

7.6.94
Braidwood

Dear Bill,

I gave this paper to
the FAIRA conference in Brisbane
last week and held up Benji
for all to see. I have also given
a copy to Cheryl Buchanan.

But, sadly, I have not
noticed any notes in Carbon Times
or S.T.H., the only papers I got.
Very disappointing for you, but I do
think the recognition & sales will
come. Nick & Harvair have their
copies and congratulate you.

Meanwhile, good luck
with your studies & see you one
day.

All the best,

Wesley

P.S. The conference, over June
1-3 was a wonderful reunion
for me. Today's Aboriginal
leaders are impressive & powerful.

FAIRA CONFERENCE

Brisbane June 1-3 1994

Paper by Stewart Harris.

I want to begin by thanking FAIRA for inviting me to come to this conference. It was quite a shock when Pam Jones phoned me because I am, as you can see, a very out of date old man. I have not for some years followed closely the course of Aboriginal affairs. I was hesitant about accepting FAIRA'S invitation, and then I remembered how Aborigines all over Australia had called me 'old man', **with respect**, and that was 20 years ago. Now I am even **older**. So perhaps, I thought, my out of date views will be respected and found useful. So I did accept FAIRA'S kind invitation.

I would like to talk a little about the work of the Aboriginal Treaty Committee, of which I was a member, between 1978 and 1983, when we disbanded. None of us was Aboriginal, because our work was to be exclusively with non-Aboriginal Australians, with 'our mob'. This may have led many people to think that the Treaty idea was some sort of 'white fella' idea, and therefore, perhaps to young Aboriginal Australians, a suspect idea.

But, as Judith Wright pointed out in her scholarly book **We Call for a Treaty**, 'In March 1972 Aborigines in the Northern Territory made the first move in the direction of the demand for treaties. The Larrakia tribe, whose land originally covered most of the area now occupied by the town of Darwin sent a petition to the Prime Minister, William McMahon'.

Judith quoted the petition, which envisaged in fact many treaties, 'To suit each tribe.....for all time'.

And I have with me a new book **Bunji**, written by Bill Day who worked with the Larrakia people and their amazing leader Kulamarini or Bobby Secretary. I would like to give this copy of **Bunji** to FAIRA for its library. I had hoped to bring you, as a tribute from Judith Wright, a new signed copy of her **We Call for a Treaty**. But it is out of print. Happily Collins/Fontana are now doing a re-print. It's a great work of reference.

Preparing to write this paper for the conference, I had a look at the final issue of The Aboriginal Treaty Committee's quarterly journal, dated October 1983. Marcia Langton, representing the Federation of Aboriginal Land Councils, had just reported to the UN Working group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva. We printed an edited text of her report.

And Judith Wright referred in an article to her very dear friend, Kath Walker or Oodgeroo Noonuccul.

But what struck me as I re-read **Aboriginal Treaty News** of October, 1983, was the immense advance within one decade of the Aboriginal struggle for self-determination. The Mabo decision showed that the struggle had succeeded in changing fundamentally the minds of even High Court judges. And the Federal legislation flowing from the Mabo judgment had come only after tough negotiations with Aboriginal representatives.

I am well aware that the Native Title Act is only a beginning and that Aboriginal Australians, through their representative bodies, will be negotiating strongly for a satisfactory Social Justice Package and a satisfactory Land Acquisition Fund.

I am really not competent to talk about Mabo or the Package or the Fund. But I do want to make the point that only one decade ago it seemed that Aborigines would have to rely very much on international action for any success they might have in their struggle. Hence the importance at the time of Marcia Langton's work at Geneva.

Today, however, Aborigines themselves have provided the evidence, in Mabo and the Native Title Act, that here within Australia they can achieve quite quickly real success in their struggle for self-determination.

Now, having ventured into the immediate present, please let this out of date old man become nostalgic about the Aboriginal Treaty Committee. As Dr Nugget Coombs wrote in our final issue, we disbanded partly because of 'the pressures of increasing age'. The great Professor Bill Stanner had already died and his successor on the committee, Dr. Diane Barwick, was soon to die herself. A very fine Canadian anthropologist, who brought her experience of her continent into our own.

And then in 1986 Professor Charles Rowley died, a social scientist whose historic influence on this country and all its peoples, black and white, matched that of the anthropologist Bill Stanner. Just after Rowley's death his book **Recovery** was published by Penguin. At the end he wrote: "The case for a Treaty between the Commonwealth and Aborigines rests partly on the possibility of governments changing course, as so few Aboriginal votes are involved, for short-term gains and from lack of information. The argument was, and remains, that Aboriginal rights are best to be safeguarded in amendments to the Constitution".

Now let me tell you of two members of our committee still very much alive, Judith Wright and Nugget Coombs. Judith will be 80 in May next year, as she reminded me last week, when my wife Mary and I asked her for lunch at home. Judith is now totally deaf. So she talks and we chat to her by writing on a pad passed between us all.

She lives in a little cottage and is far from lonely, in our village of Braidwood, 80 kms from Canberra. She keeps close to her friends and the movements which she supports through her fax machine.

As for Dr Coombs, now 88 years old, he works each winter for the North Australian Research Unit in Darwin. This unit is a creation of the Australian National University. From Darwin he gets into Kimberley Land Council country and also works with the KLC. He phoned me recently and asked me to give you his greetings and his support.

