

ANTI-SEMITISM IN AUSTRALIA

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. R.G.  
Menzies

I have hitherto made no statement about some recent manifestations of anti-Semitism in Australia, evidenced by the painting up of slogans on walls and other malicious or foolish activities.

I have myself had experience of painted slogans directed against me, but have not treated them seriously. But as many of our Jewish fellow citizens are genuinely distressed at these recent events, I think that I should now say that there is absolutely no room in Australia for anti-Semitism, no justification for it, and that I believe that there is no real substance in it.

There is a long history in Australia of distinguished service to our country by Jewish citizens. The Jews in Australia are good Australians. Any attempt to create an anti-Jewish feeling in Australia is doomed to failure. It may be, of course, that these sporadic actions are those of irresponsible people on the "lunatic fringe" who hope, by their childish antics, to secure some form of anonymous notoriety. It may be, on the other hand, that those who seek to divide our country are using this as one means of doing so. So far we have no clear evidence that there is an organised campaign of such a sinister kind, but we are of course watching the position very closely.

As we found when we attempted to deal legislatively with Communist activities, the powers of the Commonwealth Parliament are limited. But I say without any hesitation, first, that we roundly condemn any attempt to stir up false issues and, second, that we invite the people of Australia to treat these outbursts with contempt. I am sure that every Member of the Federal Parliament of whatever Party shares our feelings on this matter.

CANBERRA,  
26th January, 1960.