

Women in Science Academies⁽¹⁾

For the first time in the history of the French Academy of Science, founded about 300 years ago, its doors have been opened to receive a woman.

The new member is Mme. Yvonne Choquet-Bruhat, a mathematician specializing in relativity, elected to this distinguished academy on May 18, 1979.

Yvonne Choquet-Bruhat had occupied since 1978 the position of correspondent which had been formerly denied to Marie Curie and Irene Joliot-Curie, both eminent scientists. Bruhat's success shows a change in the mentality of the Academy members since 1972, when two outstanding women scientists were refused membership.

There are five academies in France, two of which include women members: Jacqueline de Romilly in the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres (1975), and Suzanne Bastid in the Academy of Ethical and Political Sciences (1971). Marguerite Yourcenar is expected to soon obtain membership in the French Academy of Literature, since her candidature is strongly supported.

At France's National Center of Scientific Research, women play an important role. Numbering 2500, they represent 30 percent of the research staff.

In the biology department they make a proportion of 45 percent; in the human sciences, 35 percent. But their ratio drops in engineering and the physical sciences to 9 percent, and in nuclear physics to 13 percent. However, a number of women scientists occupy leading positions at the above Center as directors and head researchers. One of them, Mme. Any Chantal Levasseur-Regourd, is a researcher in aeronomy and one of five women astronaut candidates specially trained to make a space trip in the company of a Soviet cosmonaut.

If women's representation is limited at the National Center of Spatial Studies and the Department of Nuclear Energy, four of them occupy highly responsible positions in these two centers. One of the four is in charge of the scientific satellite "Starlet", the second is a geo-physicist responsible for the scientific promotion of the Center, the third is in charge of studying the planet Venus, while the fourth, a graduate from the Polytechnic School, is a specialist of the phenomenon of Pogo vibrations which affect rocket motors.

The participation of women in scientific research has gained importance since they were allowed in 1972 to join the Polytechnic School, which had been the exclusive privilege of men, and counts at present a large number of women students.

1. *Le Réveil*, January 7, 1980.

News in Brief

- In Jordan, three women have been appointed as members of the Advisory Council. The Cabinet includes a woman minister.

- Women have recently obtained suffrage in Iraq, Jordan and North Yemen.

- In Indonesia, women participate in elections at the rate of 80 percent and represent 38 percent of the parliament membership.

- In Lebanon, the Women's Rights Committee presented, on March 20, 1980, a draft proposal for a remodeling of present legislation, mainly in the field of personal status. It claims the elimination of all discrimination on the basis of sex currently autho-

rized in the penal code, in civil law and in personal status laws. The minimum age for marriage should be raised to eighteen. Complete equality between the sexes is claimed regarding family rights and duties, divorce, rights of inheritance and family possessions.

- In Zghorta, North Lebanon, two women have been elected as members of the new municipal council.

- Out of 250 newly elected members to the Iraqi Parliament (June 21, 1980) twelve are women, including Mrs. Manal Yunes, president of the General Federation of Iraqi Women. This is the first time that Iraqi women participate in elections.