

A lot of uranium goes into rockets and bombs. It is the next generation that will suffer.



Andrew Leku goes spearing stingray at Kulaluk.

David Genarri camps beside the East Alligator River with Mary Alwendiwendi and his old mother Rosie Abgoolom. He told BUNJI this story, which we have called . . .

## The Man Who Sold The Dreaming

Short Leg Frank, properly named Frank Nalowerd, knew his place, Gabo Jang - The Green Ant Dreaming. But he didn't know what other big thing was there.

Frank, he used to walk up with his crutches to get his pension at the Border Store. That's where he got the iron to build his house, from Perry Robinson.

All this time, people use to fly around in an instrument plane. That's how they found straight uranium at Gabo Jang. Frank went over there and showed them which is the dreaming place.

### THE PEOPLE SAY NO

Queensland Mines ask about taking out the uranium. The people first been say "No". Still they went over and over again. Next time I talk with one Queensland Mining Company, I say "That thing can kill."

That bloke said, "We will be there."

Frank put his head down and say "Yes." He said "I give you a couple of yards away, not to touch that Green Ant Dreaming." Frank was all jammed up, like against a wall.

### TOYOTA, CARAVAN, MONEY

The Queensland Mining say, "You agree with us and we give you everything you want. Toyota, caravan, money." They been handing to him. He live there at Nabarlek now. Over here he leave his house.

Later on, when Frank made the law, he said, "I didn't know about this uranium, but now I am going to be manager. I am going to own the place." And he bring his family. Doesn't matter that we are Gunwinggu, everyone going to have his own acres.

I think people wanted to have their own place. That story coming a bit typical.

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There are other mining companies too, going around talking to the people. Mr. Bob Randal from Pan-Con drives the people around. He shows them the Pan-Con mining settlement at Ja Ja and says, "You can have a nice place like this if you agree to uranium."

David Genarri says Bob Randal has promised to help get a pump for water supply, which is what they badly need. While the Northern Land Council talks, the big mining companies are busy behind their back, meeting the "traditional owners" out in the bush.

PART III

## NO MORE BOOMERANG

Spears were raised in the Fort Hill camp of Surveyor-General (and Protector of Aborigines) George Goyder during the first months of the occupation of Larrakia territory. Not, in this case, against the surveyors, but as a threat to an elder who apparently welcomed the settlers. "The chief", as Goyder called him, was given armed protection.

The gun, a new power stronger than the spear, had already intervened and changed traditional law.

It is now a long time since settlers were riddled with spears and blacks walked naked in the streets. These, we hear people say, were the "Myall" people. Over the years, the traditional Aboriginal way of life has been gradually caricatured so as not to offend or threaten the dominant 'culture'. Where it exists, it has been turned in upon itself and the people, often more grotesquely abused with the influence of alcohol. Traditional way of life is also used in a vain effort to keep the young people under control or to maintain a respected position for the old people. As a result, today's young blacks are impatient with powerless traditional law, without losing pride in Balck culture - songs, dance and legends. Most deeply, they retain the Aboriginal values, which are contradictory to the capitalist way of living and thinking.

Yet in land claims before the Commission and in mining negotiations, it is the Traditional occupation of lands that is emphasised, the fourth of Woodward's aims. (Page 15)

It cannot be that the Liberal Government genuinely recognises spiritual links to the land, for there is a bar on claiming alienated land. It cannot be because the Government seeks a spiritual revival, for that would be a threat.

"Respect for the traditional owner" is a nice sounding phrase that sounds fair and good to both black and white. Then why does this paper question it? These articles are called "The Trap" as a warning against blindly following definitions of Aboriginal tradition made in courts, commissions or parliament.

How can "traditional land ownership" be separated from all the other old ways? It cannot! To talk about "getting our land back", or at least a just proportion of the land, is a better way. It is the talk of the Gurinjis, the Larrakia and the Aboriginal Embassy. It leaves plenty of room to move, to decide the direction of evolution of black culture. To maintain, to change, to borrow. Everyone can identify with such talk - it knows no tribal boundary.

There is a popular movement that is often misunderstood. It is the movement of people away from big settlements to outstations. Mostly family groups returning to their 'homelands', away from corrupt councils and grog trouble. The reason "lies not in the wish of the people to return to the past, but simply to regain some control over their own lives." (Land Rights News, July

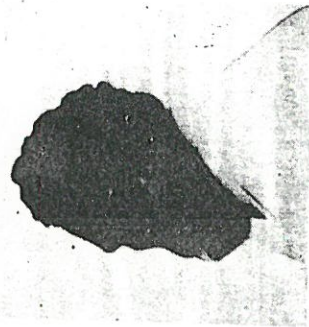


Galarwy Yunupingu, Chairman of the Northern Land Council.

