

***Herald* (Melbourne), 24 March 1930, p. 3, Shadrach James, Help my People!
Native Preacher's Strong Plea: Case for the Aborigines**

It is gratifying to note that another gracious and courageous friend has stepped into the arena to fight our battle. The article on this question, which appeared in *The Herald* on Saturday [22 March 1930] is a momentous one, and will, undoubtedly, lead other sympathetic friends to do likewise and expose the injustice and wrongs under which my poor, helpless, downtrodden people are being hustled into an untimely grave.

No sooner had the white man invaded our land than the extermination of our people began, and it has gone on, and is still going on, under various guises. It is an undeniable fact that the early colonists, not only dislodged our people from their hunting grounds, but, with the help of the police, shot down hundreds of them. It seems the police can do so still with impunity, although not going to the same measure of excess. Their wickedness in this respect knew no bounds; they armed and taught our men to go on a pleasure excursion occasionally, shooting down their own people for the squatters' rum and "bacca".

ATTITUDE OF WHITES

The whole attitude of the white man towards the aborigine has all along been to dispirit and humiliate him, to extinguish his self-respect, to suppress his ambition; in short, to kill his hope. To his natural disabilities the white man has added other disabilities which I cannot enlarge upon here, and which make the conditions of life seem so hard that the very atmosphere in which he lives appears hostile, and the consequence is he has no will to live.

Our so-called protectors are diligently attending to the care of my people, with the full conviction that they are slowly but surely passing out. "Let us", say they, "make them as comfortable as we can before they pass out". Hence all their efforts for the care of my people are mere palliatives, only sop. There is absolutely nothing, as a matter of fact, in all their activities, feeding, clothing, housing and caring, which can be counted as of vital interest to lift us up by education and other means to aspire to the dignity of citizenship. Other colored races in Fiji, New Zealand, Samoa, New Hebrides have been raised to the dignity of teachers, lawyers, doctors and clergymen.

The mentality of my people, according to the late Sir Baldwin Spencer, the greatest authority on this question, is not inferior to the white man's. While the efforts put forth for the advance of the colored people, I have just mentioned have been attended with success, because they have been carried on with confidence, earnestness and assiduity, there have been no serious attempts for our advancement in Australia.

THE RACE CHANGING

Do not think of the future fitness of the aborigines to improve intellectually, socially and morality in terms of the past. The aborigines of today are different from those of yesterday. They are more industrious, more ambitious, more intellectual, more provident and less vicious. They are eagerly but patiently waiting for the time to come when the white people now occupying our land and enjoying the inestimable benefits

it yields (I mean the white people in power, who are still possessed of a live conscience) will shake off their indifference and heartlessness and wholeheartedly arise to give our cause the hearing and consideration it deserves. We are the descendants of the people you have unjustly disinherited of their land, and of their privileges.

We are not unreasonable in asking you to secure for the us the best prospects of free development and to provide for us a full opportunity to display our capacities, and so legislate that we should know that we live and move and have our being in Australia as right, not on sufferance. We are at present—shame on the Governments of this land—landless and homeless wanderers. We ask you to secure land and homes for us by public law and not by regulation of the Aboriginal Protection Board.

NATIVE M.P. WANTED

As one who thoroughly knows his people, their thoughts and feelings, their likes and dislikes, I may be privileged to suggest that the aborigines should be placed under the supervision of the Federal Government. They should have a native representative in Federal Parliament and a native protector with an advisory council comprising whites and aborigines in each State.

We strongly deprecate the policy of placing us under the supervision of the police. Many of my people shun the aboriginal stations controlled by the Aborigines' Protection Boards because of this and its gaol-like conditions. Police and gaol are inseparables in the mind of an aborigine, and this association does not tend to elevate, but depress him.