

Aborigines as various monuments and places are to people of other religions. These sites should be respected.

The federal government's interim heritage act gives total power to the Aboriginal affairs minister to decide whether a particular site should be protected. So far the minister has rejected every application received from Aborigines under the act.

The Socialist Workers Party calls for an effective heritage protection act. Aborigines, not a white government minister, should determine which sites are to be protected. Stronger penalties for violation of such sites are needed to protect them against the greed and power of the mining moguls.

Stop racist attacks on Aborigines!

As long as Aborigines are denied their collective rights, individual Aborigines will continue to be the victims of brutal assaults and even murder. Among the worst offenders are the police.

In jails all around the country Aborigines are routinely bashed. In recent times Eddy Murray, John Pat and Robert Walker have all died as a result of police or prison warders' bashings. Yet, in face of overwhelming evidence, the murderers of these three men remain unpunished.

The Socialist Workers Party demands that such racist murderers be immediately brought to justice. All abuse of Aborigines while in legal custody should be the subject of public inquiries run by the Aboriginal community and with decision-making power binding on governments.

Existing laws against racial discrimination are weak and seldom enforced. To eliminate racism, far stronger laws are needed. These should be supported by a national education campaign against racism.

It is time to put an end to 200 years of shameful abuse of the original inhabitants of this country.

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Policy statement on Aboriginal Rights

land rights now!

Aborigines are the most oppressed group in Australian society. Ever since the first European settlers arrived on this continent the original inhabitants have been hounded from their land and treated as outcasts.

It is well past time to begin repairing the damage caused by nearly two centuries of brutal discrimination.

It is clear that Aborigines still suffer from this discrimination:

- Their infant mortality rate is three times that of the non-Aboriginal population.
- Their average life expectancy is 20 years shorter than that of other Australians.
- Aboriginal children are 12 times more likely to drop out before completing high school.
- Unemployment among Aborigines averages 60 per cent — six times the national figure. In many remote Aboriginal communities unemployment exceeds 90 per cent. Something like 30 per cent of unemployed Aborigines do not receive unemployment benefits.

● Aborigines are 13 times more likely to be in prison than non-Aborigines. The overwhelming majority of Aboriginal prisoners are convicted of minor offences.

Aboriginal communities have set up organisations to combat these abuses. These organisations, such as the Aboriginal Legal and Medical services, must be allocated sufficient funds to enable them to carry on their work.

And the activities of such organisation should not be subject to government veto by the withholding of funds.

Funding should also be provided for Aboriginal initiatives in community-run education.

Workplace and educational affirmative action programs are needed to overcome the effects of long-term discrimination. High priority should be attached to training Aboriginal teachers, health, welfare and legal workers.

At present the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs has a great deal of control over the lives of many Aborigines. The National Aboriginal Conference is maintained as a powerless token of Aboriginal "self-determination."

Independent Aboriginal political organisation should be supported.

For genuine land rights and compensation for

land stolen from the Aborigines!

Aborigines occupied this country long before Europeans, and have their own culture and languages.

Through discriminatory laws that operated in most states until the 1960s (and still operate in Queensland), Aborigines have been excluded from the mainstream of Australian life. They have also been denied any effective political voice and their traditional societies have been shattered.

In order to repair some of this damage and preserve their culture, many Aboriginal groups are requesting ownership of parts of the land they occupied for thousands of years.

This is an entirely reasonable request. However, it is running into a lot of opposition from wealthy mining and pastoral interests whose main preoccupation is their balance sheets.

South Australia, the Northern Territory and New South Wales already have land rights acts, which go some way towards granting Aborigines rights to a small part of the land that was stolen from them. But there are serious shortcomings in all these acts:

- Aborigines do not have the right to control mining on their land.
- In the NT only Aborigines who can show traditional ties with particular areas may lodge land claims. This works against the great majority of Aborigines whose traditional links have been destroyed.
- Under all three acts, most economically



viable land cannot be claimed by Aborigines.

The governments of Queensland and Tasmania refuse to grant land rights, and it appears that the governments of Western Australia and Victoria will pass inadequate legislation.

The federal government has promised to pass a national land rights act, but has yet to produce even a draft law. The Liberals say they will repeal any law Labor passes.

The Socialist Workers Party calls for a national land rights act which would give all Aborigines the right to claim land and/or compensation.

For Aboriginal control over mining on Aboriginal land! Big mining and pastoral companies and their mouthpieces in the Liberal-National Party oppose Aboriginal land rights. Not content with stealing the richest land, these moneygrubbers want to ensure their unfettered access to mineral deposits in the largely desert and semi-desert areas which are left for Aborigines to claim.

These millionaire thieves are spending millions of dollars to fool non-Aborigines into believing that Aboriginal land claims threaten the interests of white working people. In fact only their own massive profits are of any concern to them.

Regaining some of their land opens the possibility for many Aborigines to build better lives for themselves. This possibility is taken away if the land is to be taken out of their control when it becomes valuable. Land rights means nothing if only valueless land is involved.

For an effective national Aboriginal Heritage Protection Act!

Ever since the colonisation of Australia, both state and church have sought to destroy Aboriginal culture and traditions. The biggest blow to the Aboriginal people was the theft of their traditional lands.

For thousands of years the Aborigines developed a lifestyle that was intimately linked to the land. Their dispossession meant not only the loss of their livelihood but also much of their culture and identity as a people.

Despite the cheap jibes of mining companies and others, the preservation of Aboriginal sacred sites is as important to