77). It is not a traditionalist movement, but a political movement. The camps receive enough back-up services to prove they have needs more than just bush tucker. A white view of the outstations could be that each group is after their own block. The semi-permanent camps look that way because, (a) no real need for group defence (b) no long foot-walks away for hunting and ceremonies (c) less tribal law (d) sparser population. However, it is not a tribal break-up, that is not what the people seek.

That is why the Land Council should be a good thing at this time, to hold the people together in a time of change and challenge.

It is ironic that because of the way the Land Rights Act is written, they find themselves champions of people defined as the "traditional owners". A bit different to the way the Myall people gathered when the land was under attack.



Nandijwarra Amagula. "Dream-time" ... not to be exploited by people who want only money.

313



That is why the recent formation of a new land council in the west is very encouraging. Over there, one thousand blacks travelled long distances to gather for four days at a sacred site, forming their own land council. Because of the hostile attitude of the Court Government, they are likely to be spared the backing of the white man's law, and will probably make land claims in a less institutionalised way.

While the Northern Land Council negotiate and battle the courts surrounded by white advisers, there is another group, not yet directly involved in land claims, but which is unashamedly traditionalist. It is the Aboriginal Cultural Foundation. The chairman is well-known through his part in the film, "The Last Wave". He is Nandjiwarra Amagula. Nandjiwarra says: "The dreamtime is not to be touched by white fellas. Mining disturbs the Dreamtime. White fellas don't understand."

"The land comes to us from the Dreamtime and as this is not to be exploited by people who want only money. The land is important to us and that is why we fight to save the land." (Interview in the Darwin Star, March 30th, 1978). The article continues:-

"Together with 600 or 700 lawmen of the tribal groups of northern Australia, from the Kimberleys to Cape York, the Foundation forms a barrier against the continued encroachment on black lands". There are only two permanent Europeans on the staff.

Amongst indigenous people oppressed by colonialism, indeed even in Europe, there is plenty of precedent for traditionalist revivalist groups to take the lead when political bodies have failed to protect the interests of the people. Aborigines want land, they don't want dangerous uranium mined and they reject selfish capitalist values. The Government policy is hegemony and they work through the Land Councils. They have seen through the failed policies of assimilation and integration, that the Aboriginal way of thinking is indestructably opposed to the dominant outlook. If they can't get the people, get the leaders. If there are no leaders, then create them. Return land. Enough land to satisfy world opinion and silence black militancy, but make sure the people are well locked into the national economy and have as their final though probably unattainable goal, the same aspirations as the majority of Australians. With that scenario, land rights is no worry. The people can carry on with their quaint customs as long as they wish. Hegemony means it doesn't really matter who owns the land.

Such a policy infers that Aborigines go down with a sinking ship. It is too sophisticated for the Bjelke-Petersens of Australian politics. Their savage attacks on the hegemony land rights policy of Mr. Viner and Co., show signs of wrecking the whole scheme and drawing the battle lines more distinctly, although Canberra will continue the land rights charade until at least the first uranium mines are in operation.

[The title, "No More Boomerang" is from a poem by Kath Walker]



Blacks in Sydney joined the April 1st protest against uranium with a banner "Land Rights, Not Uranium" Photo by Tony Forward



Clancy Cahill worrying about the uranium mining on his country, during a stay at Bobby Secretary's camp.

## The Northern Land Council is on the wrong track. Aborigines say 'Stop Uranium Mining'

"Kiss your children good-bye," says the well-known anti-nuclear poster. With the sudden up-turn in black infant mortality since the Fraser government cut back spending on Aboriginal projects, it would be understandable if northern tribes put the dangers of a nuclear age, low in the list of their concerns.

But amongst the tribes, there is a deep undercurrent of fear at the dangers of atom bombs and nuclear holocaust, seemingly supported by dreamtime legends of the uranium fields, rich as they are in sacred sites and ceremonial cave paintings.

The Northern Land Council, the official group set up to represent Aborigines in land matters, has not treated uranium as a uniquely hazardous mineral. Influences within the Council like Zorn, the American negotiator, and McGill, the legal adviser, have so far successfully separated the conflict between the Alligator River tribes and miners, from the mainstream of the anti-nuclear movement. The absence of representatives from the NLC at national mobilisations has been confusing and disheartening, particularly in Darwin's token protest rally, which was well attended by blacks. If the Land Council joined the protest movement wholeheartedly, Fraser and his gang would be in very troubled water.

Instead, the press had been able to feature the notorious photograph of Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu out barramundi fishing with the PM, proudly holding aloft their catch.

Unfortunately, the NLC staff have actively co-operated with the well-orchestrated media build-up of the elected chairperson, although to his credit, Yunupingu has been reluctant to take the position of a "black Bob Hawke". The Aborigines of western Arnhem Land, particularly the older "traditional owners", have had to take the buffeting of wave after wave of proposal and counter proposal, swamped by the complexity of it all.

Meanwhile, back in the office, "informed sources" within the growing bureaucracy allege that the Council has become too heavily influenced by the twenty or so non-aboriginal employees during the complex uranium negotiations.

