For over a century aborigines have progressively been driven off their territory as white farmers and miners moved onto the land. The black people were forced to camp around mission stations, or in humps on the outskirts of towns. As their traditional lifestyle broke down the people became demoralised. They were ravaged by disease, alcohol, and frequently, white brutality.

Since the Land Rights Act was passed in 1976 traditional aboriginal "landowners" have had the right to claim Crown Land in the Northern Territory. The claims involve long, expensive court cases. So far only three cases have been heard. The experience gained during these cases has shown the importance of supporting the aboriginal claims.

In the past conservationists, especially in the United States, have been somewhat insensitive to the rights of native people. While glorifying their subsistence lifestyles, their respect for nature and their myths, conservationists have done virtually nothing to help native people under threat. The article "Can Indians and environmentalists find Common Ground?" (p25) describes an alliance between American Indians and environmentalists, to fight a planned coalmining project. The question it raises is: will the environmentalist support the Indians when they claim land which is now a national park?

Environmentalists must also consider what happens to Crown land not granted to aborigines. Usually it is leased to mining or pastoral interests. Even if made into a national park, the cost of patrolling the enormous areas involved is prohibitive. The Federal Government can permit mining inside national parks simply by issuing a proclamation. Woodchipping has been going on for years inside proposed park areas.

Aborigines will need all the help they can get to win valuable areas of land. Blanket expressions of sympathy are of little use. Environmentalists could be more helpful by studying modern-day aboriginal hunting or land-use practices and providing expert evidence in court cases. All existing evidence suggests that aborigines are responsible land-users.

Friends of the Earth urge everyone interested in conservation to support aboriginal land rights. We share with the aboriginal people a love for the Australian countryside, and think that they have a right to own land without strings attached.

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Birth defects and 2,4,5\textsubscript{T}

Between June 1975 and May 1976 there were births in the small Gippsland town of Yarram. Three had serious congenital neural tube defects, either spina bifida or encephaly. Spina bifida is an incomplete development of the spine, whereas encephaly is the baby is born with no brain at all. In both cases the odds of survival are extremely low.

New Zealand in the past few years has produced a spate of 2,4,5-T-related incidents. The following is quoted from a Queensland Conservation Council Subcommittee report of an incident in 1972: "In the Waikato district of New Zealand, two babies were born within a month of each other with congenital defects which prevented life. The mothers were neighbours on adjoining farms, both of which had been sprayed with 2,4,5-T during the first three months of the two pregnancies. Both farms obtained their water from roof catchments, which could contain any 2,4,5-T which had strayed onto roof. A third farm was neighbour to the above farms and an adjoining farm which was sprayed at the same time. The water from an underground well gave birth to a healthy child."

Dr. E. J. Fitzsimons of the National Health and Medical Research Council (N.H.M.R.C.), chairman of the sub-committee responsible for investigating incidents caused by certain pesticides, said that he could not rule out 2,4,5-T as a cause of birth defects amongst people."

Recently the Victorian MLA, Ian Cathie, revealed that 30% of the 2,4,5-T tested by the Lands Department exceeded the "safe" level of 0.1 parts per million. Add to this the fact that only one type of dioxin is tested for. There are many other forms of dioxin apart from 2,3,7,8-TCDD which is the type tested for.

The problem, however, does not rest solely with dioxin. Research by the U.S. Environment Protection Agency implicates 2,4,5-T itself. "Findings of birth defects and 2,4,5-T have been similar in every instance where the herbicide appears to be present."

"Wash out the container into a running stream" - The World Health Organisation in 1975 recommended the following to 2,4,5-T users, on the disposal of containers: "Bury the container in the topsoil. Care must be taken to avoid subsequent contamination of water sources. Decontaminated containers should be disassembled, wiped clean, and destroyed.

"Who says 2,4,5-T is dangerous? We dumped tons of the stuff on Vietnam... and still lost the war!!"

In a recent television documentary series "Four Corners" it was revealed that there are at least ten chemical herbicides and pesticides which are banned or severely restricted in the U.S., yet they are exported to Australia and are freely available. 2,4,5-T has been withdrawn from the U.S. market pending research and has been banned altogether in Britain. In Victoria there has been a 12-member committee set up to investigate claims that 2,4,5-T caused birth abnormalities in Yarram. However at the time of writing 2,4,5-T is still freely available.

The attitude taken by authorities in this area is even more disturbing. Dr. E. J. Fitzsimons of the National Health and Medical Research Council (N.H.M.R.C.), chairman of the sub-committee responsible for investigating incidents caused by certain pesticides, said that he could not rule out 2,4,5-T as a cause of birth defects amongst people."

Friends of the Earth would appreciate more information, donations or physical help. Contact Rod, c/o Friends of the Earth, 51 Nicholson Street, Carlton, 3053, or phone (03) 347 6630 and help stop the poisoning of children yet to be born.

References:
"Four Corners" program on pesticides, broadcast in Melbourne on May 6, 1976.
Choking Smog 'speaks' to Melbourne

During the last two weeks of June, Melbourne's TV audiences were astounded and bewildered by the breathtaking (quite literally) aerial views of the city smothered in a thick, grimy white layer of cloud. From Nicholson Street, outside FOE's Carlton office, looking directly south to just a half a mile away, the ghostly shapes of Melbourne's two towering skyscrapers, Collins's Place and Nauru House, were barely definable through the yellowish haze. Melbourne was experiencing its worst-ever smog conditions. Meanwhile, Victoria's Environment Protection Authority was in a cloud all of its own. The EPA was being beset with inquiries from the public and the press, but could only contribute to the prevailing confusion with vague and inaccurate descriptions of the severity of the air pollution.

Aftr the first record breaking day on 7.7 on the pollution index, on Tuesday, June 20, an EPA spokesperson told the Melbourne "Age" environment reporter, Jennifer Byrne, that the level was still comfortably below the "danger index" of 10. Exactly one week later, however, when this "danger index" was easily surpassed by a new record index level of 13.1, the EPA's chief air quality officer, Dr. J.B. Robinson, was reported in the "Age" the next day as reassuring Melbourne that the pollution would not become dangerous until the index reached about 20. A rather disturbing discrepancy.

The EPA was also unable to supply any basic statistics as to why the pollution was suddenly so bad. It was unable or unwilling to provide information about how many more cars are entering the inner city because of the notorious P19 Freeway. Most people, including the authority, know that cars are primarily responsible for Melbourne's smog problem. Nitrogen dioxide (an acidic chemical), and carbon monoxide levels were about 7 times higher than average.

Making my own inquiries into the discrepancy in the reporting of the "danger index" levels, I was first informed by an EPA officer that he thought that perhaps 10 was the "long term" danger level, and 20 was the "short term" danger level. He admitted that he didn't really know much about these matters. However, I was later told by another officer that 20 was the danger level on the pollution index, and 10 the danger level on the airborne particle indices. These are the two air pollution measurements used by the authority.

While Melbourne was choking in its 13.1 smog (on the pollution index), Victoria's Minister for Conservation, Mr. Borthwick was defending the Government's record on smog control. He said the Government's record "spoke for itself".

The Last Wild River

Unlike most of Australia, Tasmania is well endowed with water resources. Sitting in the path of the Roaring Forties it receives between 1000 and 3000 mm per annum.

With all that water about and a rugged terrain to boot it's little wonder that the State has a huge hydro-electric power potential. And it hasn't missed the opportunity to exploit any of it.

Since early this century the State has methodically dammed practically every river and raised the level of every sizeable lake on the island.

Well! That's a good thing, one would think. After all, hydro-electric power is a renewable energy source, isn't it? No coal burning. No need to go nuclear.

But its rainfall and topography also make Tasmania one of the most unique and beautiful areas in Australia. Until recently much of the south-west of the state was left alone by exploiters. Dense temperate rain forest, wet climate and a poverty of mineral wealth made it unsuitable (or at least very difficult) for most forms of exploitation though a haven for wilderness lovers.

The damming and flooding of Lake Pedder in 1972, one of the most contentious and hard-fought conservation issues in Australia's history, changed all that. Since Lake Pedder, conservationists have had to fight tooth and nail to try and preserve as much as possible of this unspoilt wilderness from the bulldozers, chain saws and concrete mixers of mining, forestry and power authorities.

By 1983, the Hydro Electric Commission predicts, there will be no more rivers left to dam. Its eyes are now set on the Franklin River — the last major wild river in the state. The proposed scheme is huge and involves the flooding of most of the Franklin River Valley, the Lower Gordon River Valley and the Olga River Valley.