He drew my attention to the last chapter in Judith Wright's book **We Call for a Treaty**. This chapter was in fact written by Nugget. It is called 'Where do we go from here?'

He wrote 'Committee members remain more than ever convinced that a Treaty is the logical and indeed inevitable instrument to embody the rights and status of Aboriginal Australians within Australian society. This is primarily because only a Treaty freely negotiated and accepted as an act of self-determination will satisfy Aboriginal demands for recognition as a people or group of peoples in their own right.

'Secondly only a treaty binding on succeeding governments could give security to rights and privileges gained by Aborigines and embodied in legislation or established practice. Furthermore only a Treaty would give international standing to any agreement reached about such rights and be seen as an exercise of the self-determination required by the United Nations Charter and conventions and other instruments concluded in accordance with it as part of the United Nations program for the decolonisation of subject peoples'

In this final chapter of Judith's book Nugget also referred to Aboriginal suspicion about a Treaty. But he went on 'Despite these reservations, the idea of a Treaty continued to develop in Aboriginal consciousness, but increasingly it was seen as a charter which finally would set a seal upon a series of agreements about particular issues negotiated over a period of time, protect them from repudiation and provide a mechanism by which these agreements would be subject to mutual review'.

This last passage about a review mechanism would have appealed to Charles Rowley, who shared the widespread Aboriginal apprehension that a Treaty would perpetuate an overall condition acceptable at the time, but one which might become unacceptable as Australia and the world changed.

At this point may I refer to the book which the Aboriginal Treaty, Committee published in 1979 to begin its campaign. We called the book **It's Coming Yet**, after the last three lines of Robert Burns' wonderful song 'For A'That and A'That' and I quote:

"It's coming yet, for a 'that.
That man to man the world o'er
Shall brothers be for a 'that."

I wrote this book. Its first edition sold out. But a couple of years ago the distributors, Angus and Robertson, phoned to tell me they were about to destroy all their stock. Would I like some copies? I took a van and took the lot. I have some left. Most went to Aboriginal groups like the Embassy in Canberra. I have brought some more along today for FAIRA or anyone else.

In our final edition of **Treaty News**, in March 1982, all committee members were asked by Nugget Coombs to write something.

I wrote of a week I spent on the Aboriginal owned cattle station 'Peppimenarti' on the Daly River in the Northern Territory. I described how the people at Peppi would go across the border into Western Australia to share in important ceremonies with fellow Aborigines who owned no land.

I described this as 'an unjust unequal situation, within one nation, which was discriminating **between** its Aboriginal citizens, as well as against them'.

I recalled travelling and camping all over Australia in 1975 and 1976, in many different places 'where Aborigines felt no security as they crossed borders and came under new governments, enforcing different laws, which the governments could change at will by pressing Bills through controlled Parliaments.

'Somehow, it seemed to me, Aborigines would have to be treated with equal justice wherever they lived. And, when they owned land and when they had been compensated for their dispossession, their status would have to be put firmly beyond the possibility of change, for ever. There must be no retreat.'

I continued" 'A Treaty, negotiated between equals respecting each other, would surely be able to put the new acceptable Aboriginal status beyond the reach of even sovereign Parliaments.....There is no security for Aboriginal people in Acts of Parliament.

'These are not more than positions won, which have to be constantly defended as attempts are made to retake them, always with superior, majority forces. Defending these positions is a waste of Aboriginal energy, which should be used to go forward and win new positions, without worrying about security in the rear.'

'So what is needed,' I concluded, 'is an instrument like the track of a cable railway, which allows movement forward but prevents any movement backward, when the engine of progress becomes too weak for the steep climb or breaks down. I still believe that a Treaty would be such a track'.

In his piece for our final Treaty News, Charles Rowley wrote that there had to be a settlement, which would 'require the Australian government to adopt a negotiating position. This in turn would be a symbolic, perhaps merely implied, apology to the Aborigines, an open admission of past injustice, requiring restitution.

My wife, Mary, is a wonderful woman, a lover of our four sons and daughters, of our seven grandchildren, of our cats and of a family , indoor dog. Recently, on the death of one old dog, we bought a puppy. We trained it when it made a mess in the house by putting its nose in the mess, giving it a smack on the bottom and chucking it out of the house.

This little story is not irrelevant to the Treaty issue today. The Europeans made a gigantic, very dirty mess in Australia. Many of their decendants and more recent arrivals in Australia are still untrained, uncaring, ignorant, even racist. They should have their noses rubbed in a Treaty.

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JP/tw

7th September 1994

Bill Day
PO Box 892
Nedlands
WA6009
Australia

Dear Bill,

Many thanks for your letter and the encouraging review.

I will add a few words of my own in a forthcoming article.
Please keep me in touch.

Best wishes,

John Pilger



~~WALTHEIM~~ A.M.

"WALTHEIM"
45 KISSING POINT ROAD
TURRAMURRA, N.S.W. 2074
AUSTRALIA

TELEPHONE: (02) 449 2846

9th Aug. 1994

Dear Bill Day,
You wrote that most welcome letter to me last May and it was very kind of me not to have replied before now. I have had a rather busy time finishing off a MS.

Yes I agree there are gaps in Aboriginal contemporary history. I know of the great struggle of the people of the Pitjara in the forties & fifties and have wondered if anyone has taken to writing that important effort for justice as yet. Of course, there were other battles, sometimes by small groups like the N.T. Council for Aboriginal Rights.

