

\$4.95

Radical Feminism

edited by Anne Koedt • Ellen Levine • Anita Rapone



An anthology of radical feminist writings from the current women's movement. Forty-five articles ranging from the personal to the theoretical and drawn largely from the feminist annual NOTES.

Preface

The contemporary feminist movement began in the late 1960's and has grown enormously in the six years of its existence both in the numbers of women who have participated in feminist activities and in the nature and scope of its analytic writings. In its most general formulation the goal of the radical feminist movement is the complete elimination of the sex role system. The articles in this collection, although each covers a specific aspect of sexism, all reflect this basic feminist goal.

The book is divided into five sections. The first, *Liberating History*, briefly sketches the history of the feminist struggle from its radical beginnings in the 19th century when women weren't even allowed to speak in public. Although this anthology is primarily concerned with the analysis and activities of the current movement, the awareness that women's history needs "liberating" makes such a section currently relevant.

Sexism is a political system and basic to an understanding of how it works is the recognition of women as a political class. In contrast to conventionally accepted views of women, feminism argues that an individual woman's "problems" are not in fact idiosyncratic, but rather are a product of sexist ideology and institutions. Section two, *Women's Experience*, reflects this understanding of the political nature of what has always been deemed personal.

Section three, *Theory and Analysis*, is composed of articles that examine in more broadly analytic terms the areas of feminist concern. Fundamental subjects such as abortion, marriage, housework, rape, law, socialization, sex, psychology, and religion, are examined. It is important to note that since sexism is so basic and pervasive an ideology, feminists are continuously extending their critique into areas hitherto unrecognized as "political." This process of an evolving critique has in part been possible because, unlike some

other political movements, feminism has not been burdened by an early, narrowly defined theoretical structure. Rather, there has been a much more organic relationship between analysis and activity: theory evolves from and contributes to the growth of the movement.

Section four, *Building a Movement*, covers such intramovement concerns as the consciousness raising process, internal group structure, and the feminist debate with the Left. It also includes several major manifestos.

The last section, *The Arts*, reflects the growing feminist interest in this area. Male prejudice against female writers, the portrayal of women in movies, the function of diaries, and the writings of several contemporary women authors are discussed.

The purpose in selecting and organizing this anthology was to present primary source material not so much about as from the radical feminist movement. Although such a collection of writings by definition constitutes a kind of overview of the growth of the movement, the articles are more a product than an explanation of that political process.

Many of the articles included in *Radical Feminism* previously appeared in the first three issues of *Notes*, a yearly journal of writings from the feminist movement. We would like to thank all of the authors in this anthology for their permissions to reprint their articles.

New York City
June, 1972

A.K., E.L., A.R.