

## BLACKS FOR AUSTRALIAN INDEPENDENCE

### The Black Struggle and Australian Independence

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The history of Aboriginal resistance against imperialism goes back almost 200 years. Australian Blacks at first viewed the coming of the Europeans without malice. They thought of land occupation in terms of common use and sharing. When, to their dismay, they realised the exploitation intentions of the English colonialists, the Blacks began a struggle which they have valiantly continued to this day.

English laws refused to acknowledge the land rights of the Blacks (the original inhabitants and rightful owners of Australia), thus no treaties were made. Genocide of the whole Aboriginal population was attempted. One third of the pre-1788 population was herded into concentration camps known as "reserves" or "missions". School history text books ignore or distort this period of Australian history. They ignore the heroic guerrilla warfare which the Black waged against their dispossesses. This war of resistance continued throughout the 19th Century, and it has been estimated that more Aborigines died in active defence of their land than Maoris in their better known wars against the English invaders.

While the Aboriginal people were being systematically slaughtered and the survivors imprisoned on "reserves", the British capitalists and local squatters grew fat on the fruits of black land. To add insult to injury, Blacks were now forced to work for starvation wages, or rations of slated beef, tea, flour and sugar. They were denied citizenship and freedom of movement, and until well into this century numerous "punitive raids": were made on any Black groups who tried to resist the continuing racial exploitative and oppression.

The decline of British imperialism made room for the inroads of American pastoral mining companies, in northern, western and central Australia. This has heightened the exploitation and increased the dispossession of Blacks. Even Aboriginal "reserves" are not safe from their encroachment. The current attempts by the multinationals to mine uranium in the Northern Territory are but recent cases in point. Not only do the multinationals wish to rip up and despoil sacred tribal land and deprive the inhabitants of essential hunting areas, but they even make the suggestion the nuclear waste can be dumped in the inland - of course, only Blacks live there, so it is called "uninhabited"!

Blacks took a significant role in the preparation for the anti-uranium mining Moratorium (1st April). The anti-uranium movement is a clear example of where white and black Australians, can, should and will stand together in a united struggle to control our country and our destiny ourselves. We all know the environmental dangers associated with the mining, refining and use of uranium. We are aware that this is a further example of a quarry and a dump. And we can see that the heading rush of the uranium lobby is another link in the involvement of Australia directly in the two superpowers' nuclear race for global supremacy. The devastation of Aboriginal land could be equalled all over the world by the madness of nuclear competition between the U.S and U.S.S.R.

The current struggle between the U.S and Soviet superpower has brought about the intensification of political and economic pressure on the working class, working and progressive people in Australia. We are being forced to bear the burden of U.S. imperialism's fight for survival. Nobody is suffering more in this crisis than the Blacks. For 200 years at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder, they are now being crushed even further. Fraser, co-operating in U.S. imperialism's move has slashed the Aboriginal Affairs budget to the stage where many Black housing, health,

legal and cultural organisation are finding it impossible to operate successfully. More spending cuts are expected.

In the capital cities and country town, the Black unemployment rate is literally ten times the rate of white workers - and that is shocking in itself. Through the imperialist ideology of racism, Blacks are kept at the bottom of the ever-growing pool of unemployed, which serves and makes things easier for the foreign multinationals to attack the people and reduce our living standards.

The Black struggle against the foreign pastoralists and miners and the obscene doctrine of racism which they never fail to promote has continued through the century to the present day. The Gurindji people struck in 1966 against the inhuman working conditions at Wave Hill station. After years of valiant struggle they have succeeded in winning back part of their land and a degree of self-determination. In the Pilbara, At Yirrkala, Weipa and Aurukun there have been big struggles recently. In the cities and towns Blacks have demonstrated and resisted police harassment, gaolings and beatings, and have fought to set up and maintain their support services in health, education, law, housing and for freedom from the tyrannical Queensland Acts. People will remember the courage of the Aboriginal Embassy in Canberra, its brutal suppression by the Federal Government in McMahon's time, and its reconstructions by a united group of Blacks and whites.