I agree distribution of published book has much to be desired - particularly those published by Aboriginal studies.

I shall look out for 'Bunji' and promise I shall have a good read.

Keep writing and kind wishes

Waltham Ball

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Rikki Shields
52 KELVINGTON ROAD
London SE15-3EH
UK.

Dear Bill

in the last few months have been busy packing and shifting myself and Fyessene, who bought a house in Nunhead not far from where Maggie Thatcher used to live. Life is more peaceful than the suburban jungle of estate like in Kingslake and the notorious Grosvenor Road, which is part of the Monopoly game -

I received a letter from Gene Miller who seemed to think I wrote to her. She said you show her a letter from me could you check up for me this -

My papers 'The YOUNGERS PAPERS' have been indexed by Dr Ian Willis before he shifted from Post Department of encyclopedia of ASOing Australia

I sent the form saying how I wanted to be available of course only restriction will be for Prof Ucko and Crescider former of Southampton University you can guess why

also I've sent me news article and it looks like lots of my quotes out of The YOUNGERS PAPERS are used without any reference to the source of me. makes me tired

I'm really happy for your spirit Bill you met all the people back in Darwin the Wounth was okay, I certainly want like a copy - what I suggest you do is RPARosell Australian Commonwealth Studies Centre which is situated in London, and various cities in Europe where there is big interest in Australia, as part of a seminar and Book launch in UK. ~~you~~ you be invited here, sure your publishers would agree say autumn or spring here next year, I will close many thanks for your support, Bill

close you Rikki always

Rikki

10/7/94

18TH July 1994.

JUNE MILLS .
10. MARSHALL COURT
MALAK.
DARWIN N.T. 0812
(089) 453597

Dear Bill,

Thanks for lending me the manuscript. I haven't had a chance to read it all but I'll buy one of the books when I get home. What I have read, is great. It's fantastic to read about events that you know about.

I wrote to Richard but I haven't heard from him, so I don't know if he got the letter or not.

I'm sorry I wasn't able to attend the launch in Perth or even respond to your invitation because I had moved from hismore to Sydney and didn't receive it till after the event.

Anyway I hope it went well for you I'll be heading back home at the end of July

I just attended the 3RD INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S PLAYWRIGHTS CONFERENCE. I have written several plays and was a speaker at the conference. The best play that I've written is the LARRAKIA LOUNGE CLAIM which is a satirical look at the LARRAKIA LAND CLAIM. As you can imagine the parallel with trying to ~~the~~ lay claim to a lounge that you don't have any receipt or documents proving ownership. and then having to prove that you're the Larrakia that own it!

Anyway Bill, that's about all I can say for now. Thanks again and good luck.

June Mills.

Gudbiling

(KING BROWN SNAKE).

AUNT TOSY NAMED ME
THAT. July 1993

MY OTHER NAME WAS
NIMUL AFTER JUNE FAITH



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Bill Day
PO Box 892
NEDLANDS WA 6009

22 September 1995

Dear Bill,

After some computer-generated delays I have managed to put together our sales figures for the financial year 1994-95. The sales of *Bunji* this year have totalled 109, giving an overall total of copies reaching the public of over 700. I am a little disappointed in the performance of several of our backlist titles and we will be paying particular attention to them in the coming months.

You will recall that we paid you the six monthly royalties some time ago. Unfortunately many of the stock movements to book stores on which this preliminary calculation were based proved not to be firm sales, and the stocks have subsequently been returned unsold. I'm afraid that this means we actually paid you more for the six months to December than we owed you for the whole year, and there will be no royalty cheque for the last six months.

We will be in touch soon about follow-up promotion. Hope to have better royalty news in the next half year period, but at least we know that your book has reached a significant number of people

Regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Horton".

David Horton

AARON CORN
2/376 DANDENONG RD
CAULFIELD NTH 3161

9 DECEMBER 1996

P.O. BOX 892
NEDLANDS WA 6001

DEAR BILL

THANKS SO MUCH FOR THE LATEST WAVE OF NEWSCLIPPINGS THAT YOU'VE SENT ME. THE LATEST ONE ON WILD WATER'S RECENT SUCCESS IS PARTICULARLY HELPFUL. I THINK THAT THEIR LATEST CLIP "SUNSET BAY" WILL BE SHOWN ON THIS WEEK'S ICAM (7:30 WEDNESDAY ON SBS). IT'S ALSO GOOD TO KNOW THAT THEY'LL BE PLAYING AT SURVIVAL '97 IN SYDNEY ON AUSTRALIA DAY. I WAS PLANNING TO GO TO SYDNEY TO SEE THIS CONCERT ANYWAY, BUT BEING ABLE TO CATCH UP WITH WILD WATER WILL MAKE IT ALL THE MORE WORTH WHILE.

IT'S ALSO BEEN GOOD TO KEEP ABREAST OF YOUR EXPLOITS WITH BOB'S MOB IN DARWIN. YOU'VE ATTRACTED SOME FAIRLY DECENT MEDIA COVERAGE! I THINK THAT INPUT FROM DJULPA'S DAD HELPED THE CAUSE QUITE A BIT TOO. BY THE WAY, MELINDA AND I SAW YOU ON THE 7:30 REPORT LAST WEEK SPEAKING ABOUT THE LARRAKIA'S LATEST LAND CLAIMS IN DARWIN. WE WERE SO EXCITED THAT I PHONED MY PARENTS IN BRISBANE (WHERE THE SHOW WOULD AIR AN HOUR LATER) SO THAT THEY WOULD SEE IT.

