

LET MY PEOPLE BE FREE!

WE MUST BE UNDERSTOOD

PART aboriginal Charles Perkins, was born in Alice Springs 24 years ago and was educated at St. Francis House, Semaphore, South Australia.

After a course at a trade school he became a fully qualified electrical fitter.

A keen soccer player from the time he could kick a ball, Perkins decided, when he was 21, to see the world and set off on a one-way ticket to England and the Continent.

In England he turned out for Bishop Auckland, a leading amateur team, and was coached by Jim Murphy, Manchester United's trainer.

Soon, however, he became homesick and when Croatia, an Adelaide team determined to make the First Division, offered to bring him back to S.A., Perkins accepted and has never looked back.

He has two burning ambitions—to become the first part-aboriginal to play soccer for Australia, and to work for the improvement of his people.

In a special article recently published in an Adelaide daily paper, he demanded a better deal and more realistic understanding for his people.

He said, My mother was a half-caste aborigine and my father an Englishman, I am an Australian, a true Australian, but denied certain privileges which the ruling whites imagine I am not fit to have.

I am denied the true friendship of aborigines because to them I am not a full-blood.

I am hated in many cases by other part-aborigines because I have certain things they have been denied or are too lazy to obtain for themselves—education, work and friendship from whites.

But in lots of ways I am lucky.

My skin is not so dark that I am immediately classed as of aboriginal extraction.

With the influx of so many migrants I can, when the need arises, pass myself off as an Italian, Maltese, or a member of some other dark-skinned race.

TOO EASILY RECOGNISED

I have travelled halfway around the world as a soccer player, and at times have had a hard job convincing people that I am part-blood.

In England my landlady did not even know what an aboriginal was.

Unfortunately, many part-aborigines are too easily recognised as non-whites, and, despite their dress, manner of speech and educational qualifications, are made to feel different from other Australians.

The Government, churches, associations, societies, preachers, would-be do-gooders and alleged experts are continually trying in their misguided way to give the aboriginal a fair go.

I say forget the aboriginal at the moment. The man with the spear and the boomerang is far happier left on his own.

CHILDREN FIRST

His children are the ones to be educated, not him. You can't teach an old dog new tricks.

Concentrate on the part-aborigines who are struggling to prove they are as civilised as any pure white.

I admit that some of the part-bloods are deadbeats, scroungers and a burden on the community.

But 99 per cent. of them are not hardened criminals. They have not been brought up in a decent home like normal people, and therefore have the wrong slant on life.

Remember, there are whites who fall into the same category.

Take into consideration also what has made the part-blood layabouts what they are today—Government and charity handouts.

Right from the start they are made to feel different from other people.

Along with others like myself, I have been able to ignore the looks and pats on the head.