

“considerable sympathy” for the view of contemporary radicals that “mainstream economics [is] apologetics for market capitalism”? How likely is it that someone who begins with this view of economics will present an adequate critique of economists’ practices? Will he even be familiar with what economists are actually doing today? Contrary to what Lekachman asserts in the last sentences of his introduction, discontent with one’s discipline is not “entirely healthy.” It sometimes produces a failure to understand one’s own subject. After all, no one is likely to spend much time keeping up with developments in a discipline that he or she deems fundamentally misguided from the outset.

Some such explanation must be found for the many astonishing assertions in this book about what economists are currently doing and not doing. Lekachman speaks of “the persistent popularity of the Phillips curve in the writings of mainstream economists”; but the Phillips curve has been under a critical cloud for a decade now and was attacked even before that by the “Chicago” economists, whom Lekachman especially despises. He accuses economists of “taking for granted everything from the two-party system to corporate concentration of control, division between private and public activity, current profit margins, employer definition of job qualification, and the sanctity of existing distributions of income and wealth”; one does not have to go any farther than the annual meetings of the American Economic Association or the published *Papers and Proceedings* from these meetings to discover that critical research is in fact being done on each of the issues he mentions. He tells us that economists refuse to see that “efficient use of resources, steady economic growth, and consumer freedom are valuations”; but every economist of my acquaintance knows that they are valuations and that they sometimes conflict with other valuations. “It is sad,” he tells us, that so few economists...are urgently engaged in developing better national policies for high employment”; all the evidence to the contrary from current books, professional journals, and popular publications will, of course, not refute Lekachman if, as his argument often suggests, the engagement only qualifies

as “urgent” when it produces policies of which Lekachman approves. Economists deny, according to Lekachman, that they have anything worth saying about the distribution of income and wealth or the measurement of economic welfare; there is in fact a huge and expanding body of writings by economists on each issue.

For a dozen pages he criticizes “the great god gross national product,” as if economists were unaware of its limitations as a measure of welfare. Every one of his criticisms can be found in any good textbook discussion of the national income and product accounts. In the context of an attack on economists’ assumptions of competition, he criticizes licensing procedures that masquerade as public protection but in fact serve as exclusionary schemes to restrict competition; but no group has been more vigorous or insistent in attacking licensing on just these grounds than the economics profession. “The real world constantly astonishes the adept economist,” we are told. “Unemployment rises but inflation persists. Cartels refuse to disintegrate. Unions behave differently at different times in different places. Fiscal and monetary policies sometimes work, other times don’t. Whole industries are puzzlingly sluggish in their responses to the clear sig-

nals from the market. Even altruism on occasion is a device more efficient than the market.” If the adept economist is astonished by any of this, he doesn’t read the professional journals. Economists “refuse to cope with unions as political organizations,” Lekachman complains; that has not been true at least since economists began, over a quarter century ago, to develop political models of trade union behavior. American economists suffer from “the parochial inclination...to concentrate on the behavior of their own economy almost to the exclusion of international events”; that statement would be false even if we obligingly ignored the hundreds of American specialists in international economics.

There are a number of accurate observations about economists’ behavior in this book. The professional journals are indeed, as Lekachman maintains, filled with matters of interest only to economists. But does anyone complain if medical journals are filled with matters of interest only to physicians? Lekachman fails to point out that many eminent economists *also* write and lecture for lay audiences. Fortunately, many of them have more respect for facts and fairness when they do so than Lekachman displays in *Economists at Bay*.

Beyond Kissinger: Ways of Conservative Statecraft by George Liska

(Johns Hopkins; 159 pp.; \$12.00/\$2.95)

Albert F. Eldridge

The many books on Henry Kissinger in the last seven years fall generally into three categories, not mutually exclusive, sometimes overlapping, and often with unclear lines between them. First came a series of works by journalists who were trying to tell an avid American public something about the man who was becoming “second only to the President in foreign affairs.” To describe these works as “journalistic” is not entirely pejorative; some were written by knowledgeable foreign policy analysts and were as careful as their

meager knowledge of Kissinger permitted. Others appear to have been rushed into print by persons whose acquaintance with policy or Kissinger was superficial and limited to a cursory reading of secondary sources.