I'M STILL TRYING TO ARRANGE TO DO DARWIN-BASED FIELD RESEARCH IN SEMESTER 2 NEXT YEAR, BUT MY FUNDING OPTIONS ARE STEADILY DWINDLING. IF WE WERE IN DARWIN AT THE SAME TIME AGAIN IT MIGHT BE AN IDEA TO RENT A PLACE TOGETHER. I JUST HOPE THAT MY NEXT STAY IN DARWIN DOESN'T HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL 1998.

MELINDA AND I HAD A GREAT DAY ON SUNDAY (8/12) AT THE "TAKE A STAND AGAINST RACISM" RALLY IN MELBOURNE. WE MARCHED THROUGH THE CITY, ARCHIE ROACH AND VIKI + LINDA BULL PLAYED, AND THERE WERE MANY INTERESTING SPEECHES BY PUBLIC FIGURES INCLUDING TWO FORMER

VICTORIAN PREMIERS (ONE ALP + ONE LIBERAL)! THE DAY'S MAJOR THEME WAS ONE OF CULTURALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITY GROUPS SHOWING THEIR SUPPORT FOR ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIANS. ABOUT 40 000 REPRESENTATIVES OF "MAINSTREAM" AUSTRALIA (IE, THE PUBLIC) WERE THERE, AND IT WAS QUITE HEARTENING TO SEE SUCH SUPPORT IN REACTION AGAINST THE COMMENTS OF PAULINE HANSON AND THE RECENT POLICY DIRECTIONS TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT.

I HOPE THAT ALL IS WELL AT HOME IN PERTH. WISHING YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

ALL THE BEST

Aaron

P.S. WE'LL BE IN BRISBANE/GOLD COAST FROM 21/12/96 TO AROUND ABOUT 15/1/97, SO IF FOR SOME UNFORSEEN REASON YOU NEED TO CONTACT US URGENTLY PLEASE PHONE OUR MOBILE ON 014 87 3989. IF YOU'RE REALLY GAME (OR DESPERATE) YOU COULD ALSO TRY (07) 3831 6969, (07) 5572 8636 OR (07) 3205 1426. CHEERS, AARON.

07 32

Dear Bill,

Although you haven't heard from me, I've been reading all the stuff that you send Aaron. It's been really interesting to read the letters to the editor. I always construct letters to editors in my head, but I have yet to commit pen to paper. It was very heartening to see today (the day after the anti-racism rally) students at both of the upper-class private schools at which I teach, wearing various anti-racism badges + stickers from the rally. I'm glad that these kids are getting the message - despite the suburbs in which they live. The other day at St Leonard's, I decided to introduce Aboriginal rock groups to the year 7s.

The lesson wasn't as successful as I had hoped - but I attribute that to the fact that we were discussing 'rock' music, not 'Aboriginal' music - and as such, the kids' opinions close their minds to anything but whether or not they like the group. And as kids NEVER like anything that they haven't heard they weren't too receptive. Next year I'm going to integrate a study of Aboriginal music into the Year 7 curriculum. There have recently been many articles about the conditions of Aboriginal communities which I have cut out to send to you. It's up to Aaron to copy them for you, though.

Better go as it's 12.15 am. Hope you have a great holiday and I hope to see you again somewhere.

Best wishes

Melinda

MEDIA RELEASE

The book that lifts the lid on Aboriginal land rights

'BUNJI' by Bill Day, published by

Aboriginal Studies Press, \$19.95 - 170pp (illustrated)

85 copies sold at Perth book launch!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Born 1940, Perth W.A. Great-grandson of W.A.'s second premier, great-nephew of Katharine Susannah Prichard and Hugo Throssell VC. Made his own pilgrimage to Gallipoli in 1964. Thirteen years editor of black power newsletter.

'Darwin's most active black militant. Except he's white' - *Sydney Morning Herald* (see page 58)

In 1971 he designed the first Aboriginal flag and called for **'A National Flag of ~~headed~~ Black Liberation'**

'Achieved remarkable results' - *Aboriginal Land Rights Commissioner* (see page 134)

'William Bartlett Day should be stopped' - *CLP Politician* (see page 59)

Told Aborigines how to make petrol bombs 'if the Liberals win the next election'
(see page 59)

'I'm not starting this press conference until Day leaves' - *Bob Hawke* (see page 84)

He fought **'The Welfare Octopus'** - now it's grown new tentacles (see page 34)

He beat the booze and drugs after seeing his black mates die...**'The most urgent problem today,'** he says.

Read the story of the black petrol-bomber who went to jail for his people. He built his own house but died mysteriously...then the Aboriginal Industry destroyed his house. (see pages 50,132)

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have learned to fight for what they want in the past should be acknowledged as heroic in character.

Winterson constructed a character, Nicholas Jordan, who could have been a continuum of Jordan from the seventeenth century, to lead readers to investigate and challenge the traditional stereotype of heroic people. Winterson constructed the Dogwoman, Jordan, and other characters in the 17th century fable so the readers would view them as heroic. When readers reach the end of the novel and read Nicholas Jordan's narrative and his perception of traditional heroic stereotypes readers are led to question the stereotypical characteristics of heroes.