(Note: For a description of the Franklin River see HABITAT Vol 5 No 3 October '77. See also the HABITAT Special Issue on the Wonderful South-West.)
Queenfish Protestor goes to jail

Rolf Heimann, one of the protestors arrested during a demonstration against the visit of the Queenfish, has recently been sentenced to one month's imprisonment or a $300 fine.

His appeal against the conviction for assault and resisting arrest was rejected on Thursday 15 June. He intends to go to jail rather than pay the fine.

Six people were arrested during the demonstration against the Queenfish's visit to Melbourne. The submarine was docked at Station Pier. It carried an arsenal of nuclear weapons.

The protest started off quietly. There were several speeches, after which the protestors continued to demonstrate. There was no trouble until after the end of July this year.

The highlight of the "violent" demonstration on Station Pier, Chief Superintendent Fisher was quoted by the Melbourne AGE, "I asked them not to block the roadway, but they wouldn't listen." So the police charged.

"I was pushed over, then grabbed by the hair by police and dragged along the concrete. I was carried through the gate where the police were parked.

"It was very painful, and I was screaming at the police, so they dropped me on the ground. One policeman kicked me twice." Later, that night Rolf Heimann was examined by a doctor who found bruises and abrasions on his body. In court police claimed these were caused by the prisoner struggling to break down gates.

One policeman claimed Mr. Heimann "kicked him in the face". Another policeman said he had been punched on the chin. They also stated they had informed Mr. Heimann of these accusations (Rolf Heimann says he first heard them in court).

Rolf Heimann was charged with assault, assault by kicking and resisting arrest. He was convicted but appealed.

Judge Woolnough, who heard the appeal, upheld the conviction. He said it was "an intolerable situation that police could be attacked by protestors at demonstrations".

Rolf Heimann points out that he could not possibly have kicked a policeman in the face from his position on the ground. The judge refused to accept Lila Heimann's testimony, as she is his wife.

Rolf Heimann was a member of La Flor, one of the ships that sailed into the nuclear testing zone in 1974 to protest against the French nuclear tests in the Pacific. He is well-known for his beliefs in non-violence.

Throughout his life Heimann has never punched anyone. And he hasn't led a sheltered life. In all the sea ports where I have been - Marseilles, Hamburg, Tahiti I have always managed to keep out of fights."

Mr. Heimann is married, with children and now works as a cartoonist (see cartoon this page).

One other demonstrator was released with a bond. At time of writing more are awaiting trial.

Barbara Hutton
If you live in Melbourne, and rent or own a house or flat, or are going to build a shack for yourself, why not ring 347 6789 and make an appointment for next Tuesday night?

And if you are not in Melbourne you can write to FOE, 51 Nicholson Street, Carlton 3053, enclosing as much information as possible, and a small donation to cover return postage, photocopying, etc. As a result of your generosity, we can avoid shivering through our hour of consular.”

The emphasis is definitely not on the ‘hardware’ approach to solar energy. But instead concentrates on the use of curtains to avoid the use of brick internal chimneys, weatherstripping doors and windows to reduce draughts, and on the right sort of solar hot water system for you.

Environmentalists for Full Employment

For too long have people accepted the notion that environmental considerations conflict with the goal of full employment. Business and government have tried to set workers and environmentalists against each other and have suggested that environmental considerations must be “sacrificed” to protect jobs.

A new organisation, Environmentalists for Full Employment, hopes to counter this myth and put forward positive action proposals which will demonstrate that sound conservation policies can improve the employment situation. In the words of Jack Mundey, National Convener of EFEE, “The key to an integrated socially-useful work for everyone who wants it are both imperative.”

The formation of EFEE comes at an opportune time. Many important political decisions have to be made in the near future on how to cope with the problems of unemployment, resource depletion and environmental damage. The presently proposed political solutions, by their piecemeal approach, can only marginally improve some of these problems at the expense of worsening others. Bill Hayden, leader of the Australian Labor Party advocates reduced sales tax on cars to boost the Australian car industry. If this resulted in increasing the number of cars on the roads it would hasten the depletion of our oil reserves and further extend the destruction of our urban environment.

The Liberal premier of Victoria, Dick Hamer, plans to extend our oil reserves by converting coal to oil, thereby depolitising our coal reserves and worsening the environmental damage to the Latrobe Valley. This project would require an enormous amount of capital which would provide many more jobs if invested in more labour intensive industries such as manufacturing.

By drawing on support from environment groups and trade unions, EFEE intends to develop practical policies to show that socially beneficial environmentally defensible jobs provide the key to an integrated solution to these problems.

A union or group can become a sponsor of EFEE by giving an annual donation of at least $5. You can find out more about EFEE by contacting John Andrews, c/- ACF, 672B Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, 3122. Phone (03) 819 2888.

Jack Mundey, Total Environment Centre, 18 Argyle Street, Sydney 2000, Phone (02) 27 1497 or David Roberts, c/- Traralgon Hall Council, Newcastle 2300, Phone (09) 21162.

Companies buy into Victoria’s coal

As a result of an amazing offer by the Victorian Government, twelve companies, including five multinational oil companies, have virtually bought themselves rights to commercial exploitation of Victoria’s coal reserves. The companies have each agreed to pay $150,000 towards a research program to identify the quality, location and chemical properties of Victoria’s coal reserves. The results of the program will not be available to the people of Victoria who in theory own the coal.

The program is part of the Government’s policy of encouraging the private development of the state’s coal reserves, especially the production of synthetically produced oil. The production of oil from coal is an extremely expensive process; estimates of the cost of one plant which would produce less than one sixth of Australia’s present consumption of oil products vary from $2-4,000m. Estimates on coal reserves are essential if such a plant can be established.

Companies who have invested money in this research program are therefore in the exclusive position of being the only ones with the knowledge necessary to develop the coal to oil process. This is acknowledged in the Victorian Brown Coal Research and Development Committee’s annual report which states, “Should the program successfully demonstrate that reserves of brown coal suitable for coal conversion projects exist in greater quantity than will be required for power generation purposes in the foreseeable future, such additional reserves will be preferentially allocated on an equitable basis to those participants in the program who are able to demonstrate their ability to construct and operate viable conversion plants.”

The companies participating in this scheme are: Australian Paper Manufacturers, B.P., Callops Oil, Conzinc Rio Tinto Australia; Colonial Sugar Refineries; Essex, Heine Brothers; Mitsubishi Development Pty. Ltd.; Kominic (A Japanese steel-making corporation); L.G.I.; a consortium consisting of Mitsui and Co. Ltd., Gulf Oil Corporation, and the Electric Power Development Co. Ltd. of Japan; Mobil Oil and Shell.

The Victorian Government last promised that its official energy policy would be out shortly after April 17. The policy still hasn’t appeared. To date the government has not, in the words of the State Electricity Commission, and private enterprise to do virtually what they like. So far this non-policy has met with remarkably little opposition. However as people become more aware of its consequences energy policy could become a major public issue — especially with a state election imminent.

Jack Gilding

Antarctica is Russia deceiving the FAO?

Antarctica, once the great frozen, unwanted continent, is now wanted by just about every country on Earth. Antarctica is rich in resources, both living and mineral, but at present it is the living resources which are attracting world attention: fish, crabs, squid, marine mammals and particularly krill are viewed as potential food sources for the world.

Yet, as far as most countries involved in discussions of the Antarctic Treaty are concerned, the people are concerned Antarctic resources might as well be as far away as the moon.

Antarctica and its surrounding seas are considered by most countries, fortuitously thrown together during the International Geophysical Year 1958. These countries are now in the process of attempting to set up a convention, or regime, to keep the “living resources” of Antarctica and the Southern oceans in their control.

One problem exercising the collective mind of the Treaty states is, what to do about the FAO? The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations is especially interested in these as it calls “unconventional” food.

Governments of the Southern Oceans and sees them, potentially, as a vital key to the alleviation of world hunger. Although Friends of the Earth have frequently stated (in the Antarctic publication “ICE” as well as in Chain Reaction) that Antarctica cannot support an over a large scale (remember the blue whale and the fur seal) we sympathise with the aims of the FAO. However it needs to be clear to all that the FAO is not being party to Antarctic Treaty deliberations.

Jack Gilding
**How much is being taken?**

The situation which causes the most concern is that the USSR is taking more fish from the Antarctic than was reported to the FAO. The latest FAO Fisheries Year Book (1976) lists the total reported catches for the thirteen Treaty states. Only Japan and Poland admitted to catching any fish at all. The total reported catch for 1976 was 2287 metric tons, whereas the FAO estimated that “indications of the level and extent of the Antarc tic resources are being harvested, that the USSR wants to hide its Antarctic catch, to avoid international concern.”

