MY REMARKS ARE PRIMARILY addressed to the women of Germany because of the vital importance of the German women’s recognizing and assuming the broad responsibility which is theirs of actively participating in the public life of their country today. At the present juncture in German history, the men, while not actually monopolizing the field of influence over Germany’s destiny, are playing a role out of all proportion to their numbers and their capabilities and potentialities, too.

While some women have played a notable part in German public life, up to the very present, the emphasis on their place, activities and influence has been centered around the three traditional K’s: Kinder, Kirche, Kueche (Children, Church, Kitchen). This reference is not in any way to be interpreted as a possible reflection on the importance of these three facets of women’s lives. The impact of the proper upbringing of children, of the home and of religion on the development of a nation, cannot be overestimated. Dedication to promoting and preserving the solidarity of family life, along enlightened lines, cannot be overemphasized. In this whole important sphere of activity, it is patent that the mother must and should take the lead.

However, I think, it would be a confession of considerable lack of ability and initiative, if the women of any country were to concede that their activities on a personal, local or national scale could not transcend the boundaries of their homes, their children and their churches. Furthermore, if their interests and activities were to be thus circumscribed, the development of their country would be hampered in almost direct proportion to the degree of that limitation.

These general observations are applicable during even normal times in any country which has been “keeping the noiseless tenor of its way.” However, they apply with greater cogency to a country which, like Germany, has been emotionally ravaged by the diabolic teachings of a Nazi ideology and political system. Subsequently, there were added to these desperate mental and spiritual woes, the horrors of savage murder from within and war’s destruction from without. Such a nation requires the utmost in physical, mental and moral stability; and it needs this with the most consummate understanding and the greatest possible speed. To achieve all or even a part of this, the characteristic idealism, sympathy, understanding and devotion of womanhood must play their significant role.

This is accentuated in the case of the Germany of today with its approximately 113 women for every 100 men. This disparity — and the consequent urgent necessity for women to participate actively in public affairs — is even more marked when it comes to the adult population, for of the population over 21 years of age, there are approximately 119 women for every 100 men. From the reconstruction standpoint, the picture becomes still more striking, since in the best working age group — namely, those between 25 and 34 — there are approximately 133 women for every 100 men.

These figures furnish irrefutable evidence of the importance of women making their voices heard in the solution of Germany’s present-day general problems. In particular, they furnish a background against which is etched some of the specific, important areas of German national life in which I believe it is urgently necessary for women to shoulder greater responsibility.

To revert again to the family as the very foundation of our human society, I think that, in gauging the progress of any nation or society, in the very forefront of criteria would be the degree of development of the family, the home and religion — all under the primary inspiration and leadership of the mother. Next, and very close in the order of these criteria, would be the relationship between the governed and those elected by democratic processes to do the governing. With women constituting approximately 55 percent of the voting population of Germany today, it needs but few words to underscore the power which reposes in German women, through the proper use of their ballot, to ensure a government which vouchsafes to all, but especially to the rising generation, the rights and privileges which were so viciously denied to Germany in the all too recent past.

The rebuilding of a government along truly democratic lines, after the nightmare through which Germany passed, is difficult. It requires understanding, patience, cooperation and, above all, courageous and dynamic breaking of the fetters which so often hinder political progress. Naturally, those who have been schooled and have actively participated in such practices, which are the very negation of self-government, can emancipate themselves therefrom but slowly. The women of Germany were not very intimately associated with political life of the pre-Nazi era; and, in general, not actively with the soul-searing machinations of the Hitler tyranny, which masqueraded in the guise of a government. Consequently, the women of Germany can play a fresh part in the new Republic which is emerging and developing — a part free of those reactionary and politically debilitating tendencies and
traditions, which placed power in the hands of a few, to the detriment of the many.

SO MUCH FOR THE GENERAL accomplishments, which can result from the proper use of the new and increased power that has come to the women of Germany. Now as to more specific aspects of the considerations bearing on the better development of a nation, of its families and particularly of its youth. Allowing for the difficulties under which Germany functions today, and not losing sight of the fact that progress must, therefore, necessarily be slow, the German people, particularly the mothers of Germany, should be ever vigilant, active and articulate in the interest of obtaining the best that is possible for the nation as a whole, but especially for their children, in the important areas of housing, public health, education, social legislation and, last but not least, in the broad area of wages, working conditions and employer-employee relationships.

