

No more war with women at helm?

Thursday, December 7, 1978

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Cleopatra was an exception. Most women would rather make peace than war.

Are they less aggressive by nature, or are they socialized that way? In either case, if women had more political power, could war be prevented?

These issues are explored in a collection of papers titled, "The Role of Women in Conflict and Peace," just published by the University of Michigan Center for Continuing Education of Women (CEW).

"For centuries, historians have used wars as the focal points to mark passing eras. Their accounts rarely mentioned women except as victims and mourners of the dead," said CEW program director Dorothy C. McGuigan, editor of the new book.

"Some social scientists suggest that women's vested interest in childbirth and nursing are diametrically opposed to the killing and destruction of war," she said. "Others insist that if women were brought up like men they would make wars like men, citing as

evidence the increasing numbers of women terrorists."

"On the issue of sex differences in aggression, the answer is yes, at all ages and in all cultures, the human male is more aggressive than his female counterpart," writes U-M psychologist Elizabeth Douvan in the book.

"The difference is traceable to a hormonal source called the androgen testosterone. Experiments with animal and human subjects have confirmed this relationship."

But Douvan believes that society takes these biologically rooted differences in the sexes and exaggerates them. Mothers pass on to their daughters their ability in avoiding open fights. But they tolerate aggression in their sons and consider it normal.

"We expect individuals as they mature to give up physical force for the more sophisticated verbal techniques of asserting dominance."

"Girls seem to make this shift earlier and more easily than boys, but I think girls have fewer opportunities to practice aggression of any kind—physical or verbal—during childhood. They are taught to avoid conflict rather than to resolve it."

Women are handicapped by their lack of fighting experience, Douvan believes. "In order to seek individual achievement in our culture, it is necessary to integrate a certain degree of assertiveness and aggressiveness. To equalize the relationship between sexes, men should be offered training

in empathy, negotiation and compromise, while women should be trained to deal with confrontation and conflict."

Historically, women have not always been more passive observers in a male-dominated drama of action and violence.

The book includes U-M History Professor Louise A. Tilly's account of women's participation in the strikes, food riots and the suffrage movement in Europe since 1700.

Another historian discusses the diversity of sex roles in medieval Europe.

A study of women's participation in the post-1914 peace movement in the U.S. notes that the Women's Peace Party and other groups drew on the individual image of woman as mother and nurturer to further their cause.

However, a second study shows that, more recently, the 1960's draft resistance often placed women in subordinate and demeaning positions while using sexist imagery and slogans to attract males into the movement.

Other papers in the collection analyze the role and influence of women in underdeveloped countries; examine some political issues which divide the current feminist movement, and report on a national survey comparing the attitudes of women and men toward violence.

Copies of the book may be ordered at \$3.50 each from the U-M Center for Continuing Education of Women, 330 Thompson, Ann Arbor, 48109.

OU offers new classes

The Division of Continuing Education, Oakland University, will teach classes at new locations beginning with the 1979 winter term.

Evening courses will be offered at Harrison High School, Twelve Mile between Middlebelt and Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills. Day courses will be held at the Birmingham Center for Continuing Education, 746 Purdy.

In addition, two nondegree courses will be offered through the media: Death and Dying, through The Detroit News, and Ethnic America, via Channel 56. Classroom sessions for Ethnic America will be held at Shrine High School, Royal Oak.

New Dimensions courses, which explore personal abilities, writing resumes, and controlling one's life and finances, are scheduled for days and evenings off-campus. Courses to

improve interpersonal relationships are scheduled both days in Birmingham and evenings on campus.

A new series of retail courses, designed to explain the fundamentals of retailing for those seeking employment or change of jobs in retailing will be conducted on site beginning Jan. 16. Legal assistant courses will be conducted evenings in Sterling Heights as well as on campus. New courses in the award-winning small business program, to be offered evenings on campus, are designed to develop a competitive edge. The small business courses received top national awards in 1978 from U.S. Small Business Administration for innovative programming.

Brochures detailing the 1979 winter term may be obtained by calling the continuing education office, 377-3120.

OU classes off campus

The Division of Continuing Education, Oakland University, now in its 20th year, will offer new learning areas and locations with the 1979 winter term.

Evening courses will be offered at Harrison High School on Twelve Mile between Middlebelt and Orchard Lake, Farmington Hills, and day courses will be held at the Birmingham Center for Continuing Education, 746 Purdy.

In addition, two nondegree courses will be offered through the media: Death and Dying, through The Detroit News, and Ethnic America, via Channel 56. Classroom sessions for the latter will be held at Shrine High School, Royal Oak.

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