Nicholas Jordan told of a book called "The Boys' Book of Heroes" which on the cover displayed aeroplanes, horses, ships and men with steel jaws (). Winterson demonstrated to readers that traditionally people of heroic character are adventurous men. Winterson wrote of traditional heroes and discussed their heroic attributes with hypocrisy. For example, she wrote that Lord Nelson died a hero in a historical battle leaving his family alone and his wife to die diseased and alone 9 years later. Through hypocrisy Winterson asserted that heroes in the past have been displayed with superficial attributes, and if Lord Nelson was a true hero he would have placed his family before a historical battle. Winterson emphasises the misuse of heroic nature through Nicholas Jordan's narrative when he stated: "If you're a hero, you can be an idiot, behave badly, ruin your personal life, have any number of mistresses, talk about yourself the whole time and nobody minds."

Winterson emphasised that the traditional qualities of heroic nature in the past and present

Nakara N.T. (Darwin suburb)

27/4/95

Dear Bill,

Hope this letter finds you in good stead. I have just finished reading your book - which I didn't have time to do earlier as I have been busy with studies (which I've stopped for now) and doing lots of audiotyping for a guy who employs me sometimes - so thought I'd offer some impressions of the book which I found very easy reading and enjoyed a lot.

Not being much of a reader I was so glad that it wasn't an overly academic book full of facts and figures etc but rather a concise and colourful account of events told in a storytelling fashion as though we were all sitting around the campfire together, like good bunjis, swapping stories and ideas. I think you did really well considering there was a lot of years and happenings, as well as numerous individuals and personalities, to cover. I presume it was not easy to condense it all into such a small though substantial book? Of course as well I imagine it was at times difficult and painful for you to recount some of it too, though I suspect it was good 'therapy' for you in some ways, perhaps enabling you to put the past into perspective and most importantly to gather some self-esteem and confidence from it which will allow you now to go on with your life in a happy and gentle way.

Having grown up in Darwin (though originally from Katherine in Jawoyn country where I first had contact with local Yolngu as a child) I could relate well to the old Darwin you describe...old Bagot (which I used to visit as a child on 'Open Day' when the 'public' were allowed to visit and watch sports, buy artifacts etc (view the inmates!)...old Bagot road (and the crossing at the Bagot entrance where people were often hit by cars), the Lameroo Beach days when all the hippies headed North on their way to and from Asia (I was a teenager then)... and that whole era. It was interesting reading Bunji as it made me realise that although I was a bit young then to comprehend Aboriginal Land and other rights, as a teenager I did read the newspaper sometimes and noticed reportings about the protest on Bagot road and the many other events and developments you mention which must have stuck subconsciously very strongly actually as I've always been aware of Black issues and a supporter for their rights. I was also going to school with a lot of those Retta Dixon kids too and was very sensitive to their down-troddenness and how they stood out at school as being 'different' etc.

It is interesting for me to reflect upon all this, a lot of which still has a major influence on the way I relate to and view Darwin at the present time. Though a lot has changed, still we have a racist redneck (predominantly white male!) government in power up here (I was stunned at their victory in the last election, an indication that the Territory is still full of racist whites!), while John Louizou probably still the only sympathetic journo who will stand up for Blacks in the NT News, and still the same old anti-longgrass/anti-drunken-Aboriginals-in-public sentiments floating around (even more so since Darwin is inundated with tourists and we don't want to create a bad impression do we?!!) and the same old problems of devouring the foreshore for the elite, the latest disaster being approval by the CLP for Myilly Point to be developed for tourists (too bad for locals like myself who love that little park up there) alongside that hellhole, the Casino (recently sold to America's MGM (Metro Goldwyn Me corporation who want to put \$10 million into expanding it!!) And on it goes..... (Though it's hard not to grow bitter and cynical I must say that because of my strong Buddhist practise I am able to cope much better with these gripes now days Bill, though in some ways being Buddhist makes it is also more difficult to be tolerant of

the white supremacist money-orientated meaningless society I live in, as I feel so isolated with few comrades who share the same ideals and humanistic values).

Since I was a bit young back then when you first arrived in Darwin and met up with Bobby Secretary, Fred, et al and started campaigning for rights for Aboriginal mob, I was not fully aware of what was happening (until a bit later on when I grew up and so I found it very useful to read your book and put it all in perspective and understand where and how it all began.

As I'm very anti-bourgeois and anti-capitalist/ materialist (ok in moderation) I especially appreciated the chapter describing events around the time of cyclone Tracy and your comments regarding the loss of all those possessions which for Yolngu people was not such a big deal as they had so little anyway! And I hadn't thought of the fact that at the time when the superficial material Darwin was flattened the area was stripped back to basics, baring Larrakia land with the traditional owners staying here in their rightful place and white people having nowhere to go except back South where they originally came from. It was indeed a rare moment when Aboriginal people and whites were put on even footing... though not for long eh...as it didn't take long for the big restoration project to start!

I felt sad for you when the time came to depart from Kulaluk...I know it was a difficult time for you and after, but I suppose like everything change is inevitable, nothing ever stays the same, not even from one moment to the next eh. Physical locations shapes and forms alter, including our bodies, but the stream of consciousness with which we experience and understand life flows continually, uninterrupted, on and on and on....., and with our heart and mind(in union) strong and firm in knowledge, wisdom and compassion, we can travel anywhere and be safe and content.

