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ABORIGINAL RESISTANCE:

a Study of its Social Roots and Organisation

by

C.P. Mullard

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Dissertation submitted in accordance with the regulations
for the higher degree of Master of Arts in Sociology,
Durham University.

September 1975

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We should like to take this opportunity to thank the National Aboriginal Forum in particular and all Aborigines in general for their support and hospitality they gave us during our fieldwork in Australia between July and December, 1974. We should also like to express our appreciation to Professor P. Abrams, Miss Ruth First, and Gavin Williams of the Sociology Department, Durham University who offered invaluable advice whilst this project was being written up; and to the secretary of the department, Carole Scott, who undertook to type the manuscript during her leisure time. But our largest debt is to Robin Williams, Lecturer in Sociology at Durham University, who, in his role as both friend and supervisor, provided continuous critical assessment and support as the project developed. Without his advice, and peculiar sociological knowledge, this thesis - if written, at all - would have been a mere travesty of what it is oris not.

ABSTRACT

An attempt is made here to suggest how and why Aboriginal resistance is, socially defined, constructed, and organised. It is argued that from both a historical and current perspective, resistance has evolved out of a social need to preserve (traditional) or rediscover (urban-based) Aboriginal values and institutions. With a stress on inter-connectedness, the main concepts and institutions that are discussed include "My Country", "Community", and "Dreamtime". It is shown that Aboriginal resistance has been directed against colonial authority which, from the initial stages of contact to the present day, has attempted to destroy and undermine Aboriginal social life.

INTRODUCTION: THE MASK OF RACISM

> "As a human being I am disgusted, outraged by the way one group of human beings can talk and write about another group. As an Aborigine I am insulted, reduced to a mental state of deep hate and loathing for all things white. At first they (the academics, and mainly historians) just didn't mention us at all - in their minds we didn't exist; and then later, when it became fashionable, they (mainly anthropologists and other social scientists) portrayed us as docile 'savages'.... None of them were interested in recording our struggle, our resistance to white racism and murder. They pretend there wasn't any, and still, behind the mask of racism, they continue to write rubbish, pretending they're being liberal and showing concern, when all the time - and we know it - it's a mask...." [1]

Race relations in Australia, and, particularly, Aboriginal resistance, is a subject which many white Australians wish to avoid. Inherent in their attitude towards Aborigines is the mistaken notion that Aboriginal Australia is non-existent. As one European citizen in Melbourne put it, 'the problem, if any exists, is under control and so there's no need for us to worry about it too much... and, anyhow, Australia's the most democratic and humane country in the world, and our history shows that...."[2]

Forgetfulness

What Australian recorded history shows is a complete neglect or distortion of Aboriginal contributions or resistance to Australian development. Neither racism nor resistance to it features at all in the Australian story[3]. Russel Ward, the historian, argues that racist attitudes were virtually unknown before 1851, the years of Aboriginal annihilation, prevalent between 1851 and 1939, and then, like a conjuror's rabbit, miraculously disappeared during and after the Second World War[4]. His argument appears to be that racism is both logically and emotionally incompatible with the belief, which is central to his concept of 'the Australian legend', in the brotherhood and equality of all men (Hartwig, 1972, p.9; McQueen, 1970, pp 15-18; Lippmann, 1973, p.35). Further, he rests his belief on the fictional fact that Aborigines were not really part of Australia:

> "Before the Gold Rush there were, after all, few foreigners of any race in Australia - except for the Aborigines, if we may, sheepishly, I hope, call them foreigners after a manner of speaking. And no one who knows anything of Australian history needs to be reminded of how our ancestors regarded and treated them!"[5]

By labelling Aborigines as foreigners, Ward gets over the uncomfortable problem of having to admit that Aborigines played a resistive part in the so-called 'legend', and the additional problem that racist ideology and behaviour was an important part in 'how our ancestors regarded and treated (Aborigines)'. Ward's historical treatment of Aborigines epitomises what Hartwig calls the 'cult of disrespect and neglect' in Australian histor-

iography (Hartwig, 1972, p.10).

Another distinguished historian, Manning Clark, argues that although Aborigines had developed a 'culture' but not a 'civilisation' of their own, they did not make the 'transition from barbarism' until the advent and influence of European settlement had taken root (Clark, 1963,p.14). Despite his apparent confusion between what constitutes 'culture' and 'civilisation', he dismisses Aboriginal social life and resistance to European settlement as being barbaric, and, therefore, neither relevant to Australian history nor significant to the romantic story he unfolds. For him Aboriginal resistance was petty and amounted to 'the revenge of the Aborigine against the whiteman for stealing the land', which, incidentally, 'brought great hardship and suffering' (Clark, 1963, op cit.). Not to the Aborigine, as Lippmann points out, but 'of course to the whiteman' (Lippmann, 1973, p.32). By redefining resistance as 'barbarism' and 'revenge', he is able to maintain the aura of pioneer romanticism throughout his Short History, with European pioneers always being besieged by droughts, wets, and the savages. Like Ward, he is also able to cast Aborigines as 'foreigners', peripheral to the history of Australian development, and only capable of 'revenge' and 'barbarism' rather than sustained campaigns of war and resistance.

