardships of the proletariat and wrote a great deal about its wretchedness he had no understanding of its historic role.⁵³ Roll suggests that by slackening industrial progress and by putting a brake on technological advances, Sismondi's proposals lacked insight into economic development. This would have prevented his sympathy for the oppressed from leading him into a position incompatible with his intention.⁵⁴ Many suggest then that Sismondi's remedy is just a romantic yearning for the rural economy of the bygone days.⁵⁵

VII. Conclusion

Sismondi's proposals for reform then may be considered little more than an ethical exhortation to producers. Yet in a world where one wonders about the meaning of industrial and technical progress which offers workers no alternative employment, Sismondi's critique needs to be considered seriously. T. Sowell states:

Shrewd, intuitive and analytical insights were Sismondi's forte; consistency, rigor and system building were not... . All in all, Sismondi was a pioneer, with all that this implies, not only of primary but of crudity.⁵⁶

Sismondi critiqued *laissez-faire* capitalism because he doubted the market mechanism. His critique from an anthropological perspective was penetrating. It was a significant attempt to

balance free initiative and the need for subsistence. To Sismondi an economic system is unjust if it robs man of his essential humanness and makes him subservient to that system. His ethical critique and proposal of state containment of capitalism provided an alternative to the collectivisation and nationalisation of Marxism and Socialism, and to the chrematistic economic system of *laissez-faire* capitalism. Sismondi attempted to recover the original purpose of economics, the provisioning of society, by preserving the concept of private property subject to state containment and regulation.

His critique has been used by nineteenth century socialists such as Owen, Fourier, Proudhon and Hobson; Marx and Lenin; and some see him as a precursor to J. M. Keynes. Sismondi sought to establish the principle of economic justice and his thought anticipates the modern welfare state. G. Sotiropoulos states "From the perspective of the twentieth century Sismondi has proved to have been more perceptive than most free-traders and more realistic than most nineteenth century socialists".⁵⁷

Notes

¹ H.W. Spiegel distinguishes the use of the word liberal in what he calls this modern sense, with the liberalism of Adam Smith who refused to grant to the government more than a few narrowly circumscribed functions in the field of economic policy. See H. W. Spiegel, *The Growth of Economic Thought* (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1971), p.302.

² A. Anikin, *A Science in its Youth* (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975), p. 281.

³ G. M. Taber, 'Capitalism: Is It Working?', *Time Magazine* (April 21, 1980), p. 37.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁵ C. B. Macpherson (ed.), *Property* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1978), p. 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁷ For the concept of property within the capitalist (liberal) and other economic systems see F. L. Pryor, *Property and Industrial Organisation in Communist and Capitalist Nations* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1973), pp. 384–387 and p. 435.

⁸ Macpherson, *Property*, p. 10.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁰ T. Sowell, 'Sismondi: A Neglected Pioneer', *History of Political Economy* 1 (1972), 64.

¹¹ See Sowell, *ibid.*, p. 64, also Spiegel, *The Growth of Economic Thought*, p. 303.

¹² E. Roll, *A History of Economic Thought* (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 3rd ed.), p. 235.

¹³ Spiegel, *The Growth of Economic Thought*, p. 304.

¹⁴ See Roll, *History of Economic Thought*, p. 235, and 'Halevy on Sismondi', printed in H. W. Spiegel (ed.), *The Development of Economic Thought* (John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1952), p. 259.

¹⁵ Quoted by P. Barucci, 'Sismondi Revisited', *Revista Internazionale di Scienze Economiche e Commerciali* 10 (1975), 982. For more on this argument between Sismondi and Ricardo see the above article and also Sowell, *HOPE*, pp. 82–85.

¹⁶ J. C. L. Simonde de Sismondi, *Political Economy* (Augustus M. Kelley, New York, 1966), p. 2.

¹⁷ Barucci, *RISEC*, p. 983.

¹⁸ M. Mignet, 'Historical Notes of His Life and Writings', in J. C. L. Simonde de Sismondi, *Political Economy and the Philosophy of Government* (John Chapman, London, 1847), p. 14.

¹⁹ Sismondi, *Political Economy and the Philosophy of Government*, p. 124.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

²¹ Anikin, *A Science in its Youth*, p. 286.

²² Sismondi, *Political Economy and the Philosophy of Government*, pp. 141–142.

²³ Quoted by T. Sowell, *Say's Law* (Princeton University Press, Princeton 1972), p. 66.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

²⁵ Barucci, *RISEC*, p. 981.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 980, Barucci comments that there was a glut of British goods on the markets of Europe and America.