**Something fishy**

This year the government’s inquiry into whales and whaling is considering evidence to decide whether whaling should continue in Australian waters. Prime Minister Fraser promised a full inquiry into whales and whaling in his election speech in December (1977). However, though the inquiry is underway, the whales have had no respite. Just before the inquiry was announced, the West Australian whaling company, Cheynes Beach Holdings, had its licence renewed. The company has a quota of 653 whales this year. The whaling season will be over by the time the Inquiry reaches its conclusion.

The Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development (EH & CD) has been prevented from making an independent submission to the Inquiry. The EH & CD is opposed to whaling, whereas the other Government department involved, Primary Industry, is in favour of whaling. Originally the EH & CD was to be one of the principal parties to the Inquiry, with the right to put in an independent submission and to question witnesses. However pressure has been put on the Department to forgo its right to make an independent submission with Primary Industry. People working for the environment department are not happy.

While submissions to the Inquiry were still being received, the Fisheries Act was amended to give Australia control over waters up to 200 miles from the mainland. In future foreign fishing fleets will need to have a licence in order to fish inside the 200 economic zone. However whaling has been specifically exempted from the laws, so that it is not under Australian control.

Mr. Sinclair, Minister of Primary Industry, justified this move by saying that Australia is a member of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and must therefore allow other IWC members to have access to Australian waters. Mr. Sinclair either invented this story or is totally ignorant of the rules of the IWC. The USA and New Zealand, both IWC members, have banned all whaling within 200 miles of their coasts.

The real reason for excluding whaling from Australian control has not been made public, but it seems probable that the Government is making preparations to allow foreign whaling fleets to fish within Australian offshore waters, without being in the embarrassing position of having to grant them an official licence. If Cheynes Beach whaling station is closed down the Government will be able to use whaling as a bargaining point with other nations such as Japan and the USA, who have already banned whaling in the Antarctic economic zone in exchange for a better deal for Australia on exports — wheat, beef or minerals.

**Solar versus Nuclear in the War-game**

In recent years there has been an increasing number of nuclear satellites launched. Current "spy in the sky" technology depends not only on high resolution photography and electronic eavesdropping but also on a wide range of detection devices and amazing capabilities. All of these devices require enormous amounts of energy. It is normal for satellites such as weather stations and research vehicles to be powered by batteries and solar cells, an arrangement which has worked well over many years. However spy satellites often operate closer to earth and stay longer in the earth's shadow. Also sitting high in the sky, the size of solar panels would make them very easily detected by enemy radar. The Hunter killer satellites and laser systems are being developed to knock out enemy satellites, keeping a spy satellite's location secret has become of paramount importance. Hence, without considering the consequences, military planners have moved towards building smaller nuclear-powered satellites. The Russian satellite was about the size of a TV set.

There are apparently about 20 nuclear-powered satellites in space, although many others would carry small radioactive sources for scientific purposes. These nuclear satellites are in various orbits. Several of the American ones are parked in geostationary orbit (22,220 km from the earth), having finished their active life whilst the others are still in use; in orbits generally less than 1000 km away.

Spy satellites tend to make their close sweeps at distances of less than 100 km from the earth. Because of the range of American military bases, Australia would be under continual observation. In fact, the Russian satellite swept over Australia shortly before it crashed in Canada.

**Was that a piece of sky falling?**

American space experts dismiss the possibility of a major accident as “very remote.” They claim the orbits used will mean the satellites “will not fall to earth for hundreds of years” (a very forward-looking attitude). The facts are however that no satellite has been in space more than two decades. A large number of satellites regularly fall and burn up in the upper atmosphere. But they don’t disappear.

There is a world of difference between 10 kg of iron and copper spread through the stratosphere and 100 lbs of plutonium or highly enriched uranium.

An accident in 1965 when an American satellite fitted with a nuclear powerpack burned up over the ocean may have caused a small radioactive cloud. If so, it will be quite another matter.
He added, "This difficulty in the space age is completely under control. We are planning for the worst." In the Canadian crash, information about earlier accidents began to emerge. One American nuclear satellite crashed into the Pacific Ocean off Japan. On another occasion the landing module from an Apollo shot, carrying a nuclear powerpack, landed in the Indian Ocean. The US had enormous difficulty locating this. They finally found it, but not before it had been recovered. Another nuclear satellite disintegrated in the upper atmosphere. None of these events (nor any possible Russian accidents) were reported at the time. It is now known that there have been six nuclear accidents in space and one deliberate explosion of a nuclear bomb.

Because Cosmos 594 landed on Canadian Territory the Americans and Russians (who both knew of the likelihood of the crash three weeks before it occurred) let the Canadian government into the secret. It was later learned that the satellite had been spread over 600 km and most of the fragments, determining whether they were radioactive, had not been found by people who stumbled across them, not be search parties. A request that simple geiger counters be provided for Indian hunting parties who roam through the area was denied. So far no steps have been taken to determine the effect of radioactive build-up in food.

The American satellite was that there might be a "critical mass" of uranium aboard the Cosmos 954. A "critical mass" is a certain amount of highly enriched uranium large enough to cause a nuclear explosion if left undisturbed. The Americans were not sure whether they had enough for this to happen, but initially they kept the satellite "on orbit" in case they had to exam it, as to do so they would have had to give away important clues about the device it was carrying.

The American scientists had agreed that the satellite's design was not of an extremely complex and almost impossible to deal with satisfactorily. Russian scientists and government officials to ORM were interested. The Soviet newsgacy, TASS, said the satellite was designed to destroy itself on entering the atmosphere and hence needed a "safe" reentry procedure. However nuclear accidents are extremely complex and almost impossible to deal with satisfactorily.
was incorporated on December 22, 1967. The main objective of Urangesellschaft are exploration and development of uranium deposits, operation of uranium mines and uranium mills, participation in projects and companies in these areas, trade in uranium ores, concentrates, and chemical compounds.

Urangesellschaft is a partnership between the West German government and Metallgesellschaft, the giant German metals group which is one of the world's largest smelting and refining corporations.

In order to secure the safety of supplies, Urangesellschaft endeavors to look for raw material in as many different countries as possible. It develops its own projects in areas which are known to contain uranium deposits as well as in areas which, based on geological considerations, might have a good potential for new uranium deposits, for example, Mansfield.

It is increasingly difficult to acquire mining rights in uranium mining districts; frequently, therefore, UrF forms joint ventures with local companies, in which Urangesellschaft also has mining rights, in areas which have not been thoroughly explored. It is quite possible to acquire relatively big concessions areas at considerably lower cost; but the chances to find deposits are lower.

Following a recommendation of the government of West Germany, Urangesellschaft was incorporated on December 22, 1967. The main objective of Urangesellschaft are exploration and development of uranium deposits, operation of uranium mines and uranium mills, participation in projects and companies in these areas, trade in uranium ores, concentrates, and chemical compounds.

Urangesellschaft is a partnership between the West German government and Metallgesellschaft, the giant German metals group which is one of the world's largest smelting and refining corporations.

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What is happening in his own state. He has stated that "There is no known uranium in Victoria!" Following news of Urangesellschaft's discovery, the Victorian Minister for Minerals and Energy, Mr. Balfour, when questioned in Parliament, was unable to say whether any companies were exploring for uranium in Victoria. Some time later he admitted that six different companies held leases entitling them to search for uranium and other minerals in Victoria.

This could be seen as an attempt to stifle the uranium debate. In Victoria there are thousands of people opposed to uranium mining. Some time later he admitted that six different companies held leases entitling them to search for uranium and other minerals in Victoria.

However, there may be another important reason why certain "interests" are intent on keeping this issue quiet. The Alpine region should be declared a National Park.

The potential for the tourist industry to supply both employment and finance in these local communities is enormous. The Alpine region is Victoria's major and yet largely neglected tourist asset.

Logging, grazing and mining industries all revolve around capital intensive production as opposed to labour intensive — and all of these activities provide little or no employment for workers. A change of land use is required in the National interest.

The LCC proposes that it should do so in conjunction with the Mines Department!...
Galarrwuy Yunupingu grew up in the Northern Territory, at Yirrkala on the Gove Peninsula. His father, Mungarrwuy, was chief of his clan, and Galarrwuy was taught to perform the traditional ceremonies and to go to school. He went to school at Yirrkala, and then spent three years at the Bible College in Brisbane, training to be a missionary. As the years went by, he realized it was false to preach a "foreign" religion; it merely confused the aboriginal people and made them lose their direction. He gave up Christianity (for respect for it) and determined to work for his people.

