

Between two Worlds
September 28, 1947

Dear Basil Eastland,

I am indeed glad we had such a good chat in London after my recent adventures in Germany IFDF camps. Now I have little if anything to add except my official thanks but I do want to add them and maybe the best way I can do that is to make this something of an "official" report. Do consider what follows to be a feeble effort to summarize my impressions with an overwhelming urge to be encouraging to thee and the others who are striving so faithfully to make these camps fulfil our dreams.

1.

My greatest impression is that these camps have been thoroughly worth holding. With all their shortcomings they nevertheless have definitely begun to meet a need, to awaken a vision, to strengthen the faith. Nothing else that I may write could detract from this overwhelming conviction. These camps have been worth all the time and effort that has been given them and I for one am only sorry that I have not been able to give more.

2.

I have been impressed with the quality of many of these campers, their quality and their hunger. I had been led to expect many products of Hitlerism who would be plenty shallow, plenty two-faced, plenty anti-religious and we did find some of every sort, but certainly the number of sincerely seeking young people, deeply interested in religious issues was in the majority. Most, when we got to know them, were keenly interested in Poland and what the Poles thought of the Germans and what possibilities there wherever going to Poland to help rebuild. They were sobered when I told them that any who went must be prepared to face what a Negro faces in the most prejudiced sections of white America they were sobered but not "daunted". I also pointed out that many German hoping to work in Poland should start now to contact the Poles in Germany to make friends with them and also start to learn the Polish language. I only met one camper, Günther Lenz at Langenhagen, who might well be ready to go to Poland next summer (having triumphed in spirit over the loss of his home in Silesia and knowing the Polish language) but there may well be others now or by next spring who will be ready.

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Finally I want to bear further testimony to the calibre of the men and women we met in the camps and thank them for the wonderful way they welcomed us into their hearts. From each camp we came away overwhelmingly grateful. They have made me really want to come back next spring to see how much they have grown, how much of the vision they have really made their own. May thee and Heinrich and the others carry on with renewed encouragement and devotion. You do have your hands on the beginnings of what may prove to be one of the greatest hope-restoring movements of our times. May the great Source of all hope strengthen you as you carry on.

With love,

David S. Richie