

Patsy wants to learn how to start a thought rebellion

By DEBORAH GARLAND

Mrs Patsy Kruger, 30, is the only woman among five Aborigines who left for America yesterday to represent Australia for the first time at the Congress of African Peoples in Atlanta, Georgia.

Intelligent, vocal and articulate, she is determined to learn all she can, in what might be a six-week stay, about how best to start a revolution for Aboriginal rights in Australia.

A revolution of thought, that is, among both black and white Australians.

Mrs Kruger is president of the Victorian Branch of the Aborigines Advancement League.

She said that until now black Australians had not thought about this revolution both because of their ignorance about politics and their fear of being branded as communists if they took part in any protest or civil disobedience.

White Australians had tried not to think about it because they were "apathetic, selfish or self-centred."

Mrs Kruger said: "Oh, they have a conscience about it.

"They proved that in the 1967 referendum. But they subdued it and didn't really go to the basic problems of the Aborigines.

"It's only in the past year that some have started to face up to these and even believe we might have certain rights such as land of our own.

"The Aborigines Advancement League has existed for 13 years on money given by people from all walks of life but it is a charitable organisation and we don't want charity but justice.

"To my mind, the Government's policies concerning us so far are just perpetuating this charity.

Married to a German migrant and the mother of two daughters aged six and six months, Mrs Kruger lives in a comfortable big flat in the Melbourne suburb of North Caulfield.

If she feels bitter about the plight of Aborigines in general, she also has some regrets about her own life.



MRS PATSY KRUGER at Melbourne Airport on her way to the United States yesterday.

"Having been assimilated, I've retained nothing of my people's culture, I don't know a word of our language or anything about our ceremonial background and art," she said.

"I read and see all I can about it but somehow only through European eyes, so much of the interpretation is lost."

The eldest of five children of parents of Melanesian descent, she was born in Ayr, North Queensland, and educated to intermediate standard as what she calls the first black kid in a State school in Bowen, Queensland.

"Australian"
2nd September 1970