

LAND

"GURINDJIS AT WATTIE CREEK"

"HUGE URANIUM FIND IN ARNHAM LAND"

"NORTHERN CATTLE INDUSTRY PROSPEROUS"

"LAND RIGHTS FOR ABORIGINES"

We see such headlines in the paper from time to time. Do they have any connection? What do the Aborigine want? What does "Land Rights" mean?

Land for Aborigines is important because:

- a) **IT CAN PROVIDE THEM WITH AN ECONOMIC BASE.** Land can provide Aborigines with funds to develop their own pastoral and mining enterprises.
- b) **IT CAN PROVIDE ABORIGINES WITH A SOCIAL BASE.** Land can give Aborigines a sense of belonging, a sense of feeling that they are "at home", a sense of feeling secure in their own territory.
- c) **IT CAN HELP ABORIGINES MAINTAIN THEIR RELIGION.** Land is important to Aborigines from a religious point of view. It provides them with spiritual strength. Certain areas of land are regarded by Aborigines as being sacred, just as Europeans regard places like Cathedrals and the Shrine as sacred land. Aboriginal Land Rights would protect these sacred sites and assist Aborigines to maintain their religion.

WHY SHOULD ABORIGINES BE GIVEN BACK THEIR LAND?

- a) Aborigines make up 25% of the population of Northern Australia. If all these people are to be able to support themselves, they are going to need their own industries like pastoral stations or mining enterprises. Land Rights provide such work opportunities for Aborigines.
- b) Aborigines had land taken from them when Captain Cook "discovered" Australia. They have never been paid compensation. In terms of natural justice, Aborigines should get Land Rights.

DO THE ABORIGINES WANT ALL OF AUSTRALIA?

NO:

Aborigines want

- a) Aboriginal legal **ownership** of existing land reserved for the use of Aborigines – areas like Arnhem Land, La Perouse etc.,
- b) Aboriginal legal ownership of Traditional Tribal land at present owned and leased by the Government, areas such as Wattie Creek, where the Gurindji live.
- c) Compensation for land taken from them – just as you or I would be compensated if the Government took our land to build a freeway, so Aborigines want compensation for land taken away.
- d) Aboriginal consent and benefits from Mining of their land.

BUT WILL IT WORK?

Aboriginal Land Rights have been granted in **part** in South Australia, Victoria, in New Zealand, the United States, Canada, Africa and even in New Guinea. Why not all of Australia?

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

Write to **Mr. Wentworth, Parliament House, Canberra** asking for Aboriginal Land Rights, or

Send money to **"Wattie Creek Fund" c/- Abschol 344 Victoria Street, North Melbourne, Victoria.**

to support the struggle for Land Rights.