



James L. Baughman, Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen and James P. Danky,
eds. *Protest on the Page: Essays on Print and the Culture of Dissent
Since 1865*

James L. Baughman, Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen and James P. Danky, eds. *Protest on the Page: Essays on Print and the Culture of Dissent Since 1865*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015. 278p., ill. ISBN 9780299302849. US \$39.95.

Like the conference from which these papers were collected, *Protest on the Page* brings together voices and perspectives that rarely converge. Indeed, the book features essays by more traditional book historians (scholars whose work focuses on questions of publishing, circulation, and/or the materiality of the book) alongside essays by scholars whose work is first and foremost concerned with the investigation of past and present social movements. The result is a compelling collection, which speaks to book history's expanding purview - its place in disciplines with which it has long been aligned (e.g., information studies, library science, and literary studies), as well as other fields including political science, gender studies, critical race studies, and sociology.

The 11 essays in this volume, which only represent a small fraction of those presented during the three-day *Protest on the Page* conference (hosted by the University of Wisconsin's Center for the History of Print and Digital Culture in September 2012), are diverse, well-researched, and methodologically eclectic. While some essays focus on material concerns, such as printing techniques and illustration methods, others focus on the content of specific publications and - most notably - on how the circulation of texts (be they posters, pamphlets, or books) has historically helped to support social movements of all kinds.

In "Spanish Language Anarchist Periodicals," Hispanic literature scholar *Nicholas Kanellos* explores the hitherto unknown network of anarchist newspapers produced by Spanish-speaking immigrants to the United States from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s. *Trevor Joy Sangrey's* contribution, "Pamphlets of Self-Determination: Dissident Literature, Productive Fiction," examines the overlap between the Black Power movement and the Communist Party USA while simultaneously offering a powerful example of how the mere possession of so-called dangerous literature has at times been constructed as grounds for the indictment of readers. Sangrey's essay also emphasizes the powerful ways in which protest literature has been used to put "productive fictions" into circulation as a means to enable new ways of understanding the world and to "offer inspiration for social change" (103). Other



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essays in the volume focus on more recent histories of print. In “On/Off Our Backs,” for example, **Joyce M. Latham** traces the pivotal role two feminist publications played in the so-called “sex wars” of the 1980s. Latham’s essay reveals the extent to which these newspapers and magazines were adopted as vehicles through which opposing sides of the “sex wars” were able to voice their divergent perspectives and further reminds readers of the extent to which second-wave feminism was supported by an active women-owned publishing movement.

Although this review has mentioned only three essays, these examples reveal the varied approaches to book history and print culture studies presented in the collection. As the editors emphasize in their preface, however, The Center for the History of Print and Digital Culture’s “founding impulse was to break with traditional book history with its focus on aesthetics.” *Protest on the Page* reflects the Center’s mandate to promote an approach to book history that addresses aesthetic questions and the broader social and political issues underpinning the production, circulation, and reception of printed and digital materials.

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