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Gilbert Faccarello and Claire Silvant, eds., *A History of Economic Thought in France. The Long Nineteenth Century.* Milton Park: Routledge, 2024. xiii + 423 pp. Illustrations and index. $220.00 U.S. (cl). ISBN: 9-78-0367194444; $43.99 U.S. (eb). ISBN 9-78-0429202407.

Review by Elizabeth Sage, Whittier College.

A History of Economic Thought in France. The Long Nineteenth Century is the latest title in The Routledge History of Economic Thought, a series that surveys economic thinking in an impressive array of national and historical contexts, and the second edited volume to explore French political economy after the earlier *A History of Economic Thought in France. Political Economy in the Age of Enlightenment*. The present work is divided into two parts, "Political Economy in the Age of Industry" and "Critiques of Liberal Political Economy," a judicious organization that acknowledges that the nineteenth-century critiques of the *laissez-faire* version of economic thought, particularly those that might be classified as socialist, still constituted economic thinking. In this volume, then, the liberal political economic school of thought and its critics on the left are always in dialogue.

The chapters in part one explore the key strands of liberal economic thought, spanning the period from the early nineteenth century and the so-called founding fathers of French political economy, the best-known of whom was Jean-Baptiste Say, to the less well-known economists of the fin de siècle who contributed to the liberal tradition from within the fields of engineering and mathematics. Readers are introduced to a wide array of economic thinkers: Jean-Baptiste Say and his mid-nineteenth-century followers (Charles Dunoyer, Jérôme-Adolphe Blanqui, Frédéric Bastiat, Joseph Garnier, and Michel Chevalier, to name only a few); Antoine-Augustin Cournot and Jules Dupuit, associated respectively with mathematical economics and the engineer-economist tradition; and Léon Walras, one of the founders of the marginal theory of value and the author of general equilibrium theory. Finally, we meet economic thinkers like Gustave de Molinari, a staunch defender of the liberal tradition even at the end of the nineteenth century; Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, who innovatively merged liberalism with a Saint-Simonian twist; and Charles Gide, far more sceptical of the liberal tradition than the others, but someone who wielded great influence as both the author of what would become a classic textbook on French economic theory, and as a professor of economic thought at the Faculté de droit de Paris where, in 1877, economics had become a required subject, a crucial step in the institutional success of political economy in France.

The chapters in part two, on the other hand, survey and explore the wide array of critiques levelled during the nineteenth century at liberal political economy, and the "alternative economic ideas" (p. 197) proposed by the utopian socialist and associationist groups in the decades before the revolutionary year of 1848; the fin-de-siècle socialists for whom Karl Marx's analyses of capitalism provoked both intellectual creativity and challenge; and the critics of political economy associated with the new discipline of sociology. The cast of characters is as long and varied among the opponents of liberal political economy as among its proponents, and in these chapters the readers meet the familiar figures of Henri Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, Louis Blanc, Victor Considerant, Simonde de Sismondi, and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, as well as post-Commune socialist thinkers such as Georges Sorel, Benoît Malon, and Adolphe Landry. Women socialists--Flora Tristan, Jeanne Deroin, and Suzanne Voilquin, for instance--are not neglected, and the authors of chapter eleven, "Associationists and socialists: the first debates," note the tight connection between socialism, particularly the early nineteenth-century utopian brand, as it were, and a feminist strand of thought anxious to secure political and civil rights for women. Particularly interesting in part two is the inclusion of French sociologists such as Émile Durkheim, Auguste Comte, Frédéric Le Play, and Gabriel Tarde as important critics of liberal political economy. The author of chapter thirteen, "The sociological critique of liberal political economy," argues that "sociological argument in France in part developed through a critique of political economy" (p. 341), a fascinating argument that suggests how two academic disciplines, both desirous to gain institutional status and intellectual recognition as "sciences," each played a role in constituting and legitimating each other.

Generally, the chapters in this volume are clear expositions of the ideas of a particular economic thinker, group of thinkers, or trend. The authors provide not only in-depth analyses of complex economic ideas, but also synopses of the careers of these economists and their critics, the historical contexts in which these economic ideas and their critiques arose, as well as the history of the institutionalization of different types of economic thinking in the pages of the *Journal des économistes* and the *Revue d'économie politique*, and in the lecture halls of schools such as the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers, the Collège de France, and the Facultés de droit.

What the authors of these chapters make clear is that there was absolutely nothing homogeneous or static about economic thought in France after the French Revolution, either among economists associated with the liberal school or critics of that school. Among those economists wedded--more or less tightly--to the *laissez-faire* ideas of Adam Smith and Jean-Baptiste Say, there was nonetheless often an intellectual struggle between these basic liberal economic tenets and the recognition (unwelcomed for some) that there were circumstances when either different principles or a more nuanced understanding of *laissez-faire* needed to be applied. Such was the argument made by economist Léon Walras, for instance, when he noted that there were circumstances in which the interests of society necessarily outweighed the interests of individuals; in these circumstances, it was the State that needed to consider social utility and provide social services such as roads, schools, police, national defence, railways, and post offices. According to Walras, "*laissez faire* should not mean do nothing, but let free competition work. Hence, where free competition cannot work, there is reason for the State to intervene to take its place" (p. 147).

If liberal political economy was a "broad church for much of the century" (p. 341), so was the crowd that challenged it. One of the central ideas, however, that loosely connected political economy's critics was their rejection of "the *homo oeconomicus*, the central character of political economy" (p. 351) as an overly simplistic depiction of the human individual and human behavior. Not surprisingly, Émile Durkheim is quoted, arguing that French political economy was guilty "of reducing society to no more than the simple juxtaposition of individuals" so that "man and society as conceived by economists are pure imaginary entities without any correspondence to the real world" (p. 352).

Like any edited volume, the chapters are heterogeneous, not just in terms of subject matter, but in terms of style. Some are distinctly empirical and historical, offering broad surveys; others are dense, theoretical, and perhaps (for the average historian) a bit too heavy on the economic models and specialized language. Some chapters deal with economists who are already well-known to historians of nineteenth-century France, others with those who deserve to be better known. Some chapters, in particular the more general surveys of a period or a trend (for instance chapter seven, "Tradition and innovation at the turn of the twentieth century" or chapter twelve, "Fin-de-siècle socialisms"), will likely be of greater interest to historians; one suspects that for economists, or historians of economics, interested in the specificities of complex economic theory and comfortable with economic formulas, the reverse will be true, and chapter four, for instance, "Antoine-Augustin Courot and the emergence of mathematical economics" or chapter fourteen, "Postlude. After World War I," will prove thought-provoking and valuable. In short, there is something here for everyone.

There is no doubt, as Routledge itself proposes, that this book is most likely to draw an audience from among scholars and advanced graduate students in the fields of economics, the history of economic thought, intellectual history, and French history. I would add, however, that the book might also find an audience among historians of socialist thought in France, as well as historians of sociology, or even of disciplinary formation, given that both the academic disciplines of political economy and sociology were in search of institutional legitimation and status during the nineteenth century.

This is a book that merited a more painstaking editing by Routledge to eliminate awkward syntax, missing words, incorrect word choices, and misspelled names (for instance, Blanqui's first names are more commonly written as Jérôme-Adolphe, rather than Adolphe-Jérôme). But this is ultimately a minor complaint about a volume that otherwise offers valuable contributions to the study of French economic thinking in the modern period, in all its complexity, diversity, and mutability.

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