

CUP admits alternate papers

At least one of the barriers of elitism inherent in university newspapers fell at a recent Canadian University Press (CUP) Conference with the admission of alternate newspapers to full membership status in the organization.

Canadian University Press is an organization composed predominately of university and junior college newspapers. It functions as a means of communication between the various campuses in the country through its news and feature service. Student papers "file" or submit stories of events on their campuses to the home office of CUP in Ottawa which in turn sends the stories out to the various member newspapers. CUP hired regional and national fieldworkers also visit the newspapers and try to promote cooperation among the papers as well as making suggestions for improving on the quality of the newspaper.

CUP's statement of principles says that the Canadian student press believes that "the major role of the student press is to act as an agent of social change

striving to emphasize the rights and responsibilities of the student citizen and in fulfilling this role, support groups serving as agents of social change."

For this reason, CUP in 1970, in a token move of solidarity with community and underground papers created an associate member status for these papers which entitled non-university papers to receive the CUP news and feature service for a nominal fee. It was up to these papers of course to choose whether or not they wish to join CUP.

Alternate papers are community based newspapers, interested in social involvement and social change and dedicated to working towards these goals. Alternate newspapers such as the Prairie Fire in Regina and the Alternate Press in St. John's Newfoundland are frequently staffed by ex-university students who have worked on student newspapers and/or the dailies and who are disillusioned with the dailies lack of interest in community involvement. These papers are usually run on a shoe-string budget with little advertising, relying mainly on

subscriptions for their survival. Most alternate newspapers however are making an honest effort to develop as a thoughtful socially conscious alternative to the daily newspapers in their community.

There are obvious differences between university and community papers. Basic ones are the readership and the internal operations such as the funding of the paper.

Any form of co-operation on the part of university and community newspapers can thus be only productive.

Dr. P. J. Gaudet
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