Some time later, Galarrwuy took a job with the Northern Land Council, which represents the traditional aboriginal clans of the top end of the Northern Territory and fights for land rights on their behalf. At 29, he is now chairman of the Northern Land Council. He is responsible for negotiating with the mining companies who plan to mine uranium in the Alligator Rivers area.

Galarrwuy Yunupingu took place in May this year at a mining camp not far from the old Rum Jungle uranium mine, after a successful hunting trip.

Galarrwuy was speaking to Nina Cladite, a West German anti-nuclear activist who made the film "Better Active Today than Radioactive" taped in the mining area. (NINA asks Galarrwuy to explain what he means.)

Galarrwuy Yunupingu was a great lesson - that these kind of words can change people.

(NINA asks the mining companies and the Government what have they been doing against opposition to mining.)

Galarrwuy: I think this would be the first time that Aboriginals in this part of the country will ever have the development of such a dangerous mine. (It is) the richest uranium in Australia, maybe the richest in the world; and the processing of uranium on the site is not by Aboriginal people, because you cannot make money by doing uranium mining. You have to be a human being to move to find out beyond what you can actually experience. Experiencing is more than finding it out.

Galarrwuy: Mining is not new to Galarrwuy. He first came face to face with it as a teenager, when Nabalco set up its bauxite mine at Gove, and he was told that his people must not touch the area, not even walk on it, that they would be affected if they did. They were told by the mining, not consulted.

Mining companies have treated aborigines with contempt on many occasions, and have deliberately searched for minerals on aboriginal reserves rather than on land owned or leased by whites. In 1976, CRA, the company which controls the Mary Kathleen uranium mine, had a survey made of every aboriginal reserve in Australia. Reserves were sorted into four categories: "prime targets", "areas that, in the long term, must be thoroughly investigated" and two types of areas with low mineral potential. Aborigines have no veto of mining on their lands, though they do have the right to negotiate for compensation. The threat of mining is constantly hanging over their heads.

(NINA asks how the mining companies and the Government have persuaded aborigines to accept mining.)

Galarrwuy: We know what they say, but we are not interested in what they say. We know by tradition we have always known that uranium was there, a long time before Active Today than Radioactive hunting trip. And sure enough if you look at it...in the scientific...because of some environmental danger, and so it was determined to work for his people.

(After a long pause) You are a person with two legs, although you speak a different language. And when you put yourself into a category where there is all dollar signs, you must be just one dollar as well. You're just a piece of twenty cents. That's what a miner is; he is a piece of twenty cents, or a twenty dollar bill, he is not a human being any more. All he's being is a dollar sign.

(NINA asks Galarrwuy, what have they been doing against opposition to mining?)

Galarrwuy: Well, my position is that I would love to have a seat at the table, but I am not dependent on the Government for support. I am not dependent on the Government or the mining companies for anything.

Galarrwuy: I think racism came to exist in Australia through white society and from overseas. Of course I was made to become racist. It is not our nature being racist...although we might like to say something that might change the position of the Government or the mining companies. We are part of it...although we might like to say something that might change the position of the Government or the mining companies.

(NINA asks whether the German anti-nuclear movement could help the Aborigines and whether Galarrwuy has anything to say to the movement in general.)

Galarrwuy: Well, the thing that I see is continuous pressure on Aboriginal people, especially the landowners of the uranium region. That is, the Government continues to pass legislation to block any Aboriginal people saying "NO" to uranium development. The other thing is the pressure that my people have to accept the decisions of the Government whether they like it or not...although we might like to say something that might change the decision of the public or of the Government.

But Government is Government and therefore we must accept the terms and conditions laid down by the Government...to be honest, Aborigines accept the Government's position very much better than the Europeans (do). Because I think we have lived in this country and suffered and experienced good and bad in the existence of Australian society.
The Aboriginal Land Rights Act was introduced by the Federal Government in 1976. It gave aborigines in the Northern Territory the right to make claims on unalienated crown land that they have traditionally occupied. No claims could be made on privately owned or leased land for which purpose a restricted Aboriginal Land Fund was established. A land rights Commission was established headed by a white judge, Mr Justice Toohey, to hear the claims made by traditional owners.

So far three Aboriginal land claims have been heard in the Northern Territory — in the Alligator Rivers area (the "Uranium Province"), Borroloola and Tanami (see map). In each of these claims conservation has been raised as an issue.

The Alligator Rivers claim and the Kakadu National Park

The Alligator Rivers claim was made in the context of long standing government proposals to set up a national park in the area. The Aboriginal traditional owners declared their willingness to accept a national park, if the area was made Aboriginal land. The Ranger Inquiry, which had been given the role of an Aboriginal Land Commission, recommended that the Aborigines had proven traditional ownership, and that the claim area should become Aboriginal land. However, the Aboriginal owners would then be required to lease the land to a government conservation authority to be managed as a park.

The central question of the hearings was the management arrangement for the proposed Kakadu national park. In general both the Northern Land Council, which presented the claim on behalf of the traditional owners, and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, were prepared to accept a future status of Kakadu as Aboriginal land with the Service as managers. They did not appear before the Inquiry as antagonists.

The Borroloola claim

The Borroloola claim was the first in which a possible conflict arose. At stake was the Pellew island group, one of the three areas of unalienated crown land which constituted the claim. Apart from an ignored recommendation from the Northern Territory Wildlife Advisory Council, no action had ever been taken by any government organisation to conserve wildlife on the islands. However the Northern Territory Department of Resources and Health tendered a C.S.I.R.O. report to the hearing which proposed reserving them as sanctuaries, on the grounds of the diversity and abundance of their flora and fauna. No mention was made of Aboriginal use of the area. In a statement accompanying the report the department claimed that the islands generally speaking have been uninhabited by humans on a permanent basis. It was forced to retract this under cross examination by the Land Council.

The Warlpiri claim

The third claim to be heard was made by the Warlpiri people and concerned the Tanami region. The objection made by the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission to this claim was a major threat to land rights. Approximately half the claim consists of the Tanami Desert Wildlife Sanctuary. At the hearing of the claim the Commission maintained that whether or not this became Aboriginal land it would need continuing protection with special measures for the preservation of its flora and fauna, and that "major planning, major policies concerning the movement of people and stock and so on" would have to be its responsibility. The effect of Tanami Sanctuary remaining under Commission control would be to deny the Warlpiri full land rights. As it was, their claim was restricted to the less well-watered areas of their traditional lands.

Aboriginal reaction to the objections of conservation bodies has been to insist that their record as conservationists is good. Most people, even those opposing land claims, agree that this was once the case. Terms such as equilibrium and balance are often used to describe the relationship between Aboriginals and their environment.

Conservation in the past

In his book The Australian Aborigines the anthropologist A. P. Elkin wrote that the Aboriginals were able to live as they did in Australia for thousands of years "because instead of exploiting it, they adapted themselves to and reached an equilibrium with it". T. G. H. Strehlow has described the relationship between population and food resources as a "perfect balance". These terms gloss over the necessary adaptive changes that had to be made to meet varying seasonal and climatic conditions, but they do give a true general picture.

When Aboriginals first came to Australia there was a period of adjustment as environment and man adapted to each other, during which Aboriginal hunting practices may have contributed to the decline of the megafauna — the giant predecessors of the present marsupials. However as the period of decline of these species was concurrent with extensive climatic changes, most investigation of the role played by Aboriginals is speculative. There is no evidence that any species has ever been exterminated by Aboriginals.

Burning

As Aboriginals adjusted to the world around them, their hunting and foraging and the burning which accompanied it became built into the environment. The story of the western hare-walaby provides an example of the way in which animals became dependent on the type of burning carried out by Aborigines for suitable food and habitat. This hare-walaby once occurred throughout semi-arid areas, but is now restricted to a few remnant populations in Central Australia, and on two offshore islands of Western Australia. Two colonies have been observed and documented in the Tanami Sanctuary northwest of Alice Springs. Both number about six to ten animals. While remaining stable, over a period of two
The scientists who reported on these observations have attributed the continued existence of the two colonies to:

"Consistent winter burning resulting in a tight mosaic of various stages of fire succession. This provides natural fire-break areas and a series of alternative refuge areas if required. In the past this burning pattern has been carried out by Aboriginal men.

"Without this deliberate burning the western desert country has been subject to uncontrolled but summer fires that have destroyed the hare-wallabies’ habitat over most of their range.

In the Tanami area the old burning practices were discontinued when the aborigines, under Government policy, were moved into settlements on the fringes of their traditional lands. After this most of the Aborigines’ areas were confined to limited areas, although they continued to make trips to their homelands. The area in which the hare-wallabies were found is adjacent to an old fire-break area and a series of alternative refuge areas if required. In the past this burning pattern has been carried out by Aborigines.

