

9 aboriginals are VIP guests in Mao's China

PEKING. — Nine aboriginals touring Communist China have been given VIP treatment, including large rooms in the celebrated Peking Hotel.

From a Special Correspondent

The aboriginals — four of them women — are led by Chicka Dixon, a campaigner for aboriginal land and civil rights, who figured recently in the establishment of the aboriginal tent "embassy" on the lawns of Parliament House, Canberra.

The Chinese whose general attitude to Australia is cool, invited the aboriginals to see how things were done in the Peoples Republic.

Film

They visited the Canton Fair, talked with Chinese officials in Peking and went to the capital's Institute of National Minorities where 1300 students from all over the country learn about each other's problems.

At the institute the aboriginals showed the students a film made by Spanish producers depicting Australian "police violence" in the pulling down of the 'embassy.'

Wherever they go in

China, the team is handing out red and black buttons bearing the words "Land rights now! Aboriginal embassy Jan. 26 to July 20. Destroyed by white racist violence."

The aboriginal team also went to a secondary school where the children welcomed them by singing in Chinese "Click Go the Shears" and with banners bearing the words "Welcome, aboriginal people."

Now the aboriginals are on a tour of China's minority areas, visiting remote parts of the country including Inner Mongolia. There are 55 national groups in China and the Chinese want to show their visitors what has been done for these minorities under Chairman Mao.

As a minority group in Australia, the aboriginals claim they are being treated as second-class citizens, particularly over the refusal of their de-

mand for full title to ancient tribal land in areas of the Northern Territory.

Mr. Dixon said: "Before we left home we were told all sorts of wild stories about what would become of us.

"White Australians said we would not come back. Some even said we would be locked up and even shot. All that sort of thing. They tried to intimidate us.

But . . .

"But we thought we'd come and see for ourselves anyway. We had nothing to lose. And look what's happened. We've been welcomed and given a sympathetic hearing."

The team of nine claims to represent 14,000 aboriginals now surviving in Australia.

Three are students, and the others include an actor, a waterside

worker, and a social worker. Each State is represented except Tasmania.

Two of the women in the group are married. One, Mrs. Lyn Thompson, is the wife of an archaeologist at the Sydney Museum.

A television film pictures the group standing in front of the entrance to the Forbidden City in Peking, clenched fists raised Chinese-style and Chairman Mao's portrait behind them.