

## French Minister Feminizes Language

Yvette Roudy, France's Women's Rights Minister, has started a campaign to reduce sexism in the job market by preparing school children of both sexes for all types of professions.

She has appointed a government commission to «feminize» the jobs which have traditionally been held by men, moving to close the gender gap at the top, as a growing number of women move up the professional ladder.

«It is a problem of giving women back their identity, of doing women justice,» Roudy said. «Women had in a sense surprised the language by gaining access to jobs where no one had expected them generally in prestigious professions described only by masculine nouns».

While a female nurse is «une infirmiere» and her male equivalent «un infirmier», for example, a lawyer is «un avocat», regardless of sex.

Women professionals have sought to cope by inserting «Madame» before their titles, but this has created many problems. When Roudy herself took office in May 1981, she disliked being called «Madame le Ministre».

The French language is currently in an incredible state of disorder, Roudy says: «We no longer know how to refer to certain people; we need innovation, and since it

is a delicate terrain, we have entrusted the work to a panel of experts».

The commission appointed by Roudy includes feminist writers, linguists, journalists and a member of the Academie Française, the guardian of French language and culture. But although the panel is not expected to announce its proposals soon, passions are already running high with a series of ironic and outraged reports appearing in the French press.

This does not seem to deter Roudy, 55, who has made women's rights more solid in France than in any other Western European country during her three years in office. She says a title can carry heavy symbolic weight and is prepared to ride out the storm. She is convinced that respect for the inner logic of French will win out over mental resistance to change titles among both men and women.

France is one step behind Quebec, where officials have encouraged the use of «feminized» job titles since 1979. In Quebec, a women lawyer is «une avocate», a writer «une écrivaine». But Roudy says her commission will not simply adapt the Canadian model.

«France will find its own system. I am not making this into a fight, but rather a subject for reflection and debate», Roudy declared. «I want people to think about it seriously and I believe common sense will prevail».

(The Daily Star, June 5, 1984, p. 5)

## New Women's Journal in Sudan

Ahfad Women's College at Omdurman - Sudan is producing a new semi - annual publication called «The Ahfad Journal».

The Ahfad Journal focuses on the status of women in developing countries and the role of women in development. It publishes original research reports, literature reviews, historical and critical analysis reviews, and book reviews as well as contributions to the family sciences, psychology and the social sciences, preschool education, and organization management.

In the June issue of 1985 a section entitled «comments» will be added to give readers an opportunity to express their opinion and remarks.

Articles and manuscripts that fall within the scope of the Ahfad Journal may be submitted for publications. For further information write to **Lee G. Burchinal, Editor, Ahfad Journal, P. O. Box 167, Omdurman - Sudan.**

## Claire Gebeyli Awarded Edgar Poe Prize

The «House of Poetry» in Paris has awarded the **1985 Edgar Poe Prize** for best foreign poet writing in French to poet and journalist **Claire Gebeyli**<sup>(1)</sup>. The prize, given for the first time to a lebanese poet is for Gebeyli's latest work «**La Mise à Jour**» (1984) which is about her experience of the war.

Gebeyli's previously published work includes «**Poesies Latentes**» (Beirut 1968), «**Memorial d'Exil**» (Paris, 1975) and «**Billets**» which appeared every Thursday in the French-Language newspaper l'Orient - Le Jour (Beirut, 1982)<sup>(2)</sup>.

(1) See **Al-Raida**, Feb. 1 - May 1, 1984, p. 4 and Aug. 1, 1984, p. 6-7.

(2) See **Al-Raida**, Nov. 1, 1983, p. 5.