Disrespect, neglect, distortion, and the belittlement of Aboriginal resistance are recurring themes in many accounts of European settlement. S.H. Roberts nostalgically identifies with the squatters' racist views of Aborigines (Roberts, 1964); Barry Bridges proclaims the advantages that a legal system of coercion would have had 'for the pacification of the dispossessed' (Bridges,

1970, p.70); and Sir Stephen H. Roberts is able to write 460 pages on the history of land settlement without one index reference to Aborigines, or even a textual suggestion that settlement could not have proceeded until Aborigines, in one way or another, had been cleared off all desirable lands (Roberts 1924 and 1969). Noting this 'cult of neglect and disrespect', Professor W.E.H. Stanner, after summarising more than half a dozen historical texts, poses the question why?[6] (Stanner, 1969, pp.18-29). He concludes that:

> ".... a partial survey is enough to let me make the point that inattention on such a scale cannot possibly be explained by absentmindedness. It is a structural matter, a view from a window which has been carefully placed to exclude a whole quadrant of the landscape. What may well have begun as a simple forgetting of other possible views turned under habbit and over time into something like a cult of forgetfulness practised on a national scale...."[7].

Such an explanation in terms of a 'cult of forgetfulness' is grossly inadequate. Firstly, it does not credibly explain why historians or, indeed, society as a whole should 'forget' on such a scale. Although Stanner includes a structural component within his explanation, he does not ask why the window was 'carefully placed to exclude a whole quadrant of the (social) landscape'. And, lastly, such a novel explanation, couched in passive though mildly remonstrative terms, excludes any possibility of the existence of racism. Assumptively, he reduces explanation of social phenomena to the level of personal or psychological inadequacy: a psychological aberration which caused 'the forgetting of other possible views', and which later developed 'under

habit and over time' into a 'cult of forgetfulness'.

We would suggest that a more sociological explanation would, firstly, include the notion that actors and their actions which led to settlement, land theft, enclosure, murder, and cultural annihilation drew justification from and were based on racist beliefs: and that these beliefs were an important part of the pioneer and frontier ideology. But because these beliefs, which clearly shaped the course of Australian history, conflicted with the historian's view of 19th century Australia 'as a vast spawning ground of all that is politically democratic, socially egalitarian, and economically non-competitive', they were either minimised, neglected, or redefined as part of the romantic frontier ethos.[8] So in order to preserve the view of the 'New Britannia' as being both democratic and egalitarian, the window to which Stanner refers was placed in a position looking towards Europe rather than towards Tasmania. Thus, as Hartwig points out:

> "A full understanding of the 'total context' of Australian racism (and Aboriginal resistance) cannot be arrived at from the sole vantage point of the interior perspectives which have prevailed in Australian (historical) study and which have contributed above all else to the neglect of racism."[9]

Rememberance

Many of the early impressions of Aboriginal society were based upon racist folklore, which 'mixes truth, half-truth, and untruth into hard little concretions of faith that defy dissolution by better knowledge' (Stanner, 1969, p.30). Much of this folklore was based on the observations of explorers, travellers, settlers, missionaries, convicts, and bushmen whose studies, if they can be called such, were sketchy and often malevolent. William Dampier, for example, who explored the north-west coast in 1688, informed the European world in one of his famous accounts that:

> "The inhabitants of this country are the miserablest people in the world. The Hodmadods (Hottentots) of Monomatapa, though a nasty people, yet for wealth are gentlemen to these; who have no houses and skin garments, sheep, poultry, and fruits of the earth, ostrich eggs, etc., as the Hodmadods have; and setting aside their human shape, they differ but little from brutes. Their eyelids are always half-closed to keep the flies out of their eyes... They had great bottle noses, pretty full lips, and wide mouths. The two foreteeth of their upper jaw are wanting in all of them, men and women, old and young; whether they draw them out I know not; neither have they any beards. They are long-visaged, and of a very unpleasing aspect, having no one graceful feature in their faces. Their hair is black, short and curled like that of the negroes; and not long and lank like the common Indians. The colour of their skins, both of their faces and the rest of their body, is coal black like that of the negroes of Guinea. They have no sort of clothes, but a piece of rind of a tree like a girdle about their waists and a handful of long grass or 3 or 4 small green boughs full of leaves thrust under their girdle to cover their nakedness.

