

1/A (2) PS to DG. DG has seen. B.S. 3/6. Will you please show DG the Minister's comment overleaf?  
MINUTE P.C.S. 2/6.

From: ~~PRIVATE SECRETARY~~ DIRECTOR-GENERAL  
To: The Minister.

I spent yesterday morning with the Regional Information Officers on the question of anti-Semitism. I think that they showed up well as a body in making their reports and suggestions. Few of them were unfamiliar with the problem: most had evidently given it a good deal of thought and the contacts that they drew upon for the formation of their views seemed various and well-chosen. I doubt therefore whether any organisation would give one a better impressionistic view of the position than they were able to provide.

Only one or two Regions were for practical purposes untroubled by anti-Semitism: these were North Irish and North Eastern Regions. All the others showed general agreement on the fact that from the beginning of the war there had been a considerable increase in anti-Semitic feeling, though hardly one was prepared to say that the rise had come at any moment or had been conspicuous in recent months. None of them seemed to think that the increase of feeling was due to the activities of special organisations, which was small.

They seemed to regard it as quite beyond argument that the increase of anti-Semitic feeling was caused by serious errors of conduct on the part of Jews and they scouted the idea, from which the Jewish Board of Deputies never really frees itself, that it was all due to some misunderstanding which could be corrected by a generous indoctrination of facts. This view held true both of officers dealing with industrial centres and those dealing with rural areas: it held true of officers coming from old-established Jewish centres, such as Manchester and Leeds, and officers coming from areas which had known the Jews mainly as war-time evacuees from the cities. The main heads of complaint against them were undoubtedly an inordinate attention to the possibilities of the "black market" and a lack of pleasant standards of conduct as evacuees. The chief enemy of the Jew appears to be in most areas the small trader who suffers peculiarly from the operations of Jews, whether they are in fact "black market" operations or not. There was a general belief that Jews somehow or other get supplies and advantages which are not available to other people. Reflective people might agree that this was due to nothing but a conspicuous cohesion and adaptability in the Jewish trading community: but obviously most people merely go by the results.

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It is worthy of note that Humphrey of the London Region said that

[redacted]  
quite convinced that Jews formed an inordinately large part of the  
"black market" offenders brought before them.† Other figures were given  
from other parts of the country which seemed to support this.

Nobody had any confidence in anything amounting to propaganda on  
this subject. One or two people mentioned the suggestion that always  
comes up that full publicity should be given to the work of Jews who  
make some laudatory contribution to the war effort. My own feeling is  
that this is generally done already, and sometimes done with so much  
enthusiasm that one hears the echo of the feeling that it is surprising  
that a Jew has been found to do so well.

My general advice to the Regional Information Officers was that it  
was more important that people should realise that anti-Semitism was a  
bad thing, a divisionist activity and one that had become practically the  
hallmark of the Nazi, than that they should try to dispel the evidently  
general feeling that the Jews were largely responsible for their own  
troubles. We agreed that Regional Officers should use their influence  
to check anti-Semitism wherever they could and that there was no reason  
why they should not enlist sympathetic local Information Committees to  
use their influence for the same purpose. If specific stories hostile  
to the Jews could be traced and pinned down as untruths, such as the  
recent canard as the Jews being responsible for the London shelter disaster,  
this should be done by countering it with the individuals who were putting  
it about, not by giving it general publicity. We would help on this at  
headquarters if stories were reported to us.

Some of the Regional Information Officers reported that Discussion  
Groups in their areas were discussing anti-Semitism and asked if I thought  
that this was a good thing. I said that I thought it was, since no  
good was done by tabooing the subject and few people had, in fact,  
discussed it without agreeing that it was a thing to be regretted, even  
if they thought that the Jews were to a large measure responsible. I  
reminded them that it was part of the tragedy of the Jewish position that  
their peculiar qualities that one could well admire in easier times of  
peace, such as their commercial initiative and drive and their determination  
to preserve themselves as an independent community in the midst of the  
nations they lived in, were just the things that told against them in war-  
time when a nation dislikes the struggle for individual advantages and  
feels the need for homogeneity above everything else. I thought that  
our main contribution from headquarters would be to try to keep before  
people's minds the recollection that anti-Semitism was peculiarly the badge  
of the Nazi.

† [redacted] is a man of poor  
judgement. Ought we to ask the  
[redacted] to take the opinions of all his colleagues?

C.H.  
27th May, 1945.