There is nothing to suggest excessive offroad travel in vehicles. Most of the alarm which has been generated over to a vehicle fresh from a hunting trip, shouting out ‘tollies, tollies’ as they caught sight of some wansakuli — a solanum species — on board.

Modern hunting

Present day hunting methods are often dependent on vehicles. Rifles are sought after as a means of access to homeland areas, as much as for hunting. The two activities are generally combined as a matter of preference. Rough roads necessitate the use of four wheel drive vehicles. Rifles are preferred to digging sticks. In coastal waters of northern Australia men fish from boats equipped with outboard motors. Some burning is still carried out, and native fruits, fish and vegetables are still gathered in much the same way they have been for centuries.

The introduction of modern hunting methods has not increased the amount of food taken by Aborigines. They now buy much of their food. Some of them have access to cheap beef from reserves and Aboriginal-owned cattle stations. Many of them are only able to hunt, at weekends.

Despite the use of purchased food, mostly flour, sugar and tea, people still regard bush food as essential. A belief in its superiority is universal. People who are sick often express a preference for it. Amongst native fruit people still regard it as being of high vitamin C. These are even a successful competitor with sweets and soft drinks among children. A white observer has recorded a group of them running over to a vehicle fresh from a hunting trip, shouting out ‘tollies, tollies’ as they caught sight of some wansakuli — a solanum species — on board.

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PEOPLE IN CRISIS

About 300 people live in the township of Borroloola (in the Northern Territory) during the dry season, and up to 700 during the wet when people return from working on cattle stations. Most of the people are members of the Yanyula, or Garawa tribes. There are also Marra, Gur­

The Land Rights Claim

In July 1977 the Northern Land Council, acting on behalf of the traditional owners, applied for Aboriginal land rights to three areas: Borroloola Town Common, an area of 1366 square kilometres surrounding the town; the Sir Edward Pellew Islands in the estuary of the McArthur River, and the proposed Robinson River Reserve (see map).

The Northern Land Council’s submission, prepared by anthropologist John Avery and site recorder Dehne McLaughlin, provided evidence that people living at Borroloola were the traditional owners of these areas. Moreover they relied on the land, particularly Borroloola Common, for hunting, fishing and food gathering as an important part of their nutrition. Many of the traditional owners wanted to return to their land.

Government submissions

The Department of the Northern Territory’s submission dealt with length of mining, fishing and pastoral interests, giving no serious consideration to the interests of the aborigines who constitute the majority of people in the area. The Department’s first submission was so blatantly biased that it was eventually withdrawn and racist paragraphs were removed.

The Department wishes to encourage commercial fishing in the area, but in some cases this conflicts with the need to control fishing. There is great danger that stocks of fish such as barramundi will be depleted, as has happened in Queensland. The desire to increase fishing is also inconsistent with the Department’s policy of encouraging mining, which would pollute the rivers and coastal waters, destroying the barramundi and prawns fishing industries.

The Wildlife Section of the Northern Territory Department of Resources and Health submitted a survey made by the CSIRO in 1966-67, which found that the islands had a diverse and abundant wildlife with characteristics quite different from the mainland species. It argued that Pellew Islands should be preserved as flora and fauna reserves. However there was no evidence that granting aboriginal land rights would lead to the destruction of wildlife. The destruction of wildlife populations on the mainland has been due to grazing and introduced species, not the aborigines.

The result

Justice Toohey found that traditional ownership of Borroloola Common and most of the Pellew Islands was established. However he was “unable to find that there...
are traditional Aboriginal owners of the proposed Robinson River Reserve and most of South West Island.

Justice Toohey recommended that Aboriginal Land Trusts should be set up for Borroloola Common, Vanderlin Island and West Island. This will be carried out, according to Mr. Viner, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

The Borroloola case is of enormous significance to black people throughout Australia. Insofar as the Commissioner recommends that land rights should be granted to the traditional owners, it is a milestone in the battle to reverse the harm done to black people by whites. In the words of Justice Toohey, "The destruction of Aboriginal society has been very much related to the deprivation of land. There is good reason to believe that the recognition of traditional land claims will help to arrest the destruction and to some extent restore the dignity of the people concerned."

One reason for the failure to grant land rights for the entire area was the lack of evidence of traditional ownership, particularly evidence linking the claimants to specific sites. In the words of Justice Toohey the investigators for the Northern Land Council worked "painstakingly and well". Opponents of the claims even argued that the investigators' evidence was invalid because they were overly sympathetic to the aborigines. However, none of the investigators for the Northern Land Council had ever visited the proposed Robinson River Reserve, and it appears that only one of the aborigines involved, Old Davvy, had ever been there.

The McArthur River Mining Project

One of the groups giving evidence to the Commission was Mount Isa Mines, a subsidiary of the American-based mining company, ASARCO. About 100 km upstream from Borroloola on the McArthur River lies a massive 193 million tonnes proven orebody of lead, zinc and silver. Mount Isa Mines has purchased the McArthur River and Pellew Islands. The McArthur River is one of the largest rivers in Australia and provides a link between Borroloola Common and the Pellew Islands.

For several years the Yanyula and Mara people have been trying to buy Bing Bong Cattle Station through the Aboriginal Land Fund Commission. But they could not do this until the land claims were settled. The Land Claim Commission was not informed of the MIMETS purchase until it had been finalised and approved by the Treasurer. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Viner, knew that the company was buying Bing Bong. He delayed tabling Justice Toohey's report for over three months until mid-May this year the company purchased Bing Bong Cattle Station, which lies to the north of Borroloola. Since time immemorial aborigines have depended upon Bing Bong for foraging, and it contains some of the most sacred sites and ceremony ground. It also provides a link between Borroloola Common and the Pellew Islands.

Although Mr. Viner has endorsed the recommendation that land claims be granted to Borroloola Common and two of the Pellew Islands, he has deferred a decision on whether Mount Isa Mines should be granted an easement to allow the pipelines and road through the land.

The black people know that too many people going through their place would be a bad thing. Already one group of miners has grabbed a woman from her hut and tried to rape her.

The people are also afraid that the mine could poison the river and kill the fish. Their fears are well-founded. The lead and zinc ores are associated with acidic sulphides which would allow them to dissolve in water. The process of extraction is likely to be by around 50% efficient, leaving large quantities of highly toxic lead and zinc behind.

Residues left after metals are extracted from the ore will be stored in a tailings dam. This is in a catchment area with underground water flow. All year round contaminated water would seep out, and under monsoon conditions the tailings dam could overflow. This would poison or contaminate the aquatic life of the McArthur River and destroy the aborigines' survival economy.

A fracture of the proposed pipelines would result in disastrous contamination. The pipelines would cross flood-prone mudflats. Recent experience with the Atakan oil pipeline has shown that even when special precautions were taken fractures are common.

The importance of the land claims and dangers of oil pollution must be considered in the context of the history and present lives of the Borroloola people.

History of Borroloola

When the first white explorers visited Borroloola they were presented gifts by the lively and friendly people who lived on the banks of the McArthur River. However relations changed rapidly when cattlemen took over the land and attempted to stop the traditional practice of burning off

Aborigines killing cattle and white people shooting at them were the main sources of conflict. For about forty years the aborigines fought a bloody but uneven battle to maintain their independence. Many of them were killed in punitive raids - or just for fun. Most of the Bilingula people were exterminated in a punitive raid.

Aborigines who resisted the whites were still venerated by their descendants, and many accounts of massacres still survive. One account describes the massacre of Gur-danj people at Dangiminn (a Lightning Dreaming Site in the present McArthur River Cattle Station).

"There was a mob of Aborigines camping here in the old times, poor buggers, when Top Station was up. Frank Megan came out with pack horses, plant, trailing horses and rifles. They were hunting around for people to shoot. They left their horses north of the spring and swam around the spring. They got them and shot them all.

They shot the whole mob. Some fellas got up the steep cliff. The waterfront was all blood - girls, boys, old women and men were shot. They did the same all around right down to Kalgur and Aemelia Springs. Frank Megan also killed people at Warungurri."

From the beginning of this century European dominance was largely established.

Borroloola Today

Most people at Borroloola live in home-made shanties of scrap wood, corrugated iron and palm leaf shades. The various tribal groups have settled around the river, usually in the direction of their traditional lands.

Many of the adults work as laborers for mining companies. During the wet season, when there is little paid work, most people return to the township. The major ceremonies are usually held ly in the direction of their traditional lands.

