

## Unfair business discrimination

# Women started their own publishing concern

By AGNES KRUCHIO

When you walk into the Women's Press offices on Bloor Street, the atmosphere is one of quiet hustle and bustle, of people engrossed in what they are doing.

What they are doing is quite unique. The Canadian Women's Educational Press, as it is officially called, was formed a year ago this February.

It arose in response to a need in this country for historical and contemporary writings on Canadians, and specifically, Canadian women.

They wrote Margaret Atwood, who was instrumental in forming ANANSI, another young Canadian publishing house. In her book, *Survival*, Atwood discusses the problems facing Canadians who are trying to achieve their own national identity. "A piece of art, as well as being a creation to be enjoyed, can also be a mirror. The reader looks at the mirror and sees not the writer but herself, and behind her image in the foreground, a reflection of the world she lives in."

Estimates are that no more than five per cent of the books bought in Canada are Canadian written and published. As writing and publishing are the country's intellectual life, the lack of this reflects our branch plant dominated publishing industry and the gross underdevelopment of national and cultural life. Women have played an extremely small part in our literary magazines and in publishing.

Canadian publishing industries vital to the growth of a national culture, are owned by American, British and other foreign interests. These women, all aged between 20 and 30, experienced in publishing found their university skills were not being put to use in the industry. The highest position they could aspire to was copy editor even with a Master's degree. In response to this challenge they formed the Women's Press for the purpose of teaching themselves all aspects of the publishing business and starting their own press.

There are nine staff members and nine volunteers. In Canadian by/ for Canadian publishing it is difficult to break into the big markets that are represented by department stores and supermarkets. Their first book however has been immensely successful. It has already gone through its second printing and has fast become the reference text for many courses from sociology, to political science, to history and women's courses. The book covers the woman's movement in Canada as seen by Canadian women.

They expected fierce competition from other Canadian publishers when they first started out, but have found support from bookstores and other publishers — moral, legal and technical — especially from Anansi in Toronto and Dumont Press Graphic in Waterloo. Their second book, on the daycare situation in Canada and how to start one, soon followed. These women envision a responsible publishing company.

Response from the public has been reassuring. "Often they will send a \$5 or \$10 bill to buy a three dollar book", said Sandra Sorensen-Foster, who also teaches a women's course at U. of T.

Their manuscripts often originate from the public. "We get everything from true-to-life dog-stories to academic analyses on women's economic situation in Canada."

They are always open to contributions from the public whether theoretical papers on the political, socio-economic and sexual oppression of women, or documentary and historical works on women in Canada. Also short stories and graphics and educational material for children's books.

They believe that nothing will really be solved in a profound manner until the whole social system changes. Their framework accordingly, is socialist. They believe that women's sexuality is exploited in the media by keeping them in the traditionally subservient positions as wives. They are not

against marriage, but only the way it has been organized thus far. The wife's position should not be subservient. Under the existing system there are no viable alternatives for self-respecting women. It is simplest to resign; and the media tends to reinforce this kind of perspective.

Sorensen-Foster feels that many people, women especially, may find the women's movement embarrassing and painful because of this lack of viable alternatives.

This group thus has taken the first step in the direction of finding one, re-educating women to their value as human, though female, beings; as workers; as sexual partners; as political entities. They see themselves as part of the general movement toward basically changing society and the means by which decisions are made.

