

# Of Special Interest

## THE DISSIDENT PRESS

### Alternative Journalism in American History

by **LAUREN KESSLER,**

*School of Journalism, University of Oregon*

When America's mainstream press hasn't spoken for the Blacks, or the radicals, or the feminists, these groups have found ways to speak for themselves. And their efforts play dramatic roles in our journalistic heritage.

Kessler rediscovers the needs, goals, and social impact of America's dissident journalists, the alternative voices that have faced exclusion or ridicule by mainstream society. In polished prose, she recounts the journalistic endeavors—since the early 1800s—of six groups on the fringe of cultural ideology: Blacks, feminists, immigrants, political radicals, utopians, and war resisters. Her lucid discussions illuminate: the historical context of each group; the struggles to enter the marketplace of ideas; and the widespread emergence of underground newspapers, magazines, and journals. How did these groups affect the conventional press and conventional thinking? How did certain radical, unpopular ideas evolve into nationally accepted doctrines?

Unique in its focus, *The Dissident Press* is the perfect teaching supplement for journalism texts that only touch on this vital area of press history. For journalists and communication specialists, it answers the need for a concentrated investigation of alternative journalism.

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by **HUBERT M. BLALOCK, Jr.**, *Departments of Sociology  
and Statistics, University of Washington*

The social sciences are facing serious problems, contends world renowned sociologist Hubert Blalock, Jr. These result, in part, from interaction between the study of a complex reality and the practical obstacles encountered in data collection. Until social scientists begin to examine common methodological problems and to strive for consensus on concepts and definitions, the credibility and effectiveness of social science research will remain limited.

In this incisive but nontechnical volume, Blalock assesses the problem and suggests steps to improve the situation. Complexity of topics studied; real-world restrictions of time, money, and politics; and limitations in using human subjects for research—social scientists face a number of fundamental complications that are beyond their control. Nonetheless, Blalock argues, there *are* systematic ways of minimizing or entirely overcoming both the external and internal traps. With an eye toward rigorous data analysis and theory construction, collective efforts to eliminate individual biases, and more intellectual integrity, the author describes how the social sciences have the potential to be far more directly useful and productive.

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