

13 June 48

HQ 5, C.B.S.R.A.,
(Civilian Relief),
B.A.O.R.1, Germany

To :

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U R G E N T

Dear Friends,

**HOW THE GERMAN CURRENCY REFORM WILL AFFECT IZD CAMPS IN GERMANY THIS
SUMMER :**

The much-talked of Germany currency reform is now almost certain to have been introduced into the Western Zones of Germany by the end of June 48, and whilst it is impossible to imagine a clear picture of the situation after the reform, one or two things are almost certain : present Reichsmark notes will be no longer valid, but will at a later date probably be convertible into the new currency about one tenth of their face value. No one person will be allowed more than a nominal amount of the new currency on the first few days of the reform - and that amount will be augmented through the individual's ordinary earnings. As stated, at a later date, his holdings of old marks will be convertible into the new ones, at about 1 to 10 ratio.

On the day of the reform, and for a time afterwards, it can easily be imagined that people will be rather stunned by the situation, and parents will think twice before letting their sons and daughters go on long and expensive train-journeys to international work-camps. Authorities who have been hitherto willing to pay for a camp in their area, may easily have to withdraw their promises.

This means that some of the camps planned for this summer by the IZD may have to be cancelled at the last moment, and it will almost certainly mean that the volunteers will have to go to the camp nearest to their home town, and not to the camps to which they had been asked to go by the secretariat in its attempt to have a mixture of volunteers from every corner of Germany in each camp - its policy always hitherto.

The most devastating change, however, will be that the German branch will not be able to pay for the fares of foreign volunteers passing through or coming to Germany. This was a situation envisaged when the offer to pay such fares was originally made, and the provision was made at the time that the arrangement could only be promised until the time of the currency-reform. That time has come more quickly than most of us expected.

Another result of more internal interest will be the peculiar situation which will arise should the West Zones only, have their currency reformed. To prevent the East Zone then being flooded with currency valueless in the West Zone, the former zone will be even more effectively than ever cut off from the west; this in turn will mean that Germans will not be able to travel from the western zones to Berlin, nor from Berlin to camps in the west zones. Even travel for volunteers from abroad, to Berlin, may become almost impossible.

Once again, I think that I ought to say, that the situation cannot be clearly imagined just at the moment, but the above are the likely changes; and it is most regrettable that they come just at the very moment when the summer camps here in Germany are opening. Volunteers from abroad will be warned by wire if necessary, should a camp to which they have been asked to go, have to be cancelled. They should book their fares to the place in Germany nearest to the camp, on the International Train routes - and for the final stage of their journey it may still be possible for them, as coming from abroad, to get exemption from payment by showing their passports, during the first uncertain period of the money reform.

Any currency which has been issued to foreign branches from the IZD secretariat should be returned to Herbert Böttger, c/o Relief Section 150, IVSP, Duisburg, B.A.O.R.4, Germany, unless there is a possibility of using it in Germany before the end of June. There is a possibility of getting 10% of its value back again at some future date. I am very sorry that this has to be done. It also means that Scandinavian volunteers will after all not be able to collect their railway fares from the Flensburg German Red Cross, and the complicated arrangements already outlined will not come into effect.

The last matter in this gloomy letter is purely a technical detail : The Entries and Exits branch of the Control Commission for Germany have stated that they will not allow any more volunteers to enter Germany unless I can submit to them, in addition to their birth-date, passport-number, name, address, and period of stay of foreign volunteers - the exact place and country in which the volunteer was born.

The web of bureaucracy does seem to binding us in ever closer !!

Enclosed for certain branches is a list of the volunteers and the camps to which they have been asked to go. Also attached in certain cases is a list of people whose PLACES OF BIRTH are required.

Yours sincerely,

Basil Eastland