

Violence flares in 'march on racism'

SYDNEY (AUP). A "march against racism" exploded into violence yesterday when groups of aborigines and their white supporters attempted to storm the city office of the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs.

Militant aborigines and whites wearing red head bands and "Black Power" badges and screaming "We are going in," fought police outside the foundation's glass fronted headquarters.

Five people, four aborigines and one white man, were arrested.

The violence erupted at the end of the first joint demonstration in Sydney by the anti-apartheid movement and those campaigning for land rights for the Gurindji tribe in the Northern Territory.

It began when the "Black Power" aborigines halted a march of about 200 people at the foundation offices and called for a sit down on the footpath.

About 50 people, some parents with young children, sat down shouting "down with Uncle Toms" and "this organisation is white dominated."

The demonstrators were

warned by a police officer that they were forbidden to block the footpath and would be moved on.

Then came the call to storm the building.

The marchers charged forward to be met by a solid wall of police.

Fists flew in a vicious confrontation.

Half a dozen demonstrators were knocked to the ground as police forced them back.

Peaceful

It was a violent finish to what had begun despite fighting words from "Black Power" speakers as a mild, even somewhat apathetic, gathering.

Meanwhile Melbourne's moratorium march yesterday turned out to be little more than a sunny afternoon's stroll through the city streets.

Compared with the three previous marches, it was a terribly tame and quiet affair.

The only conflict was in the widely differing estimates for the number of people who attended.

The Labor MHR for Lalor and a leading figure in the campaign, Dr Jim Cairns, claimed 10,000 people were there.

The police said 1200. And most observers put it at between 3000 and 4000.

But, even on Dr Cairns' estimate, the march was only a platoon compared with the army of anti-Vietnam war demonstrators who were at previous events.

Dr Cairns, speaking at the somewhat fruitless blockade of the Labor and National Service Offices in Flinders street, felt the news media had misled people into believing the Vietnam war was over.

He told the gathering: "The object of this demonstration is to break down the barrier of propaganda put up by the Press about Vietnam."

At the first stopping place of the marchers, the CRA Building in Collins street, not one of the 50 policemen outside the building or their colleagues inside and those waiting in a nearby bus were called upon to do anything but watch.

And at the final spot, the Princes Gate officers of the Labor and National Service Department, the police made only one move.

Supt. M. Patterson, surrounded by about 150 policemen, stepped forward and told the marchers that they would not be allowed behind the barrier to blockade the offices.

He said Dr Cairns and six of his supporters could come forward but no-one else.

The offer was refused.

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