At first glance, it appears that way. The forty black delegates who are supposed to control the NLC, could not feel welcome in the cramped air-conditioned first floor office - an office that looks like any other government bureaucracy, fronted by a tiny reception desk.

Influences within the council take a philosophical position too. Zorn was employed by the PNG government and Yunupingu is reportedly impressed by Mr. Somare.

The idea is that the best hope for blacks is the creation of a black bourgeoisie. They have no confidence in traditional black social systems to withstand the onslaught of big business dealings.

The black delegates can still assert their authority and more truly represent their people. The delegates are well aware of the national movements, in particular the Aboriginal Embassy that helped win the principle of land rights. They are also aware of, in spite of the Land Council policy, the world-wide movement against uranium and nuclear proliferation.

This is their natural allegiance and it is doubtful if the NLC can much longer disassociate itself from that powerful popular movement without foregoing the claim to be representing black opinion.

## BARAK SOPE WRITES ON LAND AND POLITICS

Australian Aborigines must study the experience of similar people in other countries. Here is an extract from a very important book called "Land and Politics in the New Hebrides", by Barak Sope [pictured below].

In the New Hebrides islands, which are in the Pacific Ocean, the blacks had been tricked or forced out of their land by the white colonialists. Barak Sope's book helped the people of Vanuaka (as they call their country) to work out a good way to resist the colonialists and get back their land and independence. Some things are the same as here, as the book says - "In the New Hebrides, land rights were traditionally held by a group. Individual rights existed but only at a certain group level, so that land was inalienable." (could not be sold or lost).

"The colonialists are ignorant of, and blind to, the New Hebridean ideas and rules connected with land... the ties of tenure and kinship and the deep, close relationship to the land are a phenomena that no European legislation has ever managed to cope with."

"In brief, it can be said that the native land tenure systems were more flexible and informal because they were based on customs."

"The European tenure system is based on legal formalities which were written down, making the system less flexible. The New Hebridean flexibility allowed for changes in accordance with environmental conditions and the need of the communities..."

"The penetration of Western ways of land usage and distribution is neither deep nor effective enough to vitally change the traditional land systems. This



is because the colonial land tenure systems, which are closely entwined with the capitalist economic system, contradict the New Hebridean communal or group relationships with the land."

"The capitalist type of economy in which the basic element is the individual ownership of property, undermines our entire social structure. This is the trend the colonialists are encouraging to develop a capitalist economy."

"The basis of socialism is manifest in New Hebrides' social structures and group ownership. The utilisation of land for maximum benefit must occur within the structure of group ownership of land rights."

"But again, group development of the land cannot be maximised unless it is related to an economic system which will not contradict it, but complement it."

"For this reason, one would recommend a socialist type of economy. It would be hard to convince many Pacific Islanders to accept this because through colonialism they have been 'brainwashed' to take socialism as a dirty word. In fact, they have become blind to the village way of life being the basis of socialism itself; the community services, obligations to village and family and equal opportunity to achieve one's status are what socialism strives for. Small island communities have these concepts and there is no need to introduce them."

Since Barak Sope wrote his book in 1973, a lot has changed in Vanuaku. Obviously the villagers were not as brainwashed as he thought!

Their success is largely because of educated leaders like Barak, who identify completely with the people and work with them. In this case, as with most 'emerging' people, the Vanuaku islanders rejected the values of the colonisers and used their own traditional community spirit to oppose them. It wasn't easy!



Barak Sope, who wrote the book "Land and Politics in the New Hebrides"

14

## The Aims of Aboriginal Land Rights

- 1) the doing of simple justice to a people who have been deprived of their land without their consent and without compassion.
- 2) the promotion of social harmony and stability within the wider Australian community by removing, as far as possible, the legitimate causes of complaint of an important minority within that community.
- 3) the provision of land holdings as a first essential for people who are economically depressed and who, at present, have no real opportunity of achieving a normal Australian standard of living.
- 4) the preservation, where possible, of the spiritual link with his/her own land which gives each Aboriginal his/her sense of identity and which lies at the heart of his spiritual beliefs.
- 5) the maintenance and perhaps improvement of Australia's standing among the nations of the world by demonstrating fair treatment of an ethnic minority.

[from 2nd Woodward Report - Land Rights Commission - April 1974  
1974

"The horde or band has an entitlement of access to areas adjoining the estates of its members, and areas further afield, which depends on mytho-ritual linkages, kinship ties and clan affiliations of the members to other land-owning groups. There is some obligation upon the members of a horde to make known their presence to the traditional owners of the land over which they travel, but the lengths to which the senior members of the horde will go to gain either express or tacit permission from the land-owners will depend largely upon the strength of mutual kinship ties, clan affiliations, totemic relationships and the current state of political relationships. In this way, an Aboriginal person, as a member of a group, has a traditional, though qualified entitlement to use and occupy an area of land which is much larger than the area of land to which he or she claims traditional ownership." Page 256, Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry, Second Report [The Fox Report].

15