The journalistic school of Kissinger analysis was quickly augmented by the polemicists. Picturing Kissinger as either hero or villain, this genre showed its bias in almost every page. Both ends of the political spectrum are represented in this category, and the “studies” that result serve chiefly as platforms for

promulgating the political passions of the authors. In this election year we have seen a growth of this type of analysis.

A third, and essentially rare, category of works is based on those written from a scholarly, often objective, and research-oriented perspective. These will have a more lasting value. While George Liska's *Beyond Kissinger* falls for the most part into this group, it is not without its prejudices and limitations. The author's bias is explicitly stated in Chapter One (thoughtfully entitled "Anti-Kissinger"). Liska contends that the report of Kissinger's greatness as a traditional statesman is exaggerated and certainly premature. He charges that Kissinger has neither mastered the "ancient mysteries" of classic European statecraft nor really confronted much of what is novel in international politics. Liska's charges are clear.

To substantiate the charges he resurrects a method of analysis that is neither popular nor widely used in academic circles in this country. He labels it "hypothetical strategic reasoning of the diplomatic kind." In the hands of a novice this methodology is nothing more than "Monday-morning quarterbacking"—a replay of key events that transpired during Kissinger's tenure, with a heavy emphasis on the theme "what if." In Liska's expert hands the exercise of historical reconstruction is provocative but not always convincing. The entire book is essentially an illustration of this hypothetical mode of analysis. The guidelines the reader needs in order to follow this reconstruction are to be found in the brief chapter entitled "Machiavellian Scholarship." Whether or not the reader accepts the tenets of Machiavellian analysis, Liska is correct in pointing out that anyone who wants to evaluate the achievements of a particular statesman must have some benchmarks. Liska's benchmarks center primarily on the degree of "fit" between the individual's statesmanship and the international environment within which he must operate. Basically there are three classic forms of statesmanship Kissinger could use. These are Kaunitzian, Metternichian, and Bismarckian. Each of these styles operates effectively in a particular international environment. Liska discusses each environment, style, and the resulting effectiveness of their fit.

The comparison of Kissinger's style

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of statesmanship with those of Metternich and Bismarck is not original. A number of writers have made these comparisons, some as early as 1969. Liska's analysis is unique in that he is knowledgeable about both nineteenth-century diplomacy and contemporary foreign affairs. As a result, his comparisons are more sensitive than others and are drawn from a richness of historical detail. Furthermore, the author actually uses Metternichian and Bismarckian styles of analysis to reconstruct contemporary events, and he is thus quite explicit about Kissinger's similarities and dissimilarities to these classic statesmen.

The principal critique to emerge from this analysis is that on a global scale Kissinger failed to consolidate and extend to the world's trouble spots the opportunities offered by the disposition of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China that he found when he came to office. One of the major themes is that Kissinger failed to develop the notion of "triangular-diplomacy" between the U.S., the USSR, and the

CPR. Had Kissinger developed this system of diplomacy, he would have sought to involve both Communist powers in interlocking peace settlements in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Instead, Kissinger undertook a basically conservative strategy, disregarding the environmental factors. This strategy sought to stabilize relations with Moscow through two-power détente. Liska concludes that this strategy delays the devolution of policies elsewhere in the world. While the U.S. is waiting for a consolidation of U.S.-USSR relations, irreversible world trends go on. One result may be that China becomes alienated into either revolutionary Third World politics or reconciles its differences with the Soviet Union. Liska believes that either of these moves by China would be detrimental to U.S. interests. The most disturbing aspect of Liska's argument is that we do not really know if he is correct; only time will prove if his hypothetical analysis is valid.

What can be said now is that this is a Kissinger analysis of rare skill.