The importance of the land claims and dangers of oil pollution must be considered in the context of the history and present lives of the Borroloola people.
Thus a person sees his or her own spirit as coming from dreaming relatives' animals. In the Borroloola region "spirit child" enters into his wife.

The depth of feeling for the land is partly derived which land he belonged to, and there was virtually com­ land. Every person I met was able to specify precisely from the store: "Bush tucker makes you strong - you hunting is very important. The fresh vegetables and meat help doctors at Darwin Hospital study the effects of aboriginal community development officer, has been modifying; for example hunters might travel in a Holden car or use nails as spear heads instead of bones. However5 eating is very important. The fresh vegetables and meat are more nutritious than the white flour and tinned food from the store. "Bush tucker makes you strong - you feel good. Store food makes you weak."

Hunting also enables people to preserve their in­dependence and spiritual knowledge; particularly since creation time stories are concerned with the land and what bounty of our. Many of the blacks have detailed knowledge of plants and animals. Leo Finlay, an aboriginal community development officer, has been helping doctors at Darwin Hospital study the effects of traditional medicines.

Most blacks still feel a strong relationship to their land. Every person I met was able to specify precisely which land he belonged to, and there was virtually complete agreement as to who belonged to which areas. If the land is damaged or not cared for the people "feel sorry" for it. The depth of feeling for the land is partly derived from the people's spiritual beliefs. These differ slightly between tribes in the area, but one widespread belief concerns creation.

Before a child is conceived a father dreams about one of the spirits from the dreamtime. During this dream the "spirit child" enters into his wife. If the dream is a kangaroo dream the child will have the kangaroo as his or her "totemic" animal. In the Borroloola region a person usually may not kill his or her own animal, and will have the responsibility of protecting the animal if it is over-hunted. People also feel some respect for their relatives' animals.

The dream often takes place at or about a sacred dreaming site on the land to which the child belongs. Thus a person sees his or her own spirit as coming from the creation time, through the father's dream.

When a spirit dies in the creation time stories it becomes a feature of the landscape in which the spiritual presence may be felt. The stories thus create a spiritual bond to the land and give meaning to each person's life.

The future

The people of Borroloola have managed to achieve some integration between traditional and European lifestyles. Parents usually want their children to learn white man's ways such as reading and writing. However, despite strong pressures to abandon their own culture, they also want their children to learn traditional knowledge, through the creation-time stories, ceremonies and participation in everyday activities.

The stress experienced by aborigines following the white's arrival has contributed to a high level of alcohol consumption among the blacks. However the aboriginal council of Borroloola has tried to improve the situation by introducing the rule "tucker before liquor" and prohibiting drinking in the home areas.

If the aboriginal people have the opportunity to develop at their own rate and in their own way there is a good chance that they will be able to develop a healthy, intact society incorporating the traditional and the new. If too quick a rate of change is imposed there could be a complete social breakdown, generating increased feelings of hopelessness, depression and alcoholism. This could result in the loss of traditional knowledge and social organisation without providing an adequate alternative to replace them.

The purchase of Bing Bong Station would have gone a long way towards helping these people. By conniving with McLoon Mining the lease of this land the Government is acting against their interests. Even the fraction of this wealth that the Indians might hope to receive for the rights to mine the coal promises relief from the brutal poverty that afflicts them. But the catch is that strip mining and energy conversion plants will destroy the land and the water and the clean air. The influx of coal miners, construction workers etc. threatens to destroy the people, their only refuges against as­saults, and whose concern for their forebears lost before they quite had acquired, the en­vironmentalists were forced to rethink their position on Indians.

Land — the land of the Great Plains — is a central concern of American Indians and of environmentalists. Each group fears the despoliation and loss of lands. But their traditional perspectives are so profoundly different that they have ignored or opposed each other's past conservation efforts.

Now they face an overwhelming threat to the land: coal strip mining and the development of huge electric power plants on the Northern Great Plains of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, and the Dakotas. This threat has led to the first hesitant step towards cooperation against the energy companies and the Federal Government which supports them: in the summer of 1976 the Northern Rockies Action Group (NRAG) held a conference in which environmentalists and those Indians who have traditionally been antagonists of Indians and environmentalists, but who now also fear that strip mining will mean the loss of their land and water, clean air and the destruct­ion of their way of life.

A major achievement was the cor­dial, low-key atmosphere of the con­ference, in which the Indians could speak freely. NRAG staff members helped individual Indians to draft position papers, and tried to limit the number of words. The result was that the Indians would not feel out­numbered. This was a new approach to encounters between Indians and non-Indians.

The Indians do not conceal their disdain for environmentalists. "I always had the notion that environment­alists were college students hunting for a reputation, or ranchers out hustling for land," said one Indian representative. And the Northern Cheyenne tribal chairman, Allen Rowland, ventured the view that wildlife organisations "have been very hostile toward Indian causes."

Among the environmentalists were several wildlife protection groups including the Sierra Club, and Friends of the Earth. In the past these groups have always fought to increase national parks and wilderness areas. It is these virtually uninhabited public lands to which the Indians have recently bid claims. Last year the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth lost a contest with the Indians when Congress gave the tiny Havasupai tribe 185,000 acres of land that they wanted to be added to Grand Canyon National Park.

Taken aback by this defeat, and embarrassed by the anti-Indian image they had acquired, the en­vironmentalists were forced to rethink their position on Indians.

Can Indians and Environmentalists find common ground?

by David Zimmerman

The purchase of Bing Bong Station would have gone a long way towards helping these people. By conniving with McLoon Mining the lease of this land the Government is acting against their interests. Even the fraction of this wealth that the Indians might hope to receive for the rights to mine the coal promises relief from the brutal poverty that afflicts them. But the catch is that strip mining and energy conversion plants will destroy the land and the water and the clean air. The influx of coal miners, construction workers etc. threatens to destroy the people, their only refuges against assaults, and whose concern for their forebears lost before they quite had acquired, the environmentalists were forced to rethink their position on Indians.

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The Indians became aware that coal cheated on the price. decaying later whether and how min­
Cheyenne observed, "Coal has been of coal development on and near
agreements, on the grounds that they
royalty rates of 17c. per ton of coal.
dered under the Cheyenne reservation a
Indians later perceived to be rip-off
sore."
where gold mining had torn up the earth.
Tired out, he says, "Don't I am sore. Don't hurt me." But
hurts them. The Indians never hurt anything,
wood. But the white people plows up
When we burn grass
When we build houses, we make little
holes.
and can't sell it because it does not
It will last forever. It will not even perish by
It will last forever. It will not even perish by
burn it with the nod of a buffalo's head, but only
belong to us. You can count your money and
money.
for their livelihood and cultural sur­
ience crises, would be too great.
missions agreed that only a coalition of
forestry and pastoralists, can take
in an Indian-environ­
mentalist coalition. All parties agreed that only a coalition of
forces could stop the coal companies.
But other Indians told the
environmentalists that in return for co-
operation they would have to support
Indian claims such as the Custer Forest
and perhaps other claims like it. The
environmentalists also would have to
manage, use or enhance the Indian
lands — which, they were told, are
outside the white man's purview.
The environmentalists could envision case-by-case assessment of
claims, such as the claim on Custer Forest, but did not think their
national organizations were ready to relax their categorical opposition
to Indian land rights. They did, however, offer the
Indians facilities to help them raise funds and legal help.
The Indians stirred a sense of guilt among environmentalists who have ignored or
opposed native people's claims in focusing their concern
wholly on the natural, non-human environment. There was talk of
appointing Indians to the boards of their national organizations, and of
bringing Indians to Washington to take part in lobbying.
Environmentalists spoke enthusiastically of integrating Indian
values into white America's envi­
nmental vision. The time may have come, they said, to broaden
their own definitions of ecological concern to include the people who
still live on the land, and depend on it
for their livelihood and cultural sur­

The Australian Experience

Although David Zimmermann's article was published in 1976, it is my
assumption that it raises a number of
environmental issues. The
American Indians have already
surfaced in Australia, and brought into
the debate on Aboriginal problems. The
Northern Land Council, during the
recent Borroloola Land Rights claim
hearing, for the area foresaw an
Aboriginal, I could re-read Zimmer­
man's paper and substitute the word
American Indian for Australian
Aboriginal, every time it appears. It
is a statistically different world, and
has been closely involved in the
Forest. He said the Cheyenne's
culture, was never "Custer Forest
oriented", and the Custer Forest was needed for grazing and timber land.
The non-Indian were Indians were shocked and
stunned. The environmentalists said they doubted if the leaders of both
their organizations would agree to
ceding the Custer Forest, because the
precedent would be a long-term threat to the public lands. For the
cattle farmers the threat was more direct: several of them rely on the
Custer Forest for summer grazing for their cattle, and could be forced
to shut down without it.
Jiggs Yellowtail of the Crow tribe,
who is a cattle farmer, suggested the
environmentalists are being
terpreted if they try to deny
Indians the right to compensate for the
coal income, and for the needs of their growing populations, by
expanding their customary pursuits,
such as cattle grazing.
Some environmentalists conceded that the Custer Forest has been badly
over-grazed and mismanaged by the
Bureau of Land Management and
the graziers who now use it. They
suggested that Indian stewardship
might not be much worse for the land — and might well be better.
In raising the claim, Rowland
exposed the basic contradictions in
an Indian-environ­
environmental vision. The time may have
come, they said, to broaden
their own definitions of ecological concern to include the people who
still live on the land, and depend on it
for their livelihood and cultural sur­

—Condensed from an article in The PROGRESSIVE
The dilemma that faced the American Indians in relation to coal mining, grand promises and rip-off royalties from the multinationals, is exactly the same in Australia in relation to the uranium mining.