Unfortunately I was too ill to attend your book launch in Darwin last year and I would have liked to say hello to you. I hope you were able to catch up with a few old buddies here. No doubt you would have noticed the changes taking place here which seem to me to be happening rapidly of late. I wonder what you are doing now and if you will stay in Perth? I hope things are going well for you Bill.

I am going ok but continue to have bad health problems and am largely housebound. I do the best I can and though minimal, I maintain links with the 'outside' world, friends etc, via telephone and letters. As I go out so little I don't see many people here but manage to know who's who and what's what.

I wanted to say thank-you for your Christmas card by the way. Would be nice to hear from you some time. All in all I have to say that you did a really good job of 'Bunji' the book and that you should be pleased not only with its completion but with all that you have done in helping the Larrakia mob and others to stand up for themselves and fight for their rights. Any cause which advocates equality for all human beings is a very worthwhile one and a top priority in my opinion. Your determination and all that you've given has enabled Yolngu mob up here and elsewhere to find their voice and their feet, and that truly is a precious gift! I hope that you do feel it has all been worthwhile.

May you be well and happy, be at ease and content. Take care.

Cheers,
Vicki

p.s. Meant to say that I appreciated the way you spoke of all the various Aboriginal people (with whom you formed the Gualala Dharaniki Assoc, etc) with great affection + respect as individuals most of the time. This is what is particularly nice about the book + not as individuals who really feels for Yolngu mob!
a Balanda who really feels for Yolngu mob!

124 2118 2118 2118 2118 2118 2118 2118 2118 2118

Cavanagh & Wilton, Darwin

Fax 089 812621

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I have known Jack Phillips since 1971 as a trusted friend to myself and my family. In those days Aboriginal fringe dwellers lived in shocking conditions around Darwin without land or services. The courts and prison were filled by Aborigines on drunkenness charges. Jack Phillips campaigned for land at Knuckeyes Lagoon, Kulaluk and Railway Dam and for the decriminalisation of drunkenness, two decades before the Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths In Custody. Jack's dedication towards his Aboriginal friends is told in my book, BUNJI: a story of the Gwalwa Daraniki Movement.

Being a sensitive man, Jack Phillips has been deeply affected by the premature deaths of so many Aboriginal friends, as related in BUNJI (see enclosed review). These alcohol-related deaths are extremely disruptive to Aboriginal society and families. Through his marriage, Jack would feel this more than most non-Aborigines. From my own experience I can state with authority that the symptoms of many whites who become involved on the 'front lines' of working to improve conditions for Aborigines are very similar to the symptoms experienced by Vietnam veterans (without the therapy available to veterans).

Jack is a kindly, generous man who organised and paid for the recent launch of BUNJI in Darwin. Guest speakers included Nugget Coombs, Richard Barnes (President of the Larrakia Association) and Robert Wesley-Smith. In the Foreword to BUNJI the author, and tireless worker for reconciliation, Stewart Harris, praises the work of Jack Phillips.

WBS Day 11 Boronia Avenue, Nedlands WA (author)

Tel. (03) 736 1786

41 The Crescent,
MT. EVELYN, 3796.
25th May, 1994.

(No. I haven't
moved to Iran!)

Dear Bill.

I have just finished reading 'Bunji'. It's wonderful! Congratulations on a very good production. It gave me so much nostalgia, remembering the people I met in Darwin and beyond, and the rare opportunity to attend the Larrakia LR Case at Kulaluk and the 1st National LR Conference at Bagot - even if only briefly. It was an honour - and a very important part of my education programme.

How are you? I rang Val Noone to say I had seen his photo in the book. He was still waiting to receive his copy which was on order. He told me you are studying in Perth. I wonder what you are studying. I take it that Polly is back in NZ. Are you alone? Do you see your children? It must be quite hard for you.

Reading 'Bunji' has given me a much clearer picture of your very great contribution to the Aboriginal scene and awareness making in Darwin. No wonder the white authorities hated you so much. However, I am still a little hazy as to how the Larrakia situation has ended up. It seemed to be a wonderful story of courage in the face of incredible odds, some very near achievements and gains, and then a gradual whittling away of any gains made, with quite a concerted effort at breaking the power of the Gwalwa Daraniki and their supporters. Were they implants who took over? What was finally achieved? Possibly the books tails off a little too quickly to make all of this clear for those who were not around at the time, or have not been to the scene. I nearly forgot to say that a copy of Bunji was donated to raffle at the Dinner, so that gave us a chance to advertise your book.

'Action for Aboriginal Rights' has just celebrated c. 25 years of its existence and work. I'll send you a copy of the talk I was invited to give at our celebratory dinner. I felt very honoured to be invited to do this, and so enjoyed remembering and recording what has been no mean achievement, even though a mere drop in the anti-racist struggle. We were all so disappointed that Stan Pelczynski was ill and unable to be present. Barbara Chmielewska, his sister came. They are now living in Bendigo, so they have a lot of travelling to do. I am at Mt. Evelyn, just on the edge of Melbourne, at the northern entrance to the Dandenong Ranges National Park, but my 30-40 km is little compared with their travelling. We struggle here to maintain the local environment against incredible odds. Our latest submission is against a new move by the Lillydale Shire to limit all vegetation except trees to 80 ml. but can you imagine a treefern of less than 3-1/2 inches? They have obviously goofed, copying this clause straight from a CFA (Country Fire Authority) manual - and they are arch anti-environmentalists!