> "They have no houses, but lie in the open air, without any covering, the earth being their bed and the heaven their canopy. Whether they cohabit one man to one woman, or promiscuously, I know not but they do live in companies, 20 or 30 men, women and children together. Their only food is a small sort of fish... for the earth affords them no food at all. There is neither herb, root, pulse nor any sort of grain for them to eat that we saw; nor any sort of bird or beast that they can catch, having no instruments wherewithal to do so. I did not perceive that they did worship anything..."[10]

In Dampier's opinion and through him the European world's, the Aborigines, in short, were 'the lowest of the low' (Moorehead, 1967, p.102). Thus right from the beginning Aborigines were considered, at best, as odd, and, at worst, as pests, inhuman, and, therefore, dispensable. Early writings and folklore descriptions, which emphasised the 'Stone Age' stage of their culture, and the ugliness of their facial features, tended to further rather than shorten the social and cultural distance between invaders and indigenes. The invaders could not understand or identify with a people whose way of life sprang from a food gathering rather than producing economy. Ignorance,racist beliefs, and the invaders' economic and social need for 'land', not only produced conflict, and white aggression, but also a social climate in which early racist writings and popular folklore thrived.

This climate was not to change radically until around 1870, when, amongst some quarters, regret started to be expressed about 'the passing of a Stone Age people'. Voiced in the form of advocating protection policies, Elkin informs us that it was increasingly felt that 'the Aborigines should surely be protected and treated benevolently' (Elkin, 1964, p.366)

> "Moreover, from 1870 onwards, anthropologists, pursuing their new field of study, became especially interested in the Aborigines. L.H. Morgan, E. Tyler, and James Frazer abroad, and L. Fisson, B. Spencer, W.E. Roth and A.W. Howitt at home showed that the social organisation and religious systems of the Aborigines were complex and full of interest. The Aborigines were, indeed, human. Here was an additional reason for showing them kindness."[11]

Possibly, as Elkin intimates and Stanner more boldly states, anthropology as a new and exciting discipline helped to compensate for the historians' 'cult of forgetfulness' by instituting a 'cult of rememberance', dedicated to the 'accurate' description of Aboriginal culture (Stanner, 1969, p.39). But of course, what is called the 'cult of rememberance' was defined by anthropologists and not by Aborigines; and naturally reflected interests peculiar to early anthopologists. It appeared, for instance, to substantiate Gough's claim that 'applied anthropology came into being as a kind of social work and community development effort for non-white peoples' (Gough, 1968, pp 403-7). As the 'child of western imperialism' anthropology in Australia, largely responsible for the 'cult of rememberance', attempted through 'kindness' and 'understanding' to attach Aborigines, as British colonial subjects, to the far-stretched perimeter of British colonial society. The ideological import of the first two major anthropological studies carried out by Fison and Howitt (1880) and Spencer and Gillen (1899) reflected just this.

What they initially achieved was, firstly, to raise the level of Aboriginal studies to the prominence they now enjoy in anthropology in particular and the social sciences in general; secondly, to publicise the plight of Aborigines; thirdly, to help shape future protectionist policies; and, fourthly, for the first time, to document

meticulously all the cultural details of Kurnai (Fison & Howitt) and Arunta (Spencer & Gillen) social organisation. Spencer and Gillen's work in particular was:

> "... hailed not only as a jewel of science... but also as the first really adequate ethnography of a savage people. The word that mattered was 'savage'. It made nearly inevitable the identification of 'contemporary Aboriginal man' with 'Stone Age Man', with 'early man' in the sense of ancient and prehistoric man and, as Sir James Frazer was to put it 'man in a chrysalis stage'. This atrocious muddle appeared to give scientific warrant for the judgement of Australian practical experience that nothing could be done for the Aborigines but to immure them in protective isolation with in inviolable reserves"[12].

Thus the deeper and, in the context of this study, more significant effect of this pioneer anthropological work was to foster a belief in the static and 'primitive' nature of Aboriginal society: Aborigines were members of the Empire, but, as 'savages', they should be treated differently. Despite Stanner's protest and implication that the reviewers and public at large were responsible for the 'atrocious muddle' rather than Spencer and Gillen or 'anthropology', it is quite clear to the Aboriginal reader, if not to anybody else, that Fison and Howitt, and Spencer and Gillen's studies were well endowed with the value and racist beliefs of the day. What should be pointed out, however, is that they were not alone in projecting an image of a static and 'savage' society, a part of, but different from, the white colonial world. The interpreters of their ethnographic findings - J.G. Frazer, Andrew Lang, Emile Durkheim, Freud, Marcel Maus, L.T. Hobhouse and others - were equally responsible.

