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*César Chávez: The Catholic Bishops, and the Farmworkers' Struggle for Social Justice* (review)

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Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Volume 111, Number 2, October 2007, pp. 244-245 (Review)

Published by Texas State Historical Association

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/swh.2007.0106>



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immediately after the secularization decree of 1794 when in fact missionary work continued, albeit limited, at the mission until 1830. Furthermore, the reader will receive a heavy exposure to William A. Dunning's interpretation on Reconstruction and will be exposed exclusively to the Taylor side of the Sutton-Taylor Feud. Nevertheless, *South of the Guadalupe* overall is a worthy publication on local history.

Victoria

CHARLES D. SPURLIN

*César Chávez: The Catholic Bishops, and the Farmworkers' Struggle for Social Justice.* By Marco G. Prouty. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006. Pp. 185. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 0816525552. \$40.00, cloth.)

Few Chicano movement leaders have received the same depth of attention as César Chávez. Thanks to the insightful works of historians like Richard Griswold del Castillo and Richard A. García, among many others, we have developed a clear understanding of Chávez and his work. Just when one may have thought, then, that the final chapter on Chávez's life had been written, along comes Marco G. Prouty with yet another book on Chávez and the farmworker movement in California, *César Chávez: The Catholic Bishops and the Farmworkers' Struggle for Social Justice*.

Employing the rich historical archives at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Prouty sheds new light on the farmworkers' struggle from the perspective of the Catholic Church. Digging through the papers of the Association of Chicago Priests Collection at Notre Dame University, the Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on Farm Labor Papers at the United State Conference of Catholic Bishops' archives in Washington, D.C., the Collections of Labor and Urban Affairs–United Farm Workers at Wayne State University in Detroit, and the Msgr. George G. Higgins Collection at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., Prouty attempts to demonstrate the significance of the Catholic hierarchy in the farmworkers' movement. Through detailed readings of letters, official pronouncements, and other documents, Prouty shows the reader how clerical leaders built a broad base of religious support for the United Farm Workers movement based on Church teachings dating back to Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891).

Prouty's book is divided into three chapters and an epilogue. The first chapter examines the roots of the conflict, by tracing the plight of the farmworker in California at mid-century, as well as the rise of both César Chávez and his eventual close ally, "the Labor Priest," Msgr. George G. Higgins. The second chapter explains the grape strike and boycott and shows how the intervention of the Catholic Church, four years into the process, finally helped secure an end to the dispute. The church entered the fray late because both the growers and the farmworkers were Catholic. As Prouty nicely puts it, "The farmworkers filled the pews, and the growers enriched the coffers" (p. 4). The third chapter studies the "battle of the salad bowl" as Prouty describes the lettuce pickers' strike. In this particular instance, the Catholic Church more openly backed Chávez and the farmworkers, because it did not face divided loyalties as it did with the grape strike.

Overall Prouty takes a balanced look at Chávez and demonstrates that he too had a dark side, which in fact helped drive off key leaders in the movement. Chávez

expected apostle-like devotion from his fellow union officers, paying them five dollars per week plus room and board. He drove the UFW as his own creation and took direction and criticism from no one.

The book contains, however, some shortcomings. The author draws heavily and uncritically from Catholic documents. Attention to outside sources would have helped immensely by either supporting Prouty's thesis or complicating his story. The overuse of quoted material is quite distracting. Quotations appear in virtually every paragraph. Ironically, the strongest portions of the book are those in which Prouty expounds, in his own words, on the significance of his story and the actions of his characters. Despite such shortcomings the book provides a rich and interesting look into the relationship between the Church, Chávez, and the UFW. While its contribution to scholarly history is limited, readers interested in Catholic history, or in the farmworkers' movement itself, will find it attractive.

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*From Syria to Seminole: Memoir of a High Plains Merchant.* By Ed Aryain, edited by J'Nell Pate. (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2006. Pp. 298. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 0896725863. \$29.95, cloth.)

In 1913 fifteen-year-old Mohammed Aryain walked 120 miles from his native Druze village, Henna, Syria, to Beirut and sailed for the United States, intending to remain ten years, earn a fortune, and return to Syria to secure a better life for his family. Upon arrival in New York, Aryain knew no English and had little money. Fortunately, a network of Syrian immigrants led him to Rochester, Pennsylvania, where a Syrian merchant provided a new suit, suitcases of merchandise, and sent him on his way to a peddling career. Syrian American friends suggested a name change. Mohammed Aryain became Ed Aryain, and he headed for Beatrice, Nebraska. He covered an immense portion of the Great Plains and the oil towns of Texas and Oklahoma, where endless hard work and a talent for selling paid very well. This success led Aryain into proprietorship: a mercantile store in Navasota, Texas, which profited admirably until the store burned, and with it, everything Aryain had accumulated.

Attracted by the southern High Plains land boom, Aryain looked there for a new start, tried retail stores in four different towns, relying upon strict but dependable credit lines with Dallas and Fort Worth wholesalers. The vagaries of High Plains weather and their boom or bust effect on cotton agriculture often dashed the high hopes of both farmers and merchants. Besides those troubles, in one town, shameful, sometimes violent, antiforeign and especially anti-Middle Eastern prejudices drove Aryain to look elsewhere. He found his permanent American home in Seminole, Texas.

Despite the often dubious outlook for future prosperity, Ed married Etta E. Stone in May 1925, which Ed readily acknowledged as the best thing ever to happen to him. The Aryains often made their home in the back of their stores; Etta, besides her roles as wife and mother of two sons, became Ed's business partner and a shrewd one, too.