These labor matters should be women's concern, not alone for themselves or for men, but particularly for such of the youth as necessity dictates working earlier than modern sociological concepts would normally countenance.

I underscore youth in relation to the working problem, as, indeed, I would in every aspect of this discussion where it is germane, because it cannot be too often repeated or emphasized how vital and far-reaching is the importance to Germany of the creation of a healthy, enlightened and contented youth, if she is to play the role in the family of nations for which her culture, her creativeness, her industriousness, her ingenuity and her very geographic location so eminently qualify her.

The youth of Germany must have a constant and valid demonstration that they are not the forgotten generation and that there exists for them a constructive and an honorable future. Their mothers must and can play a substantial part in this demonstration. Important though the ballot may be, it alone will not suffice for this difficult, but surely not impossible, task. In addition to exercising their franchise, women can and must take an actual and active part in public affairs — governmental, quasi-governmental and communal.

TO REVERT TO THE SPECIFIC list of areas on which attention should be focused, looking toward improvement in government, let us touch on them seriatim: in housing, public health, education and social legislation, women are, unquestionably, uniquely fitted to take the lead. American co-members of this federation can furnish eloquent and concrete testimony of the part that women play in our country in these important fields. Comparisons are often invidious because the circumstances applying are often quite dissimilar. There is, however, this valid common denominator of the activity of American and German women outside their homes. In the United States it has reached large proportions, with resultant great and growing effect.

Some skeptical, cynical, reactionary, chronic lamentators — fortunately few in number or stature — tend to decry this growing emancipation of womanhood from their home duties. They continue to be apostles of the outmoded concept that a woman cannot satisfactorily discharge the dual function of being a good mother and wife and still find the time and muster the energy not alone to have a separate career, but even to take any part in public affairs. So deep and abiding is my respect for the sanctity of the home and the primacy of the development of the family, under the equal guidance of wife and husband, that if I harbored the slightest fear that there was any possible derogation of that role of women to their participation in public affairs, I would be the very last to counsel such participation. I would be in the forefront of those who would advocate the family first and public affairs a very far second.

While it is one of the very cornerstones of freedom and sound government that there be a clear demarcation between church and state, this does not in any slightest degree lessen my most fervent conviction as to the essential and pervading role which religion must play if society is to develop according to enlightened, ethical concepts and not follow a sordid materialistic, atheistic pattern. Women can, and, if a nation is to advance, must, combine their home duties with public responsibilities.

SOME CRITICS OF THE AMERICAN way of life are prone to carp at American women's participation in public affairs or, as is the case in many instances, of their having careers independent of their husbands. These critics sometimes seek to buttress their criticism by the indictment that, as a result of this gregariousness of our women, American family life is deteriorating, that our moral standards are being compromised, that graft and corruption are increasing and that gangsterism is growing. I question whether the actual facts support this contention. However, even if that said state of affairs should actually exist, I am extremely doubtful that women's activities outside their homes is a contributing factor. In fact, I think a very convincing presentation can be made to demonstrate just the opposite; namely, that women's participation in public affairs has a very benign influence on public conduct.

We, as American officials here in Germany, have taken the liberty of speaking frankly and freely with the Germans whom we are here to assist and to help protect. We would, indeed, be disingenuous if we sought to portray an unfair picture of our own American life or were unwilling to discuss it with the same objectivity as marks our consideration of present-day life in Germany. In all frankness, therefore, but with equal sincerity, I think the more pessimistic picture which some of our critics seek to paint of the United States, or the impression which some of my German listeners may have, paralleling this distorted picture, derives from an unfair, sensation-seeking portrayal which, unfortunately, is occasionally embodied in the wrong, commercialized type of Hollywood moving picture or American publication.

Let me hasten to make crystal clear that it is not all sweetness and light in our country. We have our difficulties; we have our shortcomings. There is much to be desired in improving our housing, our public health measures, our social legislation and our school systems.
We are far from the millennium in the field of employer-employee relationship or, in regretfully too many instances, in satisfactory working conditions or even equitable distribution of profits as between labor and capital.

