

En conclusion, les lecteurs de *Stratégies missionnaires* profiteront surtout des pages où Li compare directement les deux expériences par rapport aux populations des deux pays de mission qui étaient, selon eux, aux deux extrémités du monde connu. La conclusion de Li paraît aussi confirmer la conclusion à laquelle on arrive à travers l'analyse des sources canadiennes, c'est-à-dire, que pour les jésuites, « les Amérindiens et les Chinois représentent [...] les deux extrêmes de l'humanité non chrétienne, les premiers étant les plus "barbares" et les seconds les plus "civilisés" » (p. 16).

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Bradford James Rennie — *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy: The United Farmers and Farm Women of Alberta, 1909–1921*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000. Pp. 282.

At the beginning of this study, Bradford Rennie suggests that we “rarely think that major groups in recent history in our own country might have had a different world view from ours”. This is particularly true of agrarian movements, which challenge the historiographical categories of urban modernity. Consequently, agrarianism is often denigrated as hapless resistance to modernization, political naiveté, settler nativism, or a mere epiphenomenon of class, region, or frontier. When all else fails, it is consigned to a catch-all receptacle labelled “populism”. Rennie asks us to consider that the strangeness of agrarianism might obscure how, in its time and context, it provided a relatively coherent, even sophisticated way of bestowing meaning on, living in, and acting in a social world: “The point is that we are dealing with another culture. How many of us would talk about our organizations as these farmers spoke of theirs? People do not respond mechanically to their circumstances; a culture mediates their responses to their environment” (p. 7).

Rennie’s central point is that Alberta farmers and farm women created a “movement culture” which sustained one of the largest agrarian organizations in North America, drove significant economic and political initiatives, and fed a variety of educational, social, cultural, and even aesthetic projects. A comprehensive web of ideas, attitudes, and rhetoric gave farm people a place in national life and endowed them with an identity — individual and collective — as citizens, producers, and moral agents bearing a vision of a new social dispensation. Out of this culture, they articulated a moral geography of rural and urban civic space: a landscape in which they felt a responsibility to act.

Rennie’s account provides a good case for considering the United Farmers and United Farm Women as an early intimation of what are now called “new” social movements, based on collective identity, vision, and style of life as much as on economic interest or social class. Rennie does emphasize that organized farmers saw theirs as a “class” movement, but one must bear in mind that, to these people, “class” could have quite different connotations than it has in present-day usage. If

the UFA/UFWA was a “response to socio-psychological ‘strains’ arising from the frontier experience, environmental disaster, price squeezes, the Great War, corporate economic and political control”, it also addressed the “general culture’s inability to explain these pressures” (p. 7) and did so in ways reflecting the uniqueness of rural social and economic life.

*The Rise of Agrarian Democracy* gives a comprehensive and multidimensional narrative of the origins, consolidation, and politicization of the Alberta farmers’ movement to the end of the First World War. This history is interspersed with thematic chapters, the first of which describes the rural economy that shaped organized farmers’ sense of reciprocity, noting that, in its early years, Alberta agriculture was quite diversified and did not fit a simple staples-production model. Another chapter details the local activities and inter-organizational relations that promoted a lived culture of community, co-operation, and negotiation of differences, enabling the UFA/UFWA to accommodate different ideological and political tendencies as well as distinct economic interests and priorities. Rennie also provides a sensitive and intelligent discussion of limits to “community” in the movement, including nativism and racism. He points out how these can be understood in their ideological and social contexts and in terms of members’ active attempts to address ideological and social contradictions. Rennie discusses the UFA’s co-operative experiments and its adoption of co-operativist ideas. More than an economic strategy, co-operation was a vision encompassing the conduct of local, national, and international politics, gender relations, and family life. Another chapter details the centrality of education to the farmer’s movement. Rennie argues against the claim that education co-opted farmer radicalism, pointing out that farmers actively constructed a “free social space” for popular education (p. 165) composed of local unions, conventions, and periodicals; participated in university extension programmes; organized Chautauqs; and promoted the educational and cultural role of the Junior UFA. It is too easily forgotten how central education was to the agrarian reform project: activists constantly reiterated that only education could sustain the movement, banishing apathy and narrowness in favour of social “uplift” and new forms of co-operative citizenship.

Narrative and thematic chapters are tied together by Rennie’s focus on the building of collective identity, pride, and a sense of mission out of varied strands of producerism, Country Life and agrarian mythologies, evangelicalism, Idealist philosophy, co-operativism, Georgist economics, radical democracy, maternal feminism, and Edwardian discourses on manliness. He identifies two main ideological tendencies (compared to David Laycock’s four) in the movement — radical and liberal — predating the founding of the UFA. His focus, though, is on how these differences were negotiated and accommodated and how they cross-fertilized each other in a shared discourse of civic responsibility, democracy, and moral community applied to familial, economic, social, and political life. To flesh out these ideals, organized farmers — and particularly farm women — undertook a myriad of local and provincial initiatives and read a vast supporting literature of books, pamphlets, and periodicals (much of which remains to be effectively preserved and annotated).

With a topic so vast, Rennie’s study has necessary limits. The story of the UFA provincial government and the eventual demise of the UFA’s political wing lies beyond

them. The national and international dimensions of UFA/UFWA agrarianism merit further study in their own right: UFA culture drew on traditions of Rochdale and Danish co-operativism, the folk-school movement, Jeffersonian and Jacksonian democracy, Ontario Clear Grit radicalism, socialism, single-tax economics, American Populism, the Garden City and Country Life movements, and many others. Alberta agrarianism also had a national dimension: United Farmer or equivalent organizations existed from the Maritimes to British Columbia, forming governments in three provinces. Movement ideas and organizers circulated freely across the country, and, though organizational co-ordination was less successful, the national dimension was important ideologically. A further historiographical possibility, then, is to see agrarianism as an alternative civic narrative in the cultural formation of the modern Canadian nation state.

Rennie's evocative conclusion, a meditation on an abandoned UFA local hall, begs the question of the fate of the movement culture whose genesis he charts and the transmutation of its elements. The Reform Party claimed agrarian direct democracy as part of its heritage, and the CCF had its own agrarian roots (the term "Co-operative Commonwealth" was long embedded in United Farmer discourse). The effects of the agrarian Social Gospel on Canadian politics and culture, the survival of adult education, extension and community-development initiatives, and the cooperative movement all merit further study. There is no simple continuity between the world of the UFA/UFWA and modern agricultural, trade, or political concerns. But other genealogies — interesting ones, in interesting places — remain to be traced.

This is a well-written book: only an occasional stylistic awkwardness betrays its origins as a dissertation. It is also an important work. Along with recent studies like Kerry Badgley's *Ringing In the Common Love of Good*, one may hope that it will spark a new and well-deserved historiography of Canadian agrarianism.

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Michael Seidman — *Republic of Egos: A Social History of the Spanish Civil War*.  
Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002.

It would be reasonable to think that, after more than 20,000 books (p. 3) on the subject, we now know enough about the Spanish Civil War of 1936–1939. We might also consider that, for such a low-tech war in a third-rate power in a corner of Europe, those books are a few thousand too many. But in the stories of the Civil War we can find idealism and betrayal, Fascism and Stalinism, Appeasement and International Brigades, revolution and reaction, clerical obscurantism and religious suffering.... This is enough inspiration not just for 20,000 books on the Civil War, but for an understanding of most of Europe's violent, ideologically deadly twentieth century. The problem is that the big issues have often obscured the reality of the little people, precisely those who fought, suffered, lost, or won that war.

Michael Seidman is an original historian with a keen eye to expose ideological