German Women Evaluate Visits To the States

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ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-FIVE German women, convinced of the value of exchange visits between Germans and Americans through their own trips to the United States, have initiated a fund to help finance an American woman's stay in Germany this year. Meeting Feb. 18-19 in Frankfurt to evaluate their experiences in the United States, the German women, ranging in age from 25 to 60, were unanimous in the belief that an accelerated program which would bring more Americans to Germany would be an important contribution to better understanding between the two nations.

Sponsored by the Women's Affairs Advisory Staff of the Division of Cultural Affairs and the Exchanges Staff, the conference was the first of its kind held for all women leaders and specialist exchangees from every type of project area, including women's affairs, education, youth and religious activities, public health and welfare, law, agriculture and home economy, journalism and mass media, labor affairs, political and public affairs.

The two-day conference began with a general session opened by Miss Ruth F. Woodsmall, head of the Women's Affairs Branch of HICOG's Office of Public Affairs. Principal speakers were Mrs. John J. McCloy, wife of the US High Commissioner for Germany; Dr. Hanna Kiep, women's affairs officer with the German diplomatic mission in Washington, who flew to Germany for the conference, and Dr. Ralph Burns, chief of the HICOG Exchanges Staff.

THE SESSION WAS DIVIDED into four workshops, all on the following topics: (1) Application of experiences gained during exchange visits to the United States; (2) Problems and difficulties encountered in applying experiences in Germany; (3) Recommendations for future planning and suggestions for selecting exchangees; (4) What each exchangee should know about Germany; (5) Suggestions for helping US experts and exchangees during their stay in Germany, and (6) How the exchanges program can be made more effective in achieving better understanding between Germany and the United States.

"Building German-American Understanding" and the role of German women returnees in the political present were the themes of Mrs. McCloy's address. She emphasized the responsibility which the German exchangee
Mrs. Hedwig Walter of Stuttgart reports on findings of workshop of which she was chairman. Seated are Mrs. Antje Lemke (left), Wiesbaden, and Mrs. Nora Melle, Berlin.

women have in combatting the unfounded criticism presently centering on the Western rearmament program.

Pointing to the need for women to examine facts before forming opinions, Mrs. McClay said: "I know there are many who let themselves be influenced by cheap propaganda, but no one can afford such immature thinking today. We know, for example, that some German groups hold the opinion that there is a rearmament race taking place now, which is bound to cause war, from one side or the other, whoever is the first to feel strong enough. Such criticism is unfounded and even false."

"Checking the facts," she went on, "we will find that America joined two world wars because it was forced to do so by declaration of war. Twice in recent history the United States stood unprepared and it experienced ruthless conquerors trying to take advantage of this fact. Experience has shown us that this state of non-preparedness led to war. Today our policy is that of a timely and proper appraisal of the danger in order to prevent war."

DR. KIEP DECLARED that the exchanges program has been "the charity package for the mental malnutrition from which German women suffered" in the years of the Nazi regime. "The hopeful and encouraging experiences of a lived democracy has given us strength and courage again," she said, "and the helping hands of American women are aiding us in building a better future."

Dr. Kiep also emphasized the importance of a greater flow of American women to Germany as a means of strengthening ties between the two countries.

Approximately 45 percent of the world-wide exchanges-program allocations by the US Congress has been for West Germany, Dr. Burns told the conference. "This is proof of the high esteem in which Americans hold the German people and of their belief that there is a strong democratic potential here in Germany," he said.

"The US mission in Germany is to help the Germans to help themselves. That is why we help the Germans in action, why we sent 6,600 Germans to the United States, plus some 500 to other European countries."

Henry J. Kellermann, chief of the Department of State's Office of German Public Affairs in Washington, called German women exchangees to America "ambassadors of their country working for better mutual understanding."

IN WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS, the conferees were agreed on the necessity of utilizing press and radio facilities more widely as a means of informing a greater segment of the German public about life in America and about the workings of democratic institutions.

They were also of the opinion that exchangees selected for visits to the United States should be thoroughly informed about conditions in Germany, including such current problems as the East-West tension, living standards, attitudes toward American troops in Germany, the refugee situation, party systems, the German Basic Law and housing and educational problems so as to be better able to impart information to the Americans with whom they come in contact.

Approximately one-third of the 6,600 German exchangees have been women, and the 175 in attendance represent many of the most active and forceful women in the new Germany. Such political leaders as Federal Parliament members Aenne Brauksiepe, Elinor Hubert, Herta Ilk and public spokesmen such as Anna Haag, Nora Melle and Elfriede Mueller, who have been vital forces and workers in Germany's reconstruction and democratic development, gave the conference greater significance.

Germany, US to Exchange Teachers

Twenty-five German secondary school teachers from western Germany and Berlin will go to the United States and the same number of American high school teachers will come to Germany next September to teach in each others' schools for a year.

This teacher-trainee project, marking a new type of program which is literally a head-to-head exchange, is being arranged jointly by the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch-Dienst (DAAD) of Bonn and HICOG's Exchanges Staff. DAAD is a private German organization recognized by the Federal Republic and represents the association of state culture ministers in matters of foreign educational exchange.

Under this new program, German teachers of English and American teachers of German will be mutually exchanged between communities of comparable size and type for a school year. The German school will continue to pay the salary of its teacher while in the United States, and the American school will also pay its teacher while in Germany. The United States Department of State will provide transportation for both groups of teachers as well as a cost of living allowance to the German teacher.