²⁷ J. A. Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1954), p. 495.

²⁸ Barucci, *RISEC*, pp. 987–988.

²⁹ Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis*, p. 496.

³⁰ Sismondi, *Political Economy and the Philosophy of Government*, p. 142.

³¹ Roll, *History of Economic Thought*, p. 238.

³² D Ricardo, *The Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo* (University Press, Cambridge, 1952, Vol IX), p. 243.

³³ Barucci quoting Sismondi in *RISEC*, p. 982.

³⁴ Interesting to note that Sismondi used this term and formulated this class conflict before Marx. Marx also appears to have taken the expression "Most miserable and most numerous class" verbatim from Sismondi.

³⁵ Sismondi, *Political Economy and the Philosophy of Government*, pp. 144–145.

- ³⁶ Roll, *History of Economic Thought*, p. 238.
- ³⁷ Barucci, *RISEC*, p. 979 and p. 982.
- ³⁸ Sismondi, *Political Economy and Philosophy of Government*, p. 148.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 154–155. Sismondi states children have lost the joys of childhood and their strength to gain a livelihood by the time of their manhood. “Who, then, has had the right to take from all these beings, who have known nothing of life but its sufferings, that portion of happiness which a God of goodness has destined for every creature, as the condition of creation; Who shall restore it to them? ... Who had the right to make this sacrifice of children more dreadful even than that which crimsoned the altars of Moloch. For intelligence and virtue, whose sparks of the Divinity, are here extinguished before the body... What an account to render to the Deity by those who require only animated machines to produce wealth”.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 243.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 243.
- ⁴² Quoted by Barucci, *RISEC*, p. 984.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 984.
- ⁴⁴ Sismondi, *Political Economy*, p. 3.
- ⁴⁵ Barucci, *RISEC*, p. 985.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 988.
- ⁴⁷ Spiegel, *The Growth of Economic Thought*, p. 304.
- ⁴⁸ Sismondi, *Political Economy and Philosophy of Government*, pp. 197–198.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 128.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 129–130.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 131.
- ⁵² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works* (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1960, Vol. 2) p. 220. Lenin considered Sismondi to be yearning for bygone days, but this does not appear to be the case. Rather Sismondi talks about overcoming the adversary relationship between worker and capitalists by worker participation in profit, guaranteed, annual wages, ceiling on hours of work, a floor on wages, all of which presuppose a continuance of the present system which Sismondi was critiquing.
- ⁵³ Anikin, *A Science in its Youth*, p. 286.
- ⁵⁴ Roll, *History of Economic Thought*, p. 240.
- ⁵⁵ Spiegel, *The Growth of Economic Thought*, p. 305.
- ⁵⁶ Sowell, *HOPE*, p. 87.
- ⁵⁷ G. Sotiroff, Simonde de Sismondi, J. C. L., *The International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (Macmillan Co., New York, 1968, Vol. 15), p. 260.

Review

H. G. Kaufman, *Professionals in Search of Work. Coping with Stress of Job Loss and Unemployment*, Wiley-Interscience, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York, 1982, 359 pp. \$28.95 (hard cover).

Accuracy of Information	Fair
Scope (Completeness – Depth)	Fair
Clarity of Writing	Good
Quality of Illustrations	Fair
Comparative Value of Book	Good

H. G. Kaufman thoroughly explores all psychological aspects of being an involuntarily unemployed professional. It is this concentration on psychological points that gives *Professionals in Search of Work*... its importance and separates it from other books on the subject. The majority of these others have been written from an economic point of view.

The text is systematic, logical and thorough. It examines the progression of different emotional stages after unemployment. These are

similar to the Kubler-Ross model of the emotional stages undergone by someone after the discovery that they are suffering from a terminal illness. The progression begins with denial, then anger, bargaining, depression, then acceptance. This final acceptance may manifest itself in many ways. According to Kaufman, it usually starts as enthusiasm in searching for a job. This eventually turns to frustration, if a job is not found, and finally apathy.

The author also points out that there are a great many factors which influence the emotional consequences of unemployment. Some of these factors are personal (i.e., experience, sex, marital status, financial status, education, occupation, previous unemployment experience, etc.). Some pertain to support structures, (i.e., spouse and/or friends).

Individual barriers and facilitators to re-employment are also discussed. It is stated here that external factors of job scarcity are more frequently blamed for difficulties than

(continued on p. 255)