

CANADIAN WOMEN'S PRESS

The Canadian Women's Educational Press, a small publishing group committed to publishing material by, for, and about Canadian women, has been operating in Toronto since February of this year. The difficulties Canadian publishers face of a virtual monopoly of their market by U.S. publishing and distribution companies is well known. The Canadian industry is foundering in the race with the U.S., which is able to produce inexpensive, large runs of books, and to advertise and distribute with little difficulty. Distribution costs alone can absorb half the value of a book, making it quite untenable for a small, non-profit publisher to use these services. The Women's Press is meeting the obstacles by undertaking its own distribution. The people to whom they sell their books will be from their own distribution file, made up of their own cross-Canada contacts.

The Women's Press is a unique publishing company in several ways, not the least of which is their non-profit orientation. An important distinction from other publishing houses is that the people on the Women's Press operate on a rotational basis, in order to learn all the skill of publishing, not normally taught to women. That is, if a woman does not know layout or typesetting, she is quickly initiated into the job by someone who has experience.

The Women's Press, is, to some extent, a reaction to the general misconception that women are the task masters of the publishing industry. In fact, women comprise less than half of the employees in the printing and publishing industries. Of these, the greatest concentration work in office and clerical positions, and have little control of the actual printing and production of the book.

The sixteen members of the Press, consisting of paid and unpaid workers, operate on a collective basis, in which everyone participates equally in decision-making. They are financed by funds received from personal donations and a grant from the Department of Manpower and Immigration which pays salaries until the end of September. Whether or not further grants are received, the Press will maintain its operations. Revenues from the sale of their publications will be sufficient to continue publishing and distribution. The women involved see the Press as a greatly needed service rather than as a business venture. They are willing and committed to establishing the viability of the Press, and will therefore work on a completely volunteer basis if necessary.



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For further information, contact Sandra Foster or Kathy Jackson at the Canadian Women's Educational Press.

Their primary objective is to provide incentive to women in Canada who want to have their writing published. Because publishing has generally been controlled by men, women writers are often placed in a disadvantageous position. The responses the Press have encountered to their work have convinced them that people are now becoming aware of the lack of material relevant to Canadian women.

There is quite obviously a dearth of writing by Canadian women. For while the U.S. has produced several anthologies of women's writing, *Women Unite!* - the Press's first publication, is Canada's only anthology. In an attempt to compensate for the lack of information in regards to the Canadian movement, the publishers have anthologized articles of particular historical and political significance, including "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers...Listen", which landmarks the initial stages of the movement. The rest of the book is devoted to articles on alternatives to the family, methods of child care, the situation of working women, the politics of sex, strategy for women's liberation, and a bibliography of material on Canadian women.

Women's Liberation in Canada at present is a multi-dimensional movement, ranging from radical feminist, to women only vaguely aware of women's issues. The complete spectrum of ideas are reflected and discussed in this anthology. The Press, in their first book, at least, does not take allegiance with one side or another. Their object is to give an over-view. The material in the book, which until this time has only appeared in diverse magazines and papers, is interspersed with graphics and poetry, creating an appealing and significant book on the subject of this contemporary, political movement.

The Canadian Women's Press is now preparing to publish material in more specific areas of concern to women. In the near future, they plan to publish non-sexist children's books, a book on Day Care, an examination of women in our culture, articles dealing with the early history of Canadian women. But the need for women's writing goes far beyond these areas. The Press is anxious to receive manuscripts on these and other topics. They would welcome any responses to their book and further questions about publication of women's writing.