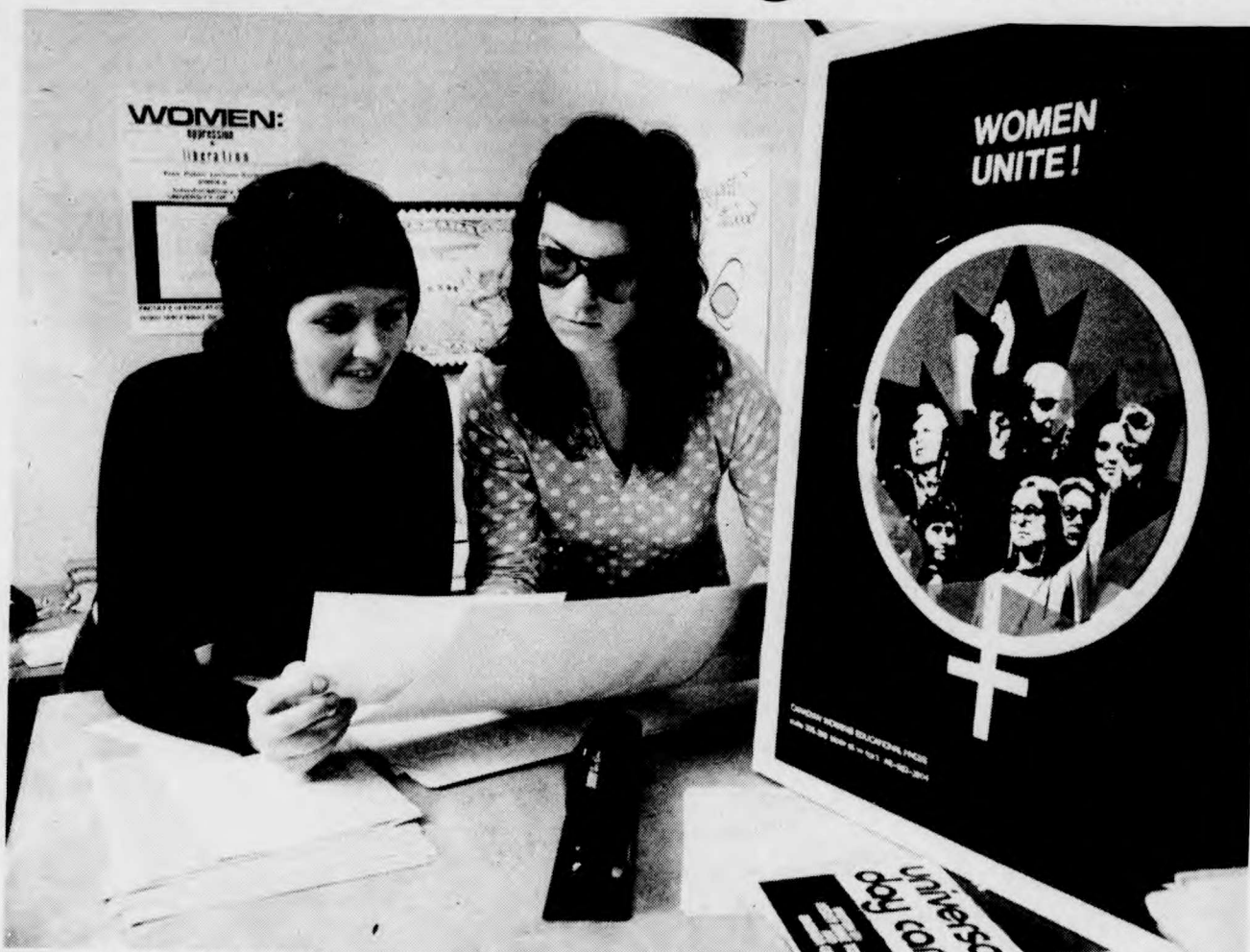
Many of the women, like their counterparts in other women's organizations, have taken a long painful, soul searching look at themselves and at the alternatives that were open to them as women. Painfully they have had to overcome the socialization that they have received since childhood.

Many of them could be earning a lot more money working in the industry but they prefer to do this. Because of the personal meaning of the work, it becomes almost a 24 hour job even though many have children and husbands to 'take care of'.

They now have an efficient distributing system across the country and find that they are succeeding in their original goal of building a market of their own. They have several manuscripts under way: Two historical pieces, *History of Women in the Family in Canada* and *Women in Work*, the latter covering the period between the two world wars, are to be published by fall; *Marxism and Feminism*, a theoretical discussion of a current issue in the movement; *Women in the Arts*; and several children's manuscripts are also in the making.

"We are an exercise in sisterhood. There is no hierarchy in our organization. Everyone has an area that she is responsible for, and one area is no more important than another," said Sorensen-Foster.

To the individuals that make up this group, the press represents the 'other' half of their personalities that they feel would be atrophied in the kind of situations that would be their lot in today's oppressive business world. And thus, by opposing the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, they might just help us end them.



Women's Place is built around small collective groups on the premise that it provides a great many areas in which a newcomer might become

involved. Kathy McLeod and Sandra Sorensen-Foster are two of the organizers.

## Built around small collectives Women's Place ups awareness

By SARA DIAMOND

The Women's Place is a feminist centre. It works on many levels, providing programs for women just recently attracted to the women's liberation movement and outlets for women who have made a commitment to the movement.

The Place functions as a number of small collectives tied together by a loose structure to enhance communication between women doing work on different levels of society. This prevents overlapping and insures that new women are referred to collectives whose activities might interest them. Decisions are made by consensus and each collective is represented at a central collective which deals with administrative questions (money, space) and major policy questions.