Hobhouse, Wheeler, and Ginsberg for instance classified 'simpler peoples' into three types of hunters - lower, higher and dependent - and three related classes of agricultural and pastoral cultures[13]. Along with the Bushmen of the Kalihari, Aborigines neatly fitted into what Hobhouse et al. called their 'lower hunters classification'. To talk about 'simpler' societies assumes some conception of 'complex', 'developed', or 'advanced' societies, and also some conception of how these societies can be differentiated from 'simpler' ones. Thus their essay in classification and correlation was inevitably evaluative, and framed from the position of 'god' looking down on earth, from the valuative comfort of a 'complex' society studying those societies which were alledgedly 'simpler'. Although their distinctions were grounded in the nature of material cultures and social institutions, the causal and somewhat deterministic form their enquiries and theories took also suggested a number of value assumptions. Firstly, that it was better to be in a higher stage of development, and even more salubrious and rewarding to be in the 'complex' stage. Secondly, that an implied equation was drawn between the 'lower hunter' and 'primitive', inspite of their intention to reclassify what had been known as 'primitive' to the more neutral and apparently less value-loaded class of 'simpler' societies. And, thirdly, their classification system implied a hierarchial structure, which in turn projected a view of social evolution that institutions everywhere had to pass through the same sequence of stages, that is, from lower hunters to higher pastoral, before they could qualify as being 'complex'? Although Ginsberg denies that Hobhouse was committed to such a view of social evolution, it does not alter the fact that their work gave a degree of credibility to those who held such a view (Ginsberg, 1965, p.vii).

If there is some doubt as to whether or not Hobhouse et al. subscribed to a concept of 'primitivity' and all the value assumptions that are associated with it, it is difficult to find any in the case of the two French scholars who maintained that the first logical categories were, indeed, social categories, that the first classes of 'things' were classes of men, and that the relations uniting them to each other were of social origin (Durkheim and Maus, 1903). Although Durkheim and Maus's essay is an important one from a sociological point of view, it has to be noted here that their argument is phrased on the value-loaded notion of 'primitivity', and that their essay straitjackets Aborigines within 'the most simple systems of classification known (to European scholars and society)'(Durkheim and Maus, 1903, p.10).

Some Durkheimians may object to this conclusion, basing their arguments on Durkheim's own statement that:

> "... when we turn to primitive religions (or societies) it is not with the idea of depreciating religion in general, for these religions are no less respectable than others. They respond to the same needs, they play the same role, (and) they depend upon the same causes..."[14]

Defensive statements such as this appear to us, to be pointless when, later, Durkheim announces that 'primitive civilisations offer privileged cases... because they are 'simple cases' (Durkheim, 1915 p.6). Even in his well-known book on sociological method, his concern for the rules for the classification of social types is based on the idea, current at the turn of the century, that such societies considered to be 'primitive' and 'simpler' or 'complex' and 'advance' actually existed; and

without questioning the value connotations of these labels, he begins his classification with 'the societies of the first or simplest order' (Durkheim, 1938, p.81)[15].

It is therefore difficult not to agree with Stanner when he concludes that:

> "To them (Durkheim, Hobhouse, and others) the new ethnographic material was manna from heaven, and in the twenty years after the middle 1890s a large literature grew up about topics which took on a curious independence of the people to whose life they referred.... We are ruefully aware of the extent to which the literature fastened on the Aborigines a reputation of extraordinary primitivity.
>
> "They were made to appear a people just across, or still crossing, that momentous border which separates nature from culture, and trailing wisps of an animalian past in their human period. It was through this interpretative literature, which in some notable cases - for example, Freud and Durkheim - used the primary data mainly as a crystal ball for private visions, that other disciplines ... picked up and propagated many falsities into wider scholarship"[16].

The beginning of the era of 'rememberance', then, not only coincided with the 'passing of the Aboriginal race' and subsequent protection policies, but also with the birth of anthropology as a complement to colonialism. It was marked by an aggressive assertion that, although Aborigines were 'savages', far removed from European society, they could be with kindness and benevolence, like the Tahitians, elevated to the exhaulted heights of nobleness. It also meant the remembering of non-political or militaristic aspects of Aboriginal society: family, clan, and tribe organisation; systems of kinship, marriage and descent; incest and promiscuity;

totemism, ritual, magic, and myth. It avoided the Tasmanian massacre, Mosquito's battles and campaigns of warfare, the Myall Creek and Nunn massacres, 'Black Tom' Birch's resistance tactics, Mon Buillietta's hatred of the white race and his pledge to 'kill every whiteman and soldier' and regain tribal lands, or the two executed patriots and warriors, Dundalli and Milbong Jemmy, who organised attacks on and resisted the settlement of Europeans around the Brisbane area between the 1830s and 1850s. Rememberance strictly meant for the anthropologists, as it did for the historians, the so-called passive nature of Aboriginal society. Contact relations, conflict, racism, black resistance, land theft, rape, or the fact that the whole future of Aboriginal society had been severely threatened by enforced reservation policies apparently had no or little bearing on anthropological investigation, concerned with a description of Aboriginal culture! In short, the colonial situation appeared to be irrelevant.