The point is that American women are playing an active part in trying to achieve improvement in all these highly significant areas of national well-being. Much that has been accomplished thus far is due to their initiative. Their efforts have involved them in active participation in government, in political party leadership, in the professions, in industry, in quasi-public organizations such as leagues of women voters, parent or parent-teacher associations concerned with our educational system, in various types of advisory councils related to housing, public health, community work and social legislation, in top strata positions in labor unions and the field of labor relations, in leagues of women shoppers, and in countless other similarly constructive ways.

The field of education is the one which should particularly commend itself to the attention and requisite action of women. An enlightened and effective educational system is so inextricably bound up with every aspect of the sound development of a people as to make any elaboration of this observation superfluous.

Women are doing all this without neglecting their homes and their families in the slightest degree. In fact, such interests outside the home have a broadening and vitalizing effect on women's lives and, hence, qualify them for more enlightened stewardship within their homes. This participation in public life makes a woman better informed, more civic conscious, more articulate and, consequently, a more respected mother and wife. Certainly these are attributes and these are lines of activity which, far from impinging on family life and proper upbringing of children, can but enrich women for that all important relationship and function.

There is another important sector of a country's life in which women have not alone an equal role with men. It is in the areas of economics. This applies to women not as workers but in the field of buying power. One is apt to lose sight of the enormous portion of the cash income of a people that is spent under the aegis of women. In the normal family, it is the mother who makes the actual expenditure of the predominant portion of the family income. The influence that can be wielded on the entire economic development of a country through this individual family purchasing power is not easily exaggerated.

Through their ability to use this power intelligently, courageously and, if need be, collectively, through leagues of shoppers, women can go far toward bringing about proper conditions in the labor field. These include acceptable hours and conditions of work, equitable distribution of profits between employer and employee, fair trade practices, reasonable pricing methods and adequate safeguards against exploitation of youth, be it through the so-called apprentice system or through just plain, downright, woefully inadequate "sweated labor" wages.

Ancillary to this, the entire field of freedom to engage in trade is one where, though somewhat indirect, the influence of women's purchasing power can play a determinative role. Just as the power and validity of labor's strikes, if they must be resorted to, are well recognized, so too can be that of buyers' strikes. Freedom of women themselves or of their husband and children to engage in trades, untrammeled by obstructive craft or guild dictates, which are often manifested against them under the guise of valid professional or trade qualifications, is something which bears scrutiny, with requisite action where the restrictions are unfair or capricious.

It would be wise for the women of Germany, both in their interest and that of their husbands and children, vigilantly to watch the whole question of equitable distribution of profits, not alone as to fair participation between labor and capital, but also from the standpoint of equal pay for equal work, whether it be done by men, by women or by youth. Equally, in the common interest of all — of the whole health and well-being of the nation — working conditions constitute a field in which women should take a vital interest. The whole apprentice system in Germany, which can and does have some desirable aspects, warrants constant observation, lest its beneficial concepts be compromised into selfish and, in some instances, almost cruel exploitation of youth.

It is patent that in order to achieve improvements in the labor and economics field, women can do much by taking a more active part in the important work carried on by labor unions. From the viewpoint of representing their own interests, constituting as they do about 37 percent of all gainfully employed persons, and from the standpoint of achieving these improvements, German women can and should participate more actively in the councils of labor.

Once again, in their own behalf and that of their countrymen in general, women should concern themselves more with the whole question of taxation. In but few countries, so far as I am aware, does the taxation system approach acceptability, let alone perfection. Here in Germany, where, in some quarters at least, conscientious effort is being made to improve a system which has been highly regressive, there is still much to be desired. This, therefore, is but another instance where the power of the ballot, plus other methods of making their influence felt, vouchsafes to women the potentiality, and, therefore, the responsibility, of helping to advance this important aspect of national policy.

Not only is it highly important that taxes are raised on the fairest and soundest basis, but also that they are spent on that basis. In this latter facet of taxation, women, once again, can and should make their influence constructively felt.