MEEPPA, our local environment group, is working on a history project, which will commence with the Aboriginal history of the region. There are very few Kooris just around here - I only know of one family.

If you ever come this way, we'd love to see you. AAR meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Give Stan or me a ring, and we can tell you where it is. I have spare beds, but am well out of the centre of the city, so not so convenient if you want to do things in Melbourne.

My warmest good wishes to you.

Regards,

Beryl Phillips

ACTION FOR ABORIGINAL RIGHTS DINNER

Welcome. Tonight we are celebrating a very significant pioneering though embryonic venture in the field of non-Aboriginal support for Aboriginal justice.

It may seem strange that we've acknowledged we really don't know how old we are, but some of our members have been involved in a continuous operation for more than 25 years - so it's time to pause and say, "It's been good to be on board". During 1993, I suggested we should celebrate our 21 years of existence - but I was howled down by some members who claimed the group was then at least 24 years old - but I felt I had very clear memories to go on.

During 1971, the Rev. Dr. Cliff Wright of the Australian Council of Christian Education organized their Biennial Conference at Southport, Qld., on the subject of 'Racism in Australia'. This proved to be a very important event, marking a turning point for many Christian Education leaders, taking us from the field of merely talking to that of action. An unplanned debate between Kath and Denis Walker showed us the difference between the two generations in their mode of fighting for justice. Denis also challenged us to support the Aboriginal people in their attempt to gain audience with the Director of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs to protest against the proposed Amendment to the iniquitous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Act. We photographed the long line of police who barred the way to a small handful of young Aboriginal activists claiming their right to be heard. Denis also challenged us to let the Aboriginal people fight their own battles, and give them the privilege of making their own mistakes, instead of whites doing it for them. Our task was to go home and educate the whites!

We came home committed to doing all we could to right the wrongs that had occurred since White Settlement, which we now call Invasion. Cliff Wright challenged me to set up a political action group. When I protested that education was my field: I knew nothing about political affairs, he replied, "You'll learn". How right he was!

I explored the field to ensure we wouldn't stand on the toes of existing groups, but found, eg. that the Methodist group had been inactive for some time. Somehow I was put in touch with Gwen McDevitt, and a meeting was arranged at my home in Balwyn. There was a very good response - mainly from Church leaders and Monash. Cliff, Denham Grierson, Barry Pittock, Lorna Lippman, Margaret Graham and I had been present at Southport. Two other Methodist ministers, Ron Croxford and Arthur Ellemore, who had been involved in the Gove Case in 1971-2 and Sally (Isobel) White, Senior Lecturer in Anthropology at Monash, were also present at that meeting in 1972. The Monash people had been largely involved in the Land Rights struggles, especially with the Gurundji. For so many years, I believed that Action for Aboriginal Rights (first set up as '*Aboriginal Action*') had begun in my home in 1972, whereas the Monash people had no doubt they were merely continuing what had gone on from around 1969. However, 1972 was a very important year - Judge Blackburn's High Court decision against the Yirrkala people, the 1st Tent Embassy in Canberra, Whitlam's Labour Victory - and the establishment of the combined group under the name of '*Aboriginal Action*'.

So we are happy to celebrate both our survival for over a quarter of a century, and the privilege we've experienced in working in a pioneering field to arouse the conscience of fellow Australians. Our resources have always been small, so much of what we've achieved has been a token effort, eg. helping an Aboriginal organisation to reconnect their telephone or get their duplicator back into action, writing endless protest letters or making phone calls to politicians, listening to Aboriginal people and groups, even when requests or advice is conflicting, producing a newsletter throughout all those years.

We used to run film nights, stalls and large fairs and dinners under Barbara's enthusiastic, tireless leadership when we were younger and more energetic. For some time we maintained a link with the Victorian Council of Churches, and were invited to send an Aboriginal contingent to the First Council of Youth at Taize in France. Dinner speakers included Don Dunstan, Don Chipp and Nuggett Coombs, Kath Walker (Oodgeroo Noonuccal), Al Grasby and Eve Feisl. Protests in the City Square were a regular part of our diet. We supported Margaret Briggs in her protest stand in Casey for the 1972 Election and took action to ensure that Darwin Aborigines were not overlooked following Cyclone Tracy. We set up an office at St. Mark's, Fitzroy, with Jan Roberts as our Education Officer, and went through a tedious name-changing operation. We've produced numerous pamphlets and two kits of note - '*Racism and Aboriginal Rights*' and more recently, with Sarah Peckham's talented assistance, on the name change for '*Gariwerd*'.

Between us, we have *visited* a number of *Aboriginal communities* around the country - eg. Oombulgurrie (NW Australia), Ken Colbung's centre at Gngarra on the northern edge of Perth, Yarrabah near Cairns, Kulaluk in Darwin (I attended part of one of the first Land Rights cases with Judge Woodward there) and Bagot, where my mother and I were given permission to sit up the back on hay bales, having been invited to visit the first Australian Land Rights Conference, Gurindji country, various communities in Arnhem Land, (including some Homeland ones), Jay Creek, Santa Teresa and Hermansberg in the Centre, Ernabella (northern South Australia), Walaga on the NSW South Coast with Gubboo Ted Thomas, and Cummeragunja, Framlingham and Lake Tyers closer to home. Through these visits and often close contact by phone or mail, we have established some lasting contacts and friendships with a wide range of Aboriginal people and communities which have helped in our learning experience so that we could be more effective. It's meant we've sometimes been close enough to share some of the pain Aborigines experience when they are exploited, overlooked, treated with condescension, denied justice, displaced by mining and pastoral interests, raped physically and economically, plied with grog, at times against their express desire (eg. Yirrkala... taxis).