Although the first of the three stages towards 'rememberance' tended to show Aboriginal society as being 'savage', 'static' and 'primitive', there is, nevertheless, an obvious question that should be asked: namely, why rememberance[17]? Was it because it was felt that the Aborigines were a 'dying race' and that investigators should therefore capitalise on what 'tribal remnants' remained, or were the reasons more ideological? Stanner believes that there was a growing 'appreciation of difference' based on the findings and fieldwork of the early anthropologists (Stanner, 169, pp.30-41); Elkin, the pioneer anthropologist in Aboriginal studies, and a campaigner in the 1930s for humane assimilation policies, considers that general humanitarian concerns played an important part (Elkin, 1939 and 1968, pp.362-381); and

many other commentators on this debate have ascribed 'the change' to missionary influence, enlightened men, and the coming of age (independence) in Australia. It would seem to us that although some of these reasons may have played a part in the Australian menopause, they do not alone supply the whole answer.

For a more social set of reasons the whole of white Australian history has to be taken into account. By the turn of the century the settlement of the continent had been nearly completed; crude frontier racist ideologies were gradually being replaced by more urban-based and sophisticated ones; intensive urbanisation and (Aboriginal) clearance policies needed to achieve this had meant, in effect, the division of Australia into a hostile rural and insulated urban area largely populated by Aborigines north of the Tropic of Capricorn, and Europeans in the south. These factors together with political independence, later protectorate responsibility for Papua and New Guinea, industrial affluence, the realisation of Australia's new role in world affairs, coupled with increasing world scrutiny, all helped to make it expedient for white Australia, from afar, to view black Australia in a different light. As will be shown in chapter two, there was also no longer any sustained violent struggle for or conflict over land: the Europeans had illegally confiscated it by declaring it crown land. The original owners' dispossession had been affected through extermination policies, imprisonment, and clearance campaigns which pushed Aborigines into the desert and tropical bush country, or rounded them up and socially imprisoned them on Christian missions, stations, and government reservations. Without fear of extensive Aboriginal reprisals and resistance, with the difusion of tension which

accompanied it, and with the knowledge that most of the Aboriginal population was out of the way, the social, political and economic climate in the urban-European south was consequently more conducive to a qualified change in attitude - the first stage of 'rememberance'.

It was from this base, as racist but not as agressive as the post-contact base, that the second stage of rememberance sprang. Concerned with the further elevation of Aborigines, the intense desire to review the record, many scholars embarked upon the task of trying 'to understand Aborigines'. Elkin's famous book published in 1938, and still used in most Australian anthropology and sociology departments with its subtitle - How to understand them - marked the change from the first to second stages; whereas Kenneth Maddock's book of the same title but with a valuatively different subtitle - A Portrait of their Society - and published in 1973, hopefully, closes the second and makes way for a third and final stage (Maddock,1973). Both authors, as does much of the literature during this period, recognise and accept, from a historical and current position, the existence of Aboriginal resistance to European settlement and racism.

Elkin attempts to show within the context of a description and analysis of Aboriginal culture just how 'human' the Aborigines were, and still are. Rather than primitivity and simplicity, complexity and civility are his main themes. Although he discusses concepts like 'revenge', 'social duty', 'clash', and 'pacification by force' within tribal and Aboriginal-European contact situations, he does not incorporate them into any coherent theory of resistance.[18] In fact they appear to

be incidental to his main thesis which emphasises the complex and passive nature of Aboriginal traditional life. He argues that 'intelligent parasitism', a mode of adaptative behaviour, rather than resistive behaviour characterises Aboriginal social interaction with Europeans.

Maddock, on the other hand, takes a completely different approach. In a refreshingly non-paternal way, he sees Aboriginal society as 'having exemplary value as a model exhibiting many features of social freedom' (Maddock, 1973, p.194). In contrast to Elkin, who tends to see adaptation without resistance as a one-way process - that is, Aboriginal - he clearly portrays how Aborigines 'are striving to change their relations with Europeans while expressly or tacitly rejecting European solutions' (op cit. p.19). Additionally, he maintains that Aboriginal culture and, ipso facto, Aborigines are displaying a noticeable power of resistance to European norms, values, and solutions. Evidence for this he finds in both traditional and urban settings: the Gurindji struggle at Wave Hill, the Ngukun people's campaign on the Roper River, the Yirrkala people's legal battle for land rights, the formation of the National Tribal Council in the southern and eastern states, and the 'emerging combativeness' which is to be found in most of the major cities. He concludes:

> "Aboriginal culture appears in the struggles discussed now as a condition and now as a symbol: a condition of the life actually led by Aborigines, in terms of which their longing to change their relations with Europeans is naturally formulated; a symbol of their distinctness from Europeans, some of the features of which they are engaged in modifying. That their culture is a condition or symbol or both of struggle does not entail total rejection of European culture... This is indeed made

> clear when they distinguish 'blackfeller law' and 'whitefeller law' and assert the wish to keep much of the first while acquiring something of the second"[19].

Clearly Maddock sees the Aboriginal struggle in terms of partial internal (or traditional) change tempered not necessarily by the demands and values of European society, but by the defensive preservation of those constituents which make up Aboriginal culture - land, the 'dreamtime' (which Maddock, like Durkheim, sees as a part of Aboriginal religious life), and 'community'. It is these cultural institutions and the social relations which form them that give rise to both a concept of Aboriginality, and a social base on and around which resistance in the past and present has been constructed and organised.