There is one further segment of public affairs in Germany today on which I would seek to focus the attention not merely of this audience, but of all Germany. I refer to the ominous and alarming spectacle of the
emergence of a political party which openly and brazenly endorses certain parts of the Nazi program and which numbers among its leaders some of the very leaders of that infamous gang which brought such untold suffering and ruin to Germany and Europe.

For six years, ever since the downfall of the Nazi regime, the world has watched with anxiety for any signs of a revival of Nazism. Within that time it has been a matter for gratification that the German people have overwhelmingly rejected all extremist parties, both of the right and the left, that challenged the democratic order and the decency of moral life. Within that time more has been done by Germany’s former enemies to blot out the destruction of war and to make a place for their beaten foe in the family of peace-loving and democratic nations than was ever done before in the history of man.

In all fairness to Germany, I think the predominant part of her people is aware of this and is dedicated to severing every tie with and memory of that Nazi past. The eyes of the world are focused on Germany and are carefully scrutinizing the degree, scope and sincerity of that severance.

The fact that 11 percent of the electorate of any German state, be it economically ailing Lower Saxony or any other, would cast its votes for a party openly advocating, as does the Socialist Reich Party, those same sordid doctrines and false panaceas which history has so utterly discredited, is a warning which we would ignore at our peril, and which cannot fail to cause serious misgivings both in Germany and throughout the world. Aid, both material and spiritual, has been given to help Germany bind up the wounds of war; aid which, I think it is reasonable to say, far exceeded the fondest dreams and expectations of even the most optimistic in Germany.

But only Germany herself can take effective, preventive measures against a renewal of the danger. In the ultimate analysis, Germany can only regain an honorable place in the freedom loving world by a deep and sincere inner purge of her own people, which will make them fit for the community of free nations.

TO THIS END there must be prompt, courageous and forthright action. The major factor in combating the menace of reviving Nazism will be an enlightened public opinion. And here the women of Germany may play a decisive role. The women who have suffered the incredible losses inflicted by the Nazi regime, who have lost homes and husbands and sons, who have experienced unspeakable humiliations, must be aware that the road to restoration can never turn back to an insensate nationalism, but can only lead forward to a new Germany, dedicated to freedom in a united Europe.

They will know best how to shield despairing or cynical youth from the mendacious appeals and specious promises of unscrupulous adventurers, who would trifle again with a nation’s fate. On the rock of their own bitter experience and hard-won knowledge, they can help to build a new faith and a better future.

Destiny calls Germany. I hope, and truly believe, that the women — and, too, the men and youth — of Germany will not be deaf to that call — a clarion call that may sound but once.

+END

Greater Parent Interest in Schools Urged

GERMAN TEACHERS HAVE been challenged to "mobilize" parents for more interest and influence in school affairs.

Speaking at the opening of a three-day conference in Stuttgart of German educators who have visited the United States under the HICOG exchanges program, Dr. James M. Read, chief of the Education and Cultural Relations Division, HICOG, said that one of the most important methods of strengthening democratic education is the participation of parents as well as teachers in educational affairs.

"You as teachers can mobilize these parents if you will. They must be mobilized if the full power of public opinion is to be focused upon the schools and upon the promotion of school improvements. They must be mobilized if the findings of modern educational psychology are to be applied in the educational process. These findings call for teamwork between school and home.

"... We are coming to realize everywhere that the education of the parent in his pedagogic responsibilities is a function which the teacher can disregard only at the risk of having his work in school neutralized or even undone in the home."

Dr. Read said that "as a parent with a child in a German school, I have missed being called into any regular or frequent consultation by the teacher or into a parents’ meeting or council." He urged that teachers organize study groups with parents on modern theories of child growth and development. He cited the many parents’ councils currently established in Wuerttemberg-Baden as an excellent step in that direction.

Two other fields of concentration in an attempt to bolster the educational foundations of democracy are the introduction of social studies in all schools, and improving school finances, according to the HICOG education chief.

"The science of human relations in one form or another must be in the forefront of all of our educational processes today, from the bottom to the top of the educational ladder," he emphasized.

To provide the material needs for better education — new buildings, books and teaching aids — teachers must "take the political initiative aggressively.

"They should organize to make known the needs of the schools and never tire in bringing these matters to the attention of an interested public through all the media they can command."