

***The Age*, 16 March 1933, p. 10, 'Treatment of Aborigines', William Cooper, Letter to the Editor**

I desire to draw attention to the inhuman treatment of aborigines in Central Australia. These aborigines live under primitive conditions. But they are not allowed to live in peace. White men who call themselves civilised, go among them with firearms, and often use them on unarmed aborigines. Aborigines have a right to receive the utmost consideration and best of attention from the whites. They lost much when the whites came to Australia, and surely it is the duty of whites to protect them from attacks by armed men.

We read in newspapers of 3rd February, 1933, of a grave charge against the police for alleged acts of brutality against aborigines. These charges were made by Mr R. S. Schenck, of the Mount Margaret Aboriginal Mission Station, Morgan, W.A. He stated that for no apparent reason members of the police force shot natives down. It is the duty of the Government and all white people to take up this matter, and to provide tribal sanctuaries for the aborigines. It is against the nature of the aborigine to move from his home country and he should be well cared for in his natural environment. If carefully educated in right surroundings aborigines would soon accustom themselves to the ways of decent white men. Scientists, anthropologists and sociologists are doing nothing to bring about just conditions for these aborigines, but simply look upon them as material for investigation and experiment. During the war many aborigines were among the first to offer for enlistment in the A.I.F. to protect the British Empire. Surely, then, it is our duty to protect the remainder of their race from inhuman treatment.

When the first white settlers arrived 145 years ago there were hundreds of thousands of aborigines here. But brutal extermination followed, and the number of full-blooded natives was reduced to 17,000. The killing of natives is continuing to-day, and if it is not soon stopped the Australian aborigine will become extinct.

Of course, all whites are not destroyers of natives. And not all whites give no consideration to them. There are many, for instance missionary workers, who go into the unpleasant parts of Australia to assist the natives. They suffer many tortures and inconveniences, but, realising the duty of the white race to the natives, they continue their work uncomplainingly. They who devote their lives to the preservation and uplift of the aborigines will be remembered forever, and given a honored place in the history books of the future. Surely, then, it is the duty of every white person in Australia to follow their example. Of course, all cannot go into Central Australia, but all of us can bring pressure to bear on the Government to have the aborigines protected from armed men, and to provide sanctuaries in the areas in which they now live. Yours, &c. ...