Perhaps more than any other social scientist, Rowley has been responsible for locating Aboriginal resistance at the centre of both Australian development and Aboriginal history since the European invasion. He implies, although he never explicitly states, that Aboriginal resistance to white settlement sprang from the social base already outlined. (Rowley, 1972, 3 vols.) In the first of three volumes he analyses the history and tragedy of interaction between Aborigines and Europeans, claiming, as noted earlier, that Aborigines have been 'written out' of Australian history, and that the tragic significance of conflicts have been largely bowdlerised and forgotten. He further claims that early resistance attempts were unsuccessful:

> "The early phases of sporadic guerilla resistance (generally regarded and often dealt with as 'treachery') or the Aborigines' attempts to use the new situation for their own purposes were generally followed by their complete subjection to the settler."[20]

But:

> "We are not yet in any position to assess the full significance of what appears, from the records, as somewhat sporadic and periodic. Yet there is, in my view and from a detailed examination of evidence in one region enough to describe it (resistance) in some regions as a series of deliberate, if limited, guerilla skirmishes".[21]

Rowley fails to explain the precise nature of Aboriginal resistance, although he frequently refers to it as being sometimes a skirmish, confrontation, battle, riot, protest behaviour, or examples of guerilla activity. How it was organised, or how and why it is still organised are questions he leaves unanswered. His analysis, like Stanner and Elkin's, is located not within the framework of Aboriginal social experience but within the liberal, humanitarian, and academic European traditinn. In other words his orientation tends to preclude an understanding of the real nature of Aboriginal resistance from the point of view and the social stance of the participants. Within a practical race relations context this invariably means the acceptance, without questioning the dominant and, racist stance of white society, of the right and ability of the powerful alone to decide upon and frame policies for the powerless. This fundamental criticism of Rowley's approach is borne out, in his final conclusion that:

> "Two groups of Aboriginal people will need to be catered for in any <u>policy designed to integrate them into the Australian community</u> - the part Aboriginal groups in closely settled areas and those mostly classified as of the full descent, who live in the centre and far north, retain more their traditional customs and beliefs and present to the whites a

> different stereotype from that of the part Aborigine ....
>
> "The future status and role of the Aboriginal will be a significant indicator of the kind of society which eventually takes shape in Australia. The real question is whether the logic of welfare or the prejudice of white Australia is to prevail..."[22].

Here the attitudinal drift is quite clear. Firstly, the promoting of policies 'designed to integrate them into the Australian community' might very well be the covert or overt aim of white society, but is this desire shared by Aborigines? Secondly, do Aborigines present a different stereotype' to whites, or do whites themselves construct their own stereotypes of Aborigines? Thirdly, is the only real alternative one which requires Aborigines to depend upon white benevolence or the 'logic of welfare'? And, finally, if the prejudice (racism) of white society prevails, it may be surmised on the basis of Rowley's own work that the destruction of Aboriginal society will continue until there are no Aborigines left at all to tell the story, or to offer any kind of resistance.

Despite the numerous criticisms that can be made, the fact remains that Rowley's work is the only major study which, from a historical and sociological perspective, tells the story the historians 'forgot', and the anthropologists conveniently avoided. Besides emphasising the point that social scientists should study the social significance of conflict and resistance, he introduces more fully, than Elkin, the necessity of researcher commitment in Aboriginal studies. This is yet another feature which distinguishes the second from the first stage of 'rememberance'. Basing his work on the belief that social scientists should tell, as far as they can, the story as it is or was, he attempts not only to reveal but

to uncover the 'mask of racism', which has for too long shrouded much of the academic and general literature 'on' Aborigines.

Resistance and Protest

Like Rowley, McQueen believes, as a historian, that racism was a 'linchpin' of both Australian nationalism and internal development (McQueen, 1970). In another place he argues that Aborigines, ever since initial European contact and settlement, have been waging a 'battle against the pink-grey peril', organising and engaging in a 'struggle for the liberation of Australia' (McQueen, 1973). Although his conceptual and analytical approach tends to lack precision in as much that he uses concepts interchangeably - 'struggle', 'campaigns', 'resistance', 'liberation', and 'protest' - he shows that resistance to the 'peril' has been continuous. Often localised in the past, he maintains, as we propose to do, that 'today it is spread right across the country once more'.

