

We Are Our Own Worst Enemies

By Desa C. Belyea
Women's Activities editor

Today Indira Gandhi rules 480 million people. She shares the world spotlight with Lyndon B. Johnson, Charles de Gaulle, Aleksei Kosygin and Mao Tse-tung. As the new prime minister of India, she holds a position of power never before achieved by any woman in the world and one that American women couldn't hope to achieve in their wildest dreams.

What is holding American women back? Is it because our men are more prejudiced, more reactionary, more unrelenting than men in foreign lands? Or is it because our women are more prejudiced, more reactionary, more unrelenting than women elsewhere?

Are American men unwilling to have a woman in high office or is it the women who are unwilling? Is it really male opposition or female jealousy that keeps American women back?

The ardent feminists who carried the banner for women's rights blamed their unemancipated state on men. But history also shows that the feminists faced apathy and downright opposition from a majority of the women they were trying to free. It seems women were afraid to upset the status quo because their comfortable lives might be disturbed.

Today the American woman is as much—if not more—to blame than the American man, for the scarcity of women mayors, governors, senators, presidents. Those cheers one hears for a Mme. Gandhi or a Sen. Margaret Chase Smith come not from the average American woman, but from the women doers. These latter are the women who have achieved status in their own fields be it politics, business, science or art.

They can glory in the success of another woman without feeling her achievement in any way detracts from their own worth. They do not question a woman's accomplishments; they wonder why there aren't more.

But what about the average American woman who, after all, represents the majority of women? She may cheer a Mme. Gandhi, but she casts her vote for a man. She does not question why there aren't more women of accomplishment; she questions why there are any. For, to her, a successful woman poses a threat to the established order, the accepted rule—"a woman's place is in the home."

The average woman will tell you women do not make good executives, good politicians, good anything because they are too emotional, too unstable, too subjective. What she really means is that she distrusts and dislikes any woman who dares to be different. Or, to be even more specific, women in general don't like women in general. They may like a few near and dear girl friends, but other women, no.

Women actually are their own worst enemies. Confirming this was a survey conducted last year by a national women's magazine. It showed that women across the country would rather have a man as a doctor, waiter, confidant, jurist, president, airplane pilot and college teacher. The women revealed they take a dim view of other women in professional roles.

And the reasons given were that women are emotional, gossipy, jealous, narrow-minded, petty, scatterbrained, unreliable, vain, vindictive and weak-willed.

Obviously, we don't need men to hold us back when we've got "sisters" like this working for us. Granted women do possess some undesirable qualities, but then so do many men who keep getting elected to the position they seek.

But these so-called failings are not the sole reasons women don't elect other women. Rather, it is because American

women have been brainwashed into suspecting any woman who "dares rock the boat." The successful woman finds her femininity questioned, her ambition criticized, her achievements disregarded. Public opinion, mostly female, forces her to decide between home and ambition.

If she combines family and career, she is accused of neglecting her family. If she concentrates on a career only, she is deemed unnatural. If she is strong enough to withstand the pressures, then she finds herself continually justifying her decision to her "sisters."

And as long as she has to justify her decision, there will be no truly emancipated women in this country. Nor will there be an American Mme. Gandhi until American women resolve their intra-sex squabble.

The question is: Should a woman strive for success outside the home or should she stay home and tend to her knitting?

World Mellows On Question Of Women

By Joy Miller

NEW YORK (AP) — Indira Nehru Gandhi's election as India's prime minister is a spectacular example of how far women have come in a world that apparently is growing mellow all the time toward the second sex.

Feminists everywhere are hoping it may usher in a new era of women's advancement. As it is, they already are heartened by these recent events:

Justice Elizabeth Lane appointed to a high court bench in England, first time for a woman.

Dr. A. A. L. Minkenhof sworn in as first woman solicitor general in the Netherlands.

Princess Lalla Aicha of Mo-

rocco sent to England as her country's first woman ambassador.

Mrs. Constance Baker Motley named by President Johnson to be the first Negro woman federal judge in the United States.

Golda Meir, Israel's foreign minister since 1956 and labor minister seven years before that, retiring at age 67, stoutly maintaining that she will keep on working in politics and labor.

Uncounted numbers of women around the world, though, still face discrimination in work, pay, educational opportunities. Many are deprived of personal and property rights as soon as they say "I do" in whatever tongue they speak.

Often the husband has the only say-so about the children. He can legally prevent his wife taking work outside the home. He owns everything. He can divorce her and toss her out without support, keeping the children.

For 20 years the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women has worked hard to help point out a more fair and humane way to the nations in which these rules of family life exist. But it is frequently a slippery balancing act to keep peace in the family of nations when proposed changes to improve women's lot runs counter to age-old traditions.

The commission believes in the right of people to choose