An analogy can also be drawn between the attitude taken by environmentalists in the U.S.A. and the one that has been gathering unnecessary momentum in Australia. Opposition to Aboriginal Land Rights by environmentalists is not warranted. As well as formal opposition by supposed environmentalists during the Borroloola hearings and the Woomera hearings quite a number of environmentalists have shown the following points:

(a) The Aboriginal people want both the land and the grazing opportunities to exist, in order to secure a living from the land. They do not want to be forced to move onto bigger and better land when the land that they are occupying is injurious to the environment, or is in the process of becoming injurious.

(b) Cattle are introduced animals and are a major cause of the environmental degradation of the area.

(c) The traditional land that the Aboriginal people wish to keep is the traditional land in the future. The land in the past is of no interest to them, apart from the fact that it is what has been occupied and will be occupied by them in the future. They are entitled to claim the land for the Aboriginal people in the same way that all white people claim the land for all white people in the future.

Aboriginals lump environmentalists into the same category as miners and pastoralists etc. The only way that this will change, is when environmentalists say, "OK, we don't convince you. We'll sup­port the Aboriginals."

It must be noted that not all environmentalists make this statement. Many environmentalists, based on their interpretation of what is in the best interests of the environment, oppose grazing altogether.

The Aboriginals have a genuine claim to the land. It is their land, and they are entitled to be consulted, and to take the lead in decision-making about what is best for the land.

In the case of the Aurukun and Mornington Island reserves, the land is being exploited for a mineral deposit which is in the process of being developed. The Aboriginal people have every right to determine what they will do with the land, in their own way.

Aboriginal Land Rights, may now be on the verge of changing to a more positive stance. At a recent meeting in Canberra with representatives from the Northern and Central Land Council, FCAATS, the officers representing A.C.F. and F.O.E. displayed a very enlightened view to supporting Aboriginal Land rights.

We must all cooperate, and face against the powers that be, in order to be EFFECTIVE and WIN.

To be more specific from the Aboriginal point of view, I wish to reader to keep in mind Zimmer­

The previous caution shown by Australian environmentalists, in giving full support to Aboriginal Land Rights, may now be on the verge of changing to a more positive stance.

The people of Aurukun and Mornington Island have asked only to be left alone to determine their own future. They want the land: that is absolutely fundamental to them. They also want the right to run cattle as they wish, and to be free to develop their own interests, rather than acknowledge Aboriginal interests.

(i) It cannot be stressed enough that the Aboriginal people have every right to determine their own ends, once they secure back ownership of their land through the introduced, imposed, legal system.

2. Aboriginal point of view, I wish to keep in mind Zim­

The Aurukun dispute first surfaced in November 1975. Taking advan­tage of the chaotic situation when the Whitlam Government was dis­missed by the Governor General, the Queensland state government rushed through a Bill giving mining rights on the reserve to a consortium calling itself "Aurukun Associates". This was during the Fraser "counterattack" government.

The companies involved were Pecheny, Billiton, Tipperary (a Texas-based company which owns over a million acres of Australian-cattle-country, among other inter­ests) and Comalco. The only one with any Australian equity at all is Comalco, which is owned mainly by Conzinc Rio Tinto and Kaiser Aluminium. Among the few Australian share-holders are Mr Bjelke-Petersen and many of his cabinet members.

The Aurukun moratorium was established by the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs; but there is at least a real possibility that it will be likely to fall through to the Aurukun people.

The Aurukun Associates Act gives no compensation to the local people.

There is a provision in it that 3% of profits of the mining on the Aurukun reserve for some time (and had twice been thrown out when they interfered with sacred sites) but relations with the companies were not too bad: the companies had assured the aborigines that there was no chance of mining for 30 or 40 years, that they would be kept fully informed about it and that all profits would be filtered through to the Aurukun people. However the Queensland premier, Mr Bjelke-Petersen, also wants the land that has been inhabited by the eight tribes on the Aurukun reserve for countless generations. Great deposits of bauxite, the raw material used to produce aluminium, lie directly beneath the surface of the reserve, and aluminium continues to command a high price in inter­national markets. Mr Bjelke-Petersen is prepared to allow three totally foreign-owned companies, and one that has a 10% Australian equity, to exploit this resource, in exchange for developing "the north Queensland, which he sees as "wasted" because it is largely given over to aboriginal reserves and jungle.

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In March this year (78) a survey was taken of aborigines living on all the major reserves in Queensland (except Edward River, where the research team was refused entry), and of urban aborigines living in Brisbane. About five aborigines from reserves and eight hundred and seventy-nine from cities were interviewed. Urban aborigines were asked whether they would be prepared to go back to their reserves to live. The results were:

- 69% said they would return to reserves if these were run by aboriginal people.
- 10.4% said they would return to live on a church-run reserve.
- Less than 4% said they would return to live on a reserve run by the Queensland Government's Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

When asked who they thought should make laws for the reserves —
- 73% of blacks living on reserves thought it should be the Federal Government.
- Less than 15% thought it should be the Queensland Government.

Urban blacks were also asked this question. They replied:
- 45%: the Federal Government.
- 0.5%: the Queensland Government.

The rest of the aborigines surveyed did not mark either option. Many of them wrote in "Aboriginal People" (an option which was not given in the questionnaire).

This marked lack of affection for the DAIA is probably due to its treatment of black people in the past, and in particular, to the Queensland Acts for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

The Queensland Acts

These acts give control of reserves to a Manager or District Officer. Many of the managers of the Queensland reserves come from the British Army, Rhodesia or South Africa. They have wide powers over the lives of people living on reserves.

- Aborigines must have permission from the Manager to go onto a reserve. The Manager can expel people "cause trouble" even if they were born on the reserve and areView full page
them appoint Mr. Morris. He claimed the man was 'not qualified'. Privately he told Mr. Morris, 'I'm running this show. I understand that.'

Throughout the dispute, the Federal Government has appeared as the champion of black rights, by contrast with the rabid Bjelke-Petersen. But how was a secure Federal Government trounced by the premier and suspected of being somewhat mentally unbalanced? The role of the Federal Government, Mr Viner in particular, should not be allowed to go unquestioned.

A few months before the dispute erupted Mr Viner authorised a sub-commission for abolishing the Aboriginal Land Fund. The fund was set up under the Whitlam Government to buy back land for aboriginal communities (there is no other way they can be given land rights in the States). Mr Fraser and Mr Viner have since denied that they were planning to get rid of the Land Fund, but the evidence is there. Mr Viner has also prevented Professor Rowley, head of the Land Fund, and Al Grassy, from suing Bjelke-Petersen for racial discrimination (Mr Bjelke-Petersen refuses to allow land in his state to be transferred into the names of aboriginal communities, even when the land has already been paid for).

Mr Viner was active during the dispute, attempting to water down the legislation for acquiring reserves. He instructed his Department not to design the legislation to "take over the reserves or acquire them on behalf of the aborigines" but merely to strengthen the structure of the aboriginal councils (— Paul Kelly, National Times, 18/4/78).

This fits in well with his attempt to "compromise" with Bjelke-Petersen. Did the Federal Government ever have any intention of taking over the reserves? Or was the whole thing just a publicity exercise?