Whereas McQueen is more concerned with the reconstructing of resistance encounters, Duncan, on the other hand, possesses more theoretical and sociological interests (Duncan 1974). Admitting that concepts used by McQueen are ambiguous and overlapping, he attempts to re-define Aboriginal political and social behaviour as forms of 'protest'. In his model resistance becomes a stage within or a strategy of protest - that is, it becomes resistive protest. Central to his discussion is the idea that 'protest occurs within the system of conflict-resolution and uses means which, at least implicitly are legitimate' (Duncan, 1974, p.599). By combining categories of protest defined in terms of the objectives of protest movements (Mazrui and Eisenstadt) with those based on the nature of strategies employed (Moloney) he states that the schema constructed as a result provides an

initial approach to an overview of Aboriginal protest.[23] He concludes that:

> "If the model suggested is applicable to Aborigine protest then it is clear that all who identify themselves as Aborigines and are in some way involved in white Australian society are participating at a level perhaps of apathy, or resistance, or protest, perhaps occasionally even of riot or subversion, in a culture of protest"[24].

Duncan's model is too restrictive a device for aiding an explanation of past and present Aboriginal behaviour as protestive to and reactive against Australian racism. His definition of protest, as that 'activity which attempts to bring about change in the system through the use of unconventional display or symbolic force', would suggest that protest is primarily aimed at policy change rather than at a rejection of the policy-makers' authority. Whether through 'unconventional display' or symbolic force', one thing protestors are doing is affirming their conviction that 'the system' ultimately can correct its faults and remedy its abuses (Bell, 1973, p.4). Such reliance or faith in the ability of the system to do this as a result of protest behaviour is based on several assumptions to which Duncan makes little, if any, reference.

First, it would seem that an essential prerequisite of protest behaviour should include a common cultural language, that the protesters as well as those in authority should accept most of the values within the system. Second, protesters assume that most of their goals or objectives can be reconciled with those of the system in a non-violent way: that is, goal achievement can be brought about through policy changes without destroying the

system or the form of authority on which the system is constructed. Lastly, if protest behaviour employs means which are supposedly legitimate, that is defined by those in authority and accepted by the majority of participants, it must be assumed that all actors accept the legitimacy of these means. Can this really be so?

Aborigines themselves are not so convinced:

> "We are different people altogether; we don't want to see this mob (the Department of Aboriginal Affairs) to go on... we want to take over this mob, control our own futures, and live the way we want to. When we take over our lands like the Wave Hill mob did, the bossmen (white officials) say we break the law... but the whitefeller's law is for whites, no good to us; we have blackfeller's law, and our law says its our land... and we come from it... and we now take it back..."[25].

From our own observations and fieldwork it would appear that Aborigines and Europeans possess quite different and conflicting cultural languages, values, and goals; and that the legitimacy of Aboriginal social and political actions are not accepted by those in authority. Further, it would seem to us and, possibly, to Aborigines, that when Duncan states that 'the focus (of his paper) will be on protest rather than on Aborigines because (his) personal contact with them, while sufficient to indicate both complexity and subtlety in their diverse cultures, is limited' (Duncan, 1974, p.597) he should have heeded the advice of Samiluno, a Walbiri elder - 'you stay long time, and then you speak...'[26]. For, although Duncan's focus is, indeed, on protest, his chief concern is to offer 'an initial view' on 'protest and Aborigines', and to construct a model in order to help explain various forms of Aboriginal protest.

These general criticisms are sufficient to suggest that any attempt at model building should be grounded not in the contrivances of European-oriented protest literature, but in how Aborigines themselves see and act out their social and political lives. Similarly, whether or not it is protest or resistance should be arrived at in the same way, if a worthwhile description and analysis of Aboriginal social and political actions is desired.

How, then, do Aborigines view their social and political situation?

> "We are not children, we men, we fight whitefeller all the time... we not want their ways, we have good ones, we blackfellers go back long time... we know right way, we follow. Whitefeller fucking no good for we... my people all in my country, put up big fight.... and big fight goes on. No stop... we keep my ways... whitefeller ways no good....."[27].

> "We are black and we are striving towards the same goal in our own individual way. This goal is the liberation of our people, not as half-castes, quarter-castes, or any other white-orientated word, but the liberation of us Koories. Our minds. To be able to get back to the old way. To know what love for each other means. What beauty, identification, responsibility, adulthood means. To be proud, to hold your head up high. Not to impress.... but to be what we are. To know where we come from... we're the sons and daughters of blood. Let us live up to our people's love and share it between ourselves and fix ourselves up."[28]

> "In Aboriginal law, if anyone went out of the values of truth or love they were usually killed. There was no room for irresponsible people, you had to live and let live, you had to know what adulthood

> meant... The whiteman and his democratic values teaches the wrongness of Aboriginal law. So if anyone speaks, make sure they know the truth about Aboriginal history since white colonisation. Not what you've been told through your white history books, because our full blood fathers did fight, and they fought because the whiteman were hunting our families and destroying our land. Taking our childrens' brains and placing them in white institutions and teaching them to be good little white-washed black kids, enabling them later in life to have an individual capitalistic outlook. To be able to bash their women and stab their brothers in the back. To think that people could do this to my people makes me sick, and this is only minor compared to the living reality that finally drove me and my brothers to face white Aboriginal Administrators, with a gun and not a pen, and without our gentle, soft, brown eyes."[29]

