

[Book Review]

**Élie Halévy (Japanese translation by Yoshio Nagai),
*La Formation du Radicalisme Philosophique***

Hosei University Press, 2016, Vol. 1, xvii + 443 pp.; Vol. 2, vii + 374 pp.;
Vol. 3, viii + 577 pp.

From the original work published in French in 1901–1904, the English translation by M. Morris appeared in 1928. Another chance to access a monumental work has been offered by the publishing of the Japanese translation here in the twenty-first century. The following review begins with an introduction of the work and this translation. Next, I briefly overview the work, consisting of three books. Finally, I emphasize a few points of the work's importance for twenty-first-century readers.

Élie Halévy (1870–1937) studied at the École Normale, where he was influenced deeply by Alphonse Darlu (1849–1921). Subsequently, he started to teach the evolution of political ideas in England at Ecole des Sciences Politiques. He published philosophical and historical works set in nineteenth-century Britain, such as *Thomas Hodgskin* in 1903 (English translation in 1956) and *History of English people in the Nineteenth Century* in 1912–1932 (English translation in 1924–1949). *La Formation du Radicalisme Philosophique*, his first major book, is highly evaluated as “a significant contribution to the history of economic thought” (Donnelly, M. 1987. ‘Halévy, Élie’ in *The New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics*, vol. 2, pp. 586–87, edited by J. Eatwell, M. Milgate, and P. Newman. London and Basingstoke:

Macmillan). Its French and English editions both had great impacts, although the availability of French edition was limited for a long period: the reprint edition appeared more than ninety years after publishing of the original edition. Here the Japanese edition was translated by Yoshio Nagai, a leading Japanese scholar in the field of the history of social thought. Translated from the French second edition published in 1995, it contains all parts of the French edition. It is noteworthy that the Japanese translation is constructed elaborately by a careful choice of words. It was awarded a prize from the Japan Society of Translators. In addition to the comprehensive contents including the translations of the appendixes and the high quality of the translation just described, the Japanese edition has another advantage because it includes a helpful description by the translator of the history of this memorial work and of Halévy's own thought.

Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) stands as the central player throughout this enormous work. The first book, *La jeunesse de Bentham 1776–1789*, elucidates the formation and transition of Bentham's thought through depth of research on Bentham's writings including some manuscripts archived at the University College London. It also considers those philosophical ideas

of Bentham's predecessors such as C. Beccaria (1738–94). Here the two conflicting sides of Bentham's thought have been emphasized: one is an authoritarian attitude penetrating his legal and political ideas. The other is a liberal attitude in his economic writings influenced by the economic ideas of Adam Smith (1723–90). Furthermore, the tense relation between the two conflicting sides is the primary theme of the work. The second book, *L'Évolution de la doctrine utilitaire de 1789 à 1815*, explores the birth of philosophic radicalism pivoting around Bentham and his disciples, which had strong influences at the time as a practical science. Among Bentham's disciples, James Mill (1773–1836) has garnered special attention as a key figure who influenced his master and gave birth to the economic doctrine of David Ricardo (1772–1823). The third book, *Le Radicalisme philosophique*, presents the contemporary economic, political, and judicatory arguments led by the philosophic radicalism movement. Here Halévy's insightful, detailed arguments on Ricardo, James Mill, T. R. Malthus (1766–1834), J. R. McCulloch (1789–1864), and R. Torrens (1814–1884) support the study of the history of economics. Furthermore, the last chapter

re-examines the “conflict between the two principles of the natural identity of interest and the artificial identification of interests.” The meaning of the historical study of social thought is suggested to the readers.

Evaluation of the work has already been established. It is justly styled as a classic in its own right. However, two aspects of the work can be underscored. First, it succeeds in bringing down the academic atmosphere originating from philosophic radicalism partly because it stands between Bentham's time and our own time. In other words, Halévy can elucidate the formation of philosophic radicalism not merely by his distinctive ability but also by his historical situation of the beginning of the twentieth century, where he was able to hear echoes from philosophic radicalism. That seems to suggest that the role of the historians of economic and political thoughts to bridge the historical thinkers and our minds. Second, Halévy's work reminds us strongly of the importance of a wide-ranging approach that overarches philosophical, political, and economic ideas. This interdisciplinary approach clarifies the fresh influences of classical utilitarianism and elucidates its present significance.

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