



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

This article was originally published in printed form. The journal began in 1973 and was titled *The Aboriginal Child at School*. In 1996 the journal was transformed to an internationally peer-reviewed publication and renamed *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*.

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11. Greater use of experienced teachers to take over responsibilities in certain areas of the school and its curriculum.
12. Recognition of education deficiencies and giving special attention in areas where interests lie.
13. Having a genuine respect for the efforts of the deprived in coping with their difficult life conditions.

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Rowley C.D., *Outcasts in White Australia*. Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972, 450 pp, \$2.50. (also in hardcover from ANU Press, Canberra, 1970).

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There is no longer any excuse for ignorance of Australian anthropology or race relations. The proliferation of books on these subjects in recent years has ranged from coffee table trivia to scholarly tomes, ensuring that any who still adhere to the racial stereotypes of a generation ago do so through disinclination to know better.

Amongst this proliferation Professor Rowley's work deserves particular attention. It is the result of several years of careful study by qualified researchers throughout Australia; certainly it is the largest and most systematic investigation of its kind to date. It is distinguished, too, by the emphasis Rowley brings to it. Work in Aboriginal studies has been published by linguists, ethnographers, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, archaeologists, educators and physicians, but this is the first definitive project from the viewpoint of political analysis.

Outcasts in White Australia is Volume II of a trilogy entitled *Aboriginal Policy and Practice*, commissioned by the Social Science Research Council of Australia. Volume I, *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society*, deals with the conflict between European and Aboriginal cultures that all but annihilated the latter. For the purpose of Volumes II and III, Rowley

divides the continent into two regions "colonial" and "settled". Volume III, *The Remote Aborigines*, deals with the present situation of Aborigines in the "colonial" areas of the north and centre, where Aborigines outnumber part-Aborigines. *Outcasts in White Australia* is concerned with "settled" areas, where the Aboriginal population is relatively small, predominantly part-Aboriginal, and concentrated in or near urban European communities. Rowley admits to arbitrariness in the dividing line and extreme diversity within each of the areas defined, but his division is a useful one.

This volume, then, is a study of the place in European Australian society of those Aborigines and part-Aborigines who are relatively acculturated and living in the closer-settled areas of the continent. The first section of the book, *The Emergence of Part-Aboriginal Communities*, paints an unflattering picture of official policies and past attempts to control the "Aboriginal problem". Discrimination was disguised under platitudes and institutionalized in law. Reserves were created to "protect" the Aboriginal, and conveniently remove him from the white man's view. Queensland's discriminatory legislation rates a chapter all to itself, with its policies characterized as "... a continued yielding of principle to expediency". (p.107) Four Queensland Aboriginal settlements fall within the area of this book: Cherbourg, Woorabinda, Palm Island and Yarrabah. Rowley hints that the reserves act in part as an employer's dream - a reservoir of labour whose supply can be controlled at the whim of a public servant.

Section II, *Journey Without Compass*, presents case studies from Aboriginal communities throughout Australia, under widely varying conditions, and Section III, *Aboriginal Living Standards and the Move to the Cities*, demonstrates the trend occurring in Aboriginal communities today. Assimilation has proved a dismal failure, and integration is being manifested principally in an urban drift by Aborigines. Aboriginal Australians, despite the high infant mortality rate, are increasing in numbers faster than any other group, and urban drift, with its attendant social conflict, is a disturbing trend. It is in the city, says Rowley, that "... all the frustrations of the rural areas come to a head". (p.439)

What can be done that has not already been tried and proved useless? Section IV, *Policies*, investigates this question. Chapter 19, *Towards a New Policy and Administration*,

is particularly worth reading. Here Rowley sounds a quiet but insistent alarm to White Australia:

"In one way or another, Aboriginal leaders will come to the fore and develop political pressures. Governments may negotiate with leaders willing to operate within the political system or face others who have rejected it." (p.422)

The alternative to conflict, he believes, is to strengthen the political influence of Aboriginal people, to grant greater autonomy. The traditional solution to the "Aboriginal problem" was to reduce Aboriginal autonomy. We have inherited the fruits of that "solution": frustration and impaired flexibility in the Aboriginal people. In order to restore flexibility, to enable Aboriginals to determine their future in a changing European Australia, we must restore the right and ability of genuine decision-making to the Aboriginal people. There is fear among European Australians that greater autonomy for Aboriginals would be a divisive influence. Perhaps in the short run it would, but in the longer term it is doubtful that we could sow greater tensions than are created by the present situation.

Rowley's views ought to be known to every Australian. They deal with an important issue - one which it will become increasingly difficult to ignore. For Australian teachers, there is special reason to reflect on the future of the two peoples of Australia. Even in our school textbooks we blandly ignore the first 30,000 for the last 200 years of Australian history, and then frequently present distortions, omissions and outright lies to compound our children's ignorance about the Aboriginal people and their place in Australian society.

For teachers in Aboriginal schools, this book and others like it are indispensable reading. Whatever the future of Aboriginal Australians - and there are many different futures predicted - the role of education in achieving that future must be a significant one.

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Kearney, G.E., De Lacey, P.R. & Davidson, G.R. (Eds.) *The Psychology of Aboriginal Australians*. John Wiley & Sons A'sia. Pty. Ltd. 1973. (446 pp.)

S. Pauling, Sydney, N.S.W.

May I say at this stage that this book is in my opinion long over-due for those of us in this field of education. This