A woman new to the movement might be interested in a con-

sciousness raising group where she can meet with other women and talk about the subjective feelings she has about herself as a woman and about her oppression. This usually leads women to understand that they are not isolated in their experience, that there are objective factors that have to be changed which cause their oppression and exploitation. At this point the working collectives at the Place are important for they allow a woman to use her new understandings constructively and provide an opportunity to take action or to study particular questions. The Women's Place is eager for new ideas and suggestions for areas of study. Any woman coming into the Place with an idea or need related to destroying her own and/or her sisters oppression will be welcomed with open arms.

The following are some of the

activities and services provided at the Women's Place:

**Lettuce Out Bookstore** — feminist writings and literature by women.

**The Library** — lending library of feminist writings and writings by and about women.

**Liberation School** — courses on our bodies and our minds, courses about different aspects of the women's struggle, mechanical courses to teach us skills that we were never taught because we were women (auto repair, carpentry, etc.);

**Work Collectives** — varied and many. Some examples: Media collective to work with press and P.R. women; media image collective (to deal with the manner women are presented in the media and to confront their objectification in commercials; abortion and birth control collective, high school women's collective, Nellie McClung Collective (International Women's Day), Education collective (to write non-sexist kids' books, and try to change the way kids are socialized in school);

**Lesbian Drop-In** — social get-together for lesbian women, as well as bi-monthly discussions of lesbianism and feminism and the oppression of lesbian women by this society;

**The Other Woman** — A feminist paper. Interested in doing articles on women and receiving articles by women about their experiences and struggles;

**C.R. Groups** — Informal rap groups for women to talk constructively about their oppression. Organized by area and needs of women (there is a therapeutic group with a feminist counsellor, for example);

**Speakers** — There are a group of women at the Place who will do speaking engagements on the women's movement and related issues;

**Information and Referral Service** — decent doctors, housing, jobs sometimes counselling, legal referrals, daycare, etc.

And much, much more . . .  
Coming up soon — Women's puppet and theatre groups, working women's group, strike support.

Any women interested in the Place should phone 929-3185 or come to 31 Dupont St. (off Avenue Rd.) If you'd like to receive our newsletter, just phone.

## Stewardesses stand firm against accepting Wardairs terms

By LAURIE REID

Flippant put-downs like a recent headline in *The Sun* — Oh What A Pretty Strike — have not discouraged the 102 Wardair members of the Canadian Airline Flight Attendants Association (CALFAA) as they entered the third month of their strike.

They are standing firm on their demands for the right to refuse duty after 16 continuous hours of work and for 240 hours per month guaranteed free from duty at home base.

Until they are satisfied they will continue to picket and meet the two incoming Wardair flights Thursday night.

On Jan. 12, after 14 months of negotiations for their first contract, the women voted unanimously to reject the company offer and overwhelmingly to strike.

Until the strike the Wardair stewardesses were working under conditions that included scheduled duty days of 23 and 24 hours and complete disregard for minimum rest periods between flights set by the Ministry of Transport. They were on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Their wages are 42 to 82 per cent below those of Air Canada and Canadian Pacific flight attendants.

Wardair flights have continued to operate staffed by supervisors ex-stewardesses (normally considered unqualified after one year of not trying) new stewardesses only partially trained and former Wardair attendants who were previously forced to retire after their marriages to Wardair crewmen.

Wardair crewmen unhesitatingly cautioned the stewardesses not to voice their objections and informed them that they had no right to ask for any improvements. They entered into a campaign with War-

dair to stop the women from joining CALFAA. Yet when the pilot's own working conditions began to deteriorate their position was reversed. After the stewardesses' strike vote was delivered, the pilots approached the company to arrange a contract for themselves. While the stewardesses walked the picket lines the pilots settled a satisfactory contract. Many Wardair pilots own shares in the company.

Besides picketing on the airport access routes (picketing on airport property is illegal) the Toronto based Wardair women have progressed to confrontations with Minister of Labour, John Munro and Max Ward, owner of the airline.

Munro's reply when attendants questioned why they were not guaranteed the recommended 40 hour work week of employees in other fields, was that by averaging the number of hours the women work throughout the year they come out with an eight hour day. The presence of several uniformed attendants affected Ward's composure and his speech when he addressed an Empire Club luncheon recently.

Other airline stewardesses are offering support at the regular Thursday rallies. Last Thursday, strike-breaking attendants, afraid to cross picketlines, remained on airport property several hours after their flight duties ended.

Wardair attendants feel that their responsibility to their passengers is as great if not greater than that of the pilots and that they should have at least a similar limit of 15 hours for in-flight time.

CALFAA would appreciate public support at their Thursday rallies. They meet in room 210 of the Avion Hotel at 6:00 p.m. then proceed to the airport.