

Legal Obstacles to Relief Efforts within Enemy Territory

C O P Y

TRADING WITH THE ENEMY BRANCH

(Treasury and Board of Trade)

ref.

T/E Gen. 21/921/1205

24 Kingsway,

W.C.2

April 22nd.1941

Sir,

My attention has been drawn to the organization by the World Jewish Congress of New York of a scheme for transmission of food parcels to Poland. For this purpose I understand that the American Office is transmitting relief funds to Poland under an agreement with the German authorities.

German occupied Poland is enemy territory within the provisions of the Trading with the Enemy Act, 1939. In common with other territory in enemy occupation it is subject to blockade by his Majesty's Government both as regards the entry of goods, including food, and the remittance of money to, or for the benefit of, persons in Poland. Any steps taken to circumvent that blockade have the effect of conferring a benefit on the enemy and of prolonging the war. Earnest consideration has been given for a long time past to the possibility of arrangements whereby philanthropic or charitable bodies might be permitted to take certain relief measures for the assistance of the distressed population of the occupied territories including Poland, but so far it has not been found possible to approve of any suggested measures, in the absence of adequate guarantees to prevent a greater benefit to the enemy than would accrue to the oppressed people whom it is desired to help.

As regards the activities of your Branch in this country and of persons connected with it in relation to the proposals mentioned in the first paragraph, I have to draw your attention to the provisions of the Trading with the Enemy Act, 1939, which render it an offence to have any commercial, financial or other intercourse or dealings directly or indirectly with, or for the benefit of, a person in enemy territory. I must therefore point out that your Branch is prohibited from being associated with those activities of the American parent body to which I have drawn attention.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(signed) E.F. Henriques