A Reply to The Miners

While blacks in Queensland still suffer under the Queensland Acts — the mining industry council bleats about "special privileges" and discrimination in favour of blacks. In the business pages of The Age, economics writer Tony Thomas replied to the miners in these terms: In 1974 Professor R.M. Berndt put the typical age at which Aboriginal females were first violated by whites at seven years. Dr Frank Stevens says in his book, Aborigines in the N.T. Cattle Industry, published in 1974, that the age of first violation would have since risen only slightly. Brian Toohey of the Financial Review reported on 7th April this year: "The joke of the night at the miners' annual dinner in Canberra this year had as its main gag line the fact that a gorilla was mistaken for an Aboriginal in a fur coat.

The author of this obscenity was the Queensland Minister for Mines. Toohey politely omitted the part about the mistaken identity resulting in the rape of the gorilla.

If you are feeling a little sick in the stomach, just remember that Queensland blacks are ruled by these racists. The people up there are fighting for basic human rights. What about a bit of support?

Contact: Lyndon Shea. Campaign Against Racial Exploitation. 22 Smith St, Collingwood.
national parks and wildlife conservation act

A structure for setting up national parks and applying a plan of management is provided by this Act. Under it the Kakadu region be declared a national park, control of the area to be a park or reserve. Unlike a national park, the conservation zone can only be "regulated". Thus, until the area is declared a national park, control of mining and pollution in the region will be seriously weakened.

The Director of National Parks and Wildlife can regulate mining activities with in a national park. However, mining leases are specifically excluded from the national park. The Ranger can take out an order against the mining companies only if the national park is affected. The Ranger recommended that the mining companies should deposit a large fund to pay for any environmental damage caused. This has been ignored by the Government.

The Environment Protection (Northern Territory Supreme Court) Act:

This Act provides for the appointment of a Supervising Scientist to be responsible for establishing standards and monitoring radiation, environmental pollution and its effects. The Ranger Inquiry specified that the NLC should consider research programs and review mining practices. However, the Ranger can only make recommendations to the Supervising Scientist. The Ranger Inquiry is known to be against many of the measures proposed to protect the environment that the committee has been effectively emasculated before it has even met.

Environment Protection (Nuclear Codes) Act:

This act provides for the creation of codes of practice on all stages of the nuclear fuel cycle including the disposal of nuclear waste and the operation of nuclear facilities. It is too easy to regard the question of uranium mining in simplistic terms. It is too easy to regard the question of uranium mining in simplistic terms. It is too easy to regard the question of uranium mining in simplistic terms. It is too easy to regard the question of uranium mining in simplistic terms. It is too easy to regard the question of uranium mining in simplistic terms.

"Uranium mining legal!" in CR 3.4/This is particularly disturbing since under the Atomic Energy Act, as you may find, those standards would not apply in the mining lease area, and operations would not be open to public scrutiny.

Secrecy Provisions:

Included in the Acts are secrecy provisions which make it illegal for the Director of Parks and Wildlife, the Supervising Scientist, and their staff, as well as anyone from the Northern Land Council to disclose any information about the mining operations under a penalty of a $1,000 fine or six months imprisonment. These secrecy provisions will apply even if the company is breaking the law, or mining regulations, and would include release of information about the location of land ownerships. The Ranger site will be a prohibited area, and no unauthorized official will be allowed to enter. Thus the mining operations will be concealed from public scrutiny.

In conclusion the legislation fails to protect the environment from the polluting effect of mining. It does not set up a Kakadu National Park, and makes the prospect of a park even more remote. The secrecy provisions and lack of effective independent monitoring means that uranium miners will be able to break regulations with impunity.

Research by John Hallam
I personally found Ian Pausacker's article, "China, Environmentalists Dream?" (CR 1/2) interesting and informative. My own view is that whilst China has emerged from much harsher, and industrial society, that is no excuse for upholding China as being a viable alternative to capitalism. (I'm a libertarian socialist.)

Undeniably China has come a long way since 1949; there is no easy solution to the many problems of that country. However to have illusions that China's social and political system is morally superior is downright ridiculous. I would like to ask apologists for China whether they are really friends of the Earth.

Consider this:

The New China News agency said that the twenty-second (my emphasis) atmospheric nuclear test (17/9/77) "was a victory anew achieved by the workers, commanders and fighters of the Chinese People's Liberation (1) Army, scientists, technicians and revolutionary cadres engaged in research, manufacturing and testing of nuclear weapons.'

Last year China's mushroom cloud over Lanzhou is said to have been two miles long and 1,000 feet high. It is a frightening picture of the world's working class and bourgeoisie — four times China is the only country still conducting atmospheric nuclear tests. An ordinary person can, in all fairness, only conclude that China, like the rest of the world (whether "democratic" or "communist") is still a hierarchical society, and there is no reason to suggest that the rulers have any intention of allowing the ordinary person to have an influence in that society.

I believe that Friends of the Earth does an essential job in preserving our environment and in fighting the case for conservation; however, I do have a criticism. The magazine CHAIN REACTION sometimes looks more like an immature leftist university rag or TRIBUNE (a communist newspaper) than the hard-hitting ecological communication device it should be. Let us not equate socialism with ecology. Labor's "honour thy contracts" is case in point. The picture of fat capitalists in top hats doing naughty things (and similar cartoons) I found not only puerile but downright embarrassing. When I receive a copy of CHAIN REACTION I want something I can show to someone and say, "Read this!" I don't want them to dismiss it as a kid's paper.

As another matter of interest, my comments on FOE are not those of a wealthy do-gooder capitalist. The comments come from a middle class (like the majority of Australians) "restricted free-enterprise" (and "not free for all") political activist. I am a member of a party that as a matter of policy and priority demands a ballot on uranium and as a result stands against mining it. I'm an Australian Democrat, neither left nor right. I keep up the good work and maybe we can save the environment and therefore humanity. Yours in friendship.

Peter Markham.

P.S. I hope you don't mind my writing a long and critical letter but I have been a member for some time and feel that I should let you know how at least one member feels.

According to the artist, who clearly is an annoyed capitalist and great believer in free enterprise, the cartoons in question are meant as a comment on the EXCEDES of capitalism and materialistic values, moded in a humorous and absurd way. Cartoonists should be given the freedom to express their own feelings.

Unfortunately there are other environmental groups in Australia which aren't quite as liberated. Take for example MAUM, which tends to reflect the authoritarian structures of its member organizations (trade unions, churches, academics ...). I was present at the national MAUM meeting in February and saw running the meeting with boring, alienating, business-type meeting procedures. Such complicated structures are the most alienating of those who are newest to activism, and to a large extent this means women.

When I brought up the issue at a state Federal meeting in Hobart in connection with nominations for a steering committee, the same old arguments came up — "that's reverse discrimination, isn't it? There any need?" — "Note — these comments came from men only. Another woman present stood up for me, saying that I had raised the point at a good moment and that it would encourage other women to speak up if they were shy. Women really do feel stronger if they know they will be listened to for a change.

In Tasmania I found (at last) theocker environmentalists! The environmental movement here has until now consisted of several ad hoc action groups (South-West Action Committee, Project Jonah, Tasmanian Wilderness Society etc.) for the first time I've come face to face with people who are into, say, wilderness, which is quite accepted for environmentalists, but who are also of the same time conservative and socially/politically unwary. The number of 'ecofeminists' down here is very small. It takes a bit of getting used to to allow the friendly, supportive atmosphere of the other FOE groups, and to having much-needed support from other feminists. In the process I'm meeting a depressing number of feminists who have no great awareness of environmental issues. The lack of analysis occurs in both circles. I think it's time that women in the environment and feminist movements consider putting much more effort into bringing the two camps together. After all, aren't we all going in the same direction?

The environmental movement, as I have come to realize, is not only for a sustainable society which lives in harmony with nature rather than seeks to dominate it, but also for women's rights. I would like to make this point more forcefully by bringing the two camps together. After all, aren't we all going in the same direction?

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At the beginning of time, an early man digs the 'first hole'...

With his simple wooden spade, this early man had unearthed the rock which would make the first weapon.

This was to lead to the first business takeover...

And this civilization was well under way...

Today, of course, civilization has become much more sophisticated...

Aah... nothing like a lung full of fresh air in the morning... mm - I can even smell the asbestos from the brake linings of the traffic.

This is Lang Hancock - a descendant of the first miner.

Also, self-appointed protector of society (as we know it)

As Lang turns the page...

Gee! Don't those fools realise that they're standing in the way of progress?

30,000 protest WA N-Plane!

And so begins the adventure which we call Lang vs the Eco-Nuts.

Listen, Charlie - I got a plan to short-circuit those Marxist ratbags.

Some hours later, at a businessmen's luncheon in Perth...

... and I tell you, gentlemen, this whole oil crisis is directly attributable to the effect these eco-nuts had in America...

Within seconds, Lang dials his direct line to Sir Charles Court...