

No. 4/1980

January 21, 1980

SIMONE VEIL, PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Simone Veil, who heads a twenty-one member European Parliamentary Delegation visiting Washington next week to meet with members of the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Administration, has been President of the Parliament since July, 1979.

In Washington, she will address a National Press Club luncheon at 12.30 p.m. on Monday, January 28 and have meetings with President Carter, Secretary of State Vance and Congressional leaders.

Madame Veil was the first woman in France to reach ministerial rank, and held for five years the portfolio on Health and Family Affairs. In a poll taken while she was still a member of the French government, she was voted second in popularity to the French President, Giscard d'Estaing.

The esteem in which she is held was not marred by her controversial legislation on abortion and contraception which she successfully steered through the French National Assembly.

Madame Veil was born in Nice 52 years ago and later survived deportation to Germany and imprisonment in the extermination camps of Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen.

A lawyer by training, she is also a graduate of the French Institute for Political Studies and began her career in the Ministry of Justice where she served from 1957 to 1969. From 1970 to 1974 she was secretary general of the Higher Council of the Magistracy, concentrating on penal reform and rehabilitation, before moving to the Ministry of Health.

The President of the European Parliament is the co-author of a book "L'Adoption, donnees medicales, psychologiques et sociales" (1969).

She is a Chevalier of the National Order of Merit and additionally decorated for her work in prison administration.

In a recent interview, published in "Europa" by four leading European newspapers, Madame Veil said that she believes that Europe will move towards greater unity.

"But I think that this will happen through its response to issues and problems as they arise rather than through the establishment of institutions. It is the role of our Assembly to initiate such Community policies."

* * * *
* * *
* *
*