In the first extract, the Brinken tribesman is quite emphatic in his renunciation of 'whitefeller's ways', and the acceptance of the good ones (Aboriginal) which 'go back long time'. Resistance to value change and European cultural aggression is also evident. The Aborigine from Wreck Bay, New South Wales, in the first of the two extracts is equally sure that the way to the 'liberation of our people', is not through protest but through resistance to European ways; as only then will liberation be achieved and the path made clear 'to get back to the old way'. In the second extract Jing-Grala and his brothers demonstrate that protest is not enough, that the normal channels of dialogue and petition have long been exhausted, and that a gun (resistance) rather than a pen (protest) is the next logical step: that is, the dawn of protest has to give way to the day of resistance.

In other words Aborigines do not see their actions as 'protest', but as 'resistance'. That is, valuatively, they

see themselves as different from Europeans. To maintain this difference or, in the case of Jing-Grala, to rediscover its social essence, they are obliged to resist European authority and the values which underpin it. Attempts, such as Duncan's, to straitjacket Aboriginal actions into the explanatory mould of 'protest' may help to reduce and integrate actions into categories and expressions readily understood by Europeans, but, it seems to us, that this is often done at the expense of recognising the value of actors' own interpretations.

By seeking European explanations to render non-European actinns understandable, shows, we feel, not only a total disrespect for what Blumer calls 'the nature of the empirical world', but also an academic variety of oppression (Blumer, 1969.) To borrow Paulo Freire's phrase, 'the pedagogy of the oppressed', must begin with a refutation of scholarship directed towards the study of 'other, 'simpler', or 'primitive' peoples, or else, however sophisticated the analysis, the end result of it will be to give academic credibility to political oppression, for the ideological values on which research is based become no different from those shared by white society as a whole. (Freire, 1973).

Thus, by showing the 'cult of forgetfulness' was replaced by one of 'rememberance' - in most cases devoid of any account of how Aborigines interpret their own actions, and accompanied by what Azad considers to be a rationalising relationship between the growth of functional anthropology and colonialism (Azad, 1973, pp 9-19) - we have attempted to account for the absence of any actor-oriented literature on resistance. As we have seen, when it is discussed, it tends to undergo a revealing metamorphosis. Either it emerges as 'protest' (Duncan), or it becomes a guilty stick to goad Euroaustralian policy-makers into adapting their

policies and stance in order to accommodate past and present injustice (Rowley). Both manifestations undermine its social value for Aboriginal resisters, and render it a meaningless analytical concept. That is to say its meaning and importance to actors' definitions and accounts of their actions has been, by and large, neglected.

Thesis

In this dissertation we shall then attempt to relocate actors' own definitions and accounts at the centre of our enquiry, and in accordance with Aboriginal views, we shall define resistance as culturally grounded social and political activity directed against European authority, which either seeks its limitation or eventual destruction. Further, where protest action is essentially normative, resistance action is largely not; where protest is based upon and located within a shared cultural framework, resistance springs from a different cultural base than that of those in authority; and where protest is directed towards policy change, resistance is designed and organised against the authority of policy-makers. As Jing-Grala's actions show, resistance is also largely cognitive and constructed on conscious decisions to disobey authority in order to protect (the Brinken tribemen) or rediscover (Jing-Grala) former social values and institutions. Based on a distrust of European authority and policies, and a conviction that this 'authority' is directed towards the social, economic, and ideological destruction of Aboriginal society, the decision to resist is a social one. As Aboriginal resisters subscribe to a different set of values, they inevitably reject the protesters' equation of legality with justice in a 'democratic' European context. They find adequate legal and social justification for anti-nomian action within their own culture. Thus, in an Aboriginal context, resistance becomes the lawful defence of social values and institutinns, a significant constituent of Aboriginal normative and goal-directed social actions.

From what has already been said, it is clear that the methodological starting point of this thesis will begin with actors' views

and interpretations of their own actions. More clearly, our analysis will be based on the following conceptions of Aboriginal action. Firstly, that Aboriginal society consists of Aborigines engaged in action which is qualitatively quite different from that performed by Euroaustralians. Such a difference has arisen because the situations in which Aborigines interact are socially and politically estranged from Euroaustralian situations, and because the general rules which govern Aboriginal actions were formulated during a 'time' before 'Australia', as such, was established.

Secondly, that the meaning of actions is located within, and recognised through a process of interpretation. This commonsense notion, if accepted, re-emphasises the importance of constructing pictures of social reality not from the colours of paint used, or, indeed, from the forms of objects represented, but from the meaning transferred from the artist, through the brush stroke, onto the canvass. Explanation is thus sought from the artist and not through an interpretation of the painting (the art critic).

Sometimes the discrepancy between intention and result can be too striking to be ignored. For example, when an Aborigine explains a series of actions - say, walking around, dancing, