

power relations that define them. Dominant discourses are constantly interpellating subordinate subjects and reshaping their identities and the ideologies of subordinate organizations. And while subordinate subjects or organizations may consciously take up dominant discourses for their own purposes, their outlook and identity may be changed unwittingly in the process. UFA/UFWA members, then, may have used a variety of resources to build their movement and bolster their sense of resistance, but the dialectical interplay of ideologies in hierarchical societies suggests this was not a neutral process.

These theoretical disagreements aside, Rennie's book is a welcome addition to agrarian and Western Canadian historiography. It is the best analysis available of the rise and development of a Canadian farm organization.

Jeffery Taylor  
Athabasca University

Anne Lopes and Gary Roth, *Men's Feminism: August Bebel and the German Socialist Movement* (New York: Humanity Books, 2000).

August Bebel's book *Woman and Socialism* (1879) should be read by everyone dealing with women's, feminist, or gender history. One of the most reprinted (53 times by Bebel's death in 1913) and translated books of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the study informs about the condition of and possibilities for women in Europe with special emphasis upon Germany. Before and after World War I, this book inspired many women and men to join movements of protest and to agitate for reforms. Today, despite many courses on the history of women and feminism, the book seems forgotten. Anne Lopes and Gary Roth provide a basis for its rescue from obscurity with *Men's Feminism*. Their important study finds "socialist men proved to be more consistent feminists than bourgeois women ...the socialist movement in Germany drew attention to feminist issues, like suffrage and sexual harassment, decades before bourgeois feminist groups were willing to follow suit." (31)

Lopes and Roth challenge many of the historians' conventions as they illustrate the "historiographical switching" – I would add forgetting – of lead roles. They show that the initiation of action on female equality by proletarian movements has been forgotten and attribution for such roles given to middle class reformers. This can be exemplified by the emphasis upon J.S. Mill as opposed to Bebel. The former did not touch upon people's work world and thus could not explore, as Bebel did, such crucial issues as harassment, prostitution,

and middle-class marriage conventions. Lopes and Roth demonstrate that the late 19<sup>th</sup> century social movements need to be revisited and our understanding of them revised. They maintain that “Bebel’s feminism was all-present in the nineteenth century, [but] it has been altogether absent in the twentieth.” (39)

After a short chronology of people and issues related to Bebel’s life, his seminal book and 19<sup>th</sup> century women’s movements, a lengthy note on translation points to the problems in previous renderings. The authors illustrate the difficulties inherent in the term “feminist,” which in German changed from being a term which applied to men who were insufficiently manly or overly compromising to becoming a word with many meanings relating to women’s assertiveness. The three English translations of Bebel’s book are analyzed, pointing to the inappropriate titles, such as *Woman Under Socialism*, and the use of male terminology instead of the gender-neutral language Bebel sought to employ. Lopes and Roth have re-translated some of the text. The authors note that while 53 printings exist only 8 were revised and expanded editions.

Lopes and Roth think that “the history of men’s feminism can be read from two distinct perspectives, of which the more usual emphasizes a history of men for and about men, the other a history in which the category of ‘male’ appears omnipresent but not quite so stable.” (24) They emphasize the latter while leaving aside the “history of men’s feminism from the perspective of women.”

In the chapter entitled “Reading Women,” the authors argue that the style of Bebel’s book sought to emulate the oral traditions common to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century workers’ movements, namely verbal agitation and reading aloud. With many examples they illustrate “Bebel’s reliance on images and metaphors concerned with combat, battle, struggle and heroes” (64) to demonstrate that “Bebel could never quite efface sensationalism and the proletarian traces of his own intellectual development.” (68) Lopes and Roth note the three broad approaches to women and gender, namely in politics, knowledge, and sex. Most other authors have looked only at the political implications, though I have reservations about their assertion that “prostitutes are made into role models for all women.” (73) Even if Bebel concluded that women demanded the “greatest possible economic independence” (73), prostitution hardly provided such independence and in Bebel’s book the prostitutes’ situations were compared primarily to that of women in arranged marriages.

Bebel’s early contact with and interest in the emancipation of women is traced to discussions in the worker’s associations of the 1860s. Here Lopes and Roth add significant information on how and why Bebel became involved in the “woman question” as an advocate of female as well as male emancipation. They provide the specific context in which his ideas and ideology developed, from the “dual-gender union” in textile work to recruitment for cooperatives. They also review his part in the formulation of social democratic programmat-

ic statements, including the latter's ambiguous stance on complete emancipation for women. They find two main themes, namely domesticity being lessened as a role for women and gender equality being advocated unequivocally.

Having provided the background to Bebel's ideology of emancipation, the authors turn to Bebel's relations with women, specifically his wife Julie, his daughter Frieda, the feminist agitator Gertrud Guillaume-Schack, Bebel's translator Hope Adams, and the head of the socialist women's organization, Clara Zetkin. Though informed with crucial evidence from correspondence, this part of the study appears the weakest in an otherwise very strong book. Bebel's personal practice of equality is shown in the shift from paternalism to partnership with his wife, in child-rearing practices and in his choice of associates. But, the "common ground" with Guillaume-Schack is thin and the relationship to Adams very tenuous. However, the Zetkin-Bebel relationship is crucial and a separate chapter is appropriately devoted to it. Lopes and Roth seek to "trace the development of a specifically socialist form of backlash against women's equality" (201) in Zetkin's approach. In contrast to other historians, they illustrate that "Zetkin was considered the leading female exponent of Bebel's ideas at the very time she transformed his doctrine into something other than what it had been." (201) Bebel's book offered a program for gender equality; Zetkin pushed for suffrage but also protective legislation. With the latter she returned toward what Bebel had denied: the assumption that all women would be wives and mothers.

This significant study should force a rethinking about men's and women's feminism. It certainly moves toward restoring one of the first and classic analyses of women history in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to its rightful place as a crucial and central text.

Dieter K. Buse  
Laurentian University

Thomas C. Jepsen, *My Sisters Telegraphic: Women in the Telegraph Office, 1864-1950* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000).

Venus Green, *Race on the Line: Gender, Labor and Technology in the Bell Systems, 1880-1980* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

Writing for the journal *Good Words* in 1877, Anthony Trollope paid a visit to the Central Telegraph Office in London. The telegraph was then four decades old, and the wonder of its much-heralded capacity to speed human intelligence