

Ostertag/*People's Movements, People's Press: The Journalism of Social Justice Movements*

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People's Movements, People's Press: The Journalism of Social Justice Movements

BOB OSTERTAG. Beacon, \$23.95 (228p)

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Names such as *Freedom's Journal*, *Mattachine Review* and *RAIN* may have little resonance today, but Ostertag's succinct, well-paced study, growing out of a report commissioned by the Independent Press Association, reveals the "crucial and neglected" role they and other "social movement" journals have played, and still do, in bringing about social change. Ostertag focuses, thematically rather than chronologically, on five movements (abolition, women's suffrage, gay and lesbian liberation, Vietnam antiwar, environment). In treating the abolitionist and women's suffrage movements, he brings together the conventionally divided "story of the early 'black press' and that of the predominantly white 'abolitionist press.'" In treating an underground GI press, Ostertag describes how the antiwar movement in the military ("almost entirely clandestine [with] almost no identifiable organizations") found its voice. Ostertag shows how advances in printing technology (e.g., for the *Whole Earth Catalog*, "one of the most startlingly innovative journals in the history of publishing in America") and the gradual shift "from the sparse, privately owned media environment of the nineteenth century to the corporate media saturation of the present" alter the shape of the independent journal, but not the visionary significance of the "accidental" journalists motivated by "a sense of social justice." (*June*)