I'd like to pay tribute to all who have contributed in a wide variety of ways, but I must mention specifically the incredible work of Stan Pelczynski, especially through research and photocopying. Stan is recognized world-wide as a skilled resource person in Aboriginal affairs. We pay tribute to him and Barbara for their extreme dedication and generosity in significant voluntary service in Koori Resource Centres at Monash University and now in Bendigo. Our thanks go too, to Tom and Alba for chairing us over a very long period, to Tom Wolkenberg particularly for his generosity at our fairs, Rob Martin's dedication as a resource supplier, and many, many more. One person

we'd particularly like to remember is Elizabeth Eggleston, who joined us in 1973 and shared her wisdom and the resources of the Centre for Aboriginal Studies (now Koorie Research Centre) at Monash, until her untimely death. None of us will ever forget Wandjuk Marika piping her into the Spirit World!

The international character of our group has been very enriching - although I can remember how off-putting that was for Jeff Kennett when he visited us at Balwyn when he, of all people, was the Liberal Spokesperson for Aboriginal Affairs. His rudeness to Stan in particular did not endear him to us!

Early in the piece we accepted our role as a *white support group*. A few Aborigines attended some of our early meetings - Geraldine and Margaret Briggs, Hyllus Maris (along with Philippa Ransome), David Anderson, and several of the Jackomos family. But they had their tasks to fulfil. So we have regular contact with Aboriginal people and communities - but not the shared membership of Black and White as we'd originally hoped. Another limitation is that we are an aging group. Younger people tend these days to form new groups, not join existing ones, with a few exceptions. However, though more restricted in our output, our commitment is still strong.

We would like to thank you for coming to share in our celebration tonight. We thank you for what you have done over the years, and wish you well as you continue in this vital task of working for a just reconciliation. Now that South Africa has achieved its political freedom, Australia will doubtless become a focus for world attention in the field of race relations. Australia can only hold its head high when all of its citizens live in true freedom, peace and justice.



D. BERYL PHILLIPS
23rd May, 1994

D. Beryl Phillips
41 The Crescent
Mt. Evelyn
AUSTRALIA 3796

ARNHEM LAND COMMUNITIES

visited by D.B.P.

Maningrida,
Guyun (Rembarranga Tribe - Paddy ?)
Cadell River (Ganarrdpa Tribe)
Milingimbi
Galiwin'ku & Wadangay'yu
Gapuwiyak on Lake Evella
Yirrkala
Angurugu (Groote Eyland)

DARWIN

Gundal (to entrance only)
Fanny Bay Gaol
Kulaluk
Bagot
Railway Dam
Nine Mile at Berrimah
(Knuckeyes Lagoon)

LAND RIGHTS CONFERENCES

Gwalna Daraniki at Kulaluk - 2nd June
1st National LR Conference at Bagot - 13-15th June

36 Princess Rd.
Dunblair
21st July '95.

Dear Bill,

Thank you for the letter - &
also for representing the family at
the funeral service. I'm afraid I
just couldn't have made it - even if
I had seen the notice.

So sorry not being able to get
in touch sooner. I've had several
teachers staying with me & I've
been so busy with house keeping -
It's quite apt after just looking after
one's

As regards the shields & the spears
thrower - Reg spent a great deal
at Marble Bar - He was a jackeroo -
on Bamboo Springs.
There is a photo taken with
Cronkington the head of the
Pallagone tribe.

The tribe called Reg, Corlamung
Reg had great affection for
the aborigines - The pet of the
Station was a little one - called
"Kitchener".

Other stations in this region
were Bonnie Downs (1919)
Emu Springs etc.

Hope the above information
is of some use.

I dare say you are very busy
with your studies - Best of
luck.
Cheers for now -

Love
Isabel

WA'S LITERARY HERITAGE

Western Australia's output of creative writing is a rich one. Poets, novelists, essayists and others have all contributed to this heritage through published materials ranging from books to periodicals and other formats.

In their *published* form these works are generally acquired by State and National libraries. Our national literary output is therefore well represented in collections committed to the preservation of this format.

SURVIVAL AND PRESERVATION

The survival and preservation of the manuscripts of such publications, however, is not assured. Many, perhaps most, manuscripts are discarded after publication.

The Library and Information Service of Western Australia (LISWA) has therefore made a commitment to preserving for posterity the literary manuscripts of Western Australians.

It is doing this by actively seeking to acquire and preserve the original manuscripts from which the final published works were developed.

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Manuscripts donated to LISWA will join the ranks of other treasured records in our Private Archives Collection.

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- Manuscripts pertaining to *The Boy in the Bush*, by D H Lawrence and Mollie Skinner.
- Papers of Dame Ida Mann, world authority on the treatment of glaucoma.
- The research material used by Sister Mary Albertus Bain in her book *Full Fathom Five*.
- Scripts produced by John Gilchrist for the Workers Art Guild, a Communist cultural body active in the 1930s.
- The writings of Bert Vickers, an author who published extensively in the 1950s and 1960s.

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- They will form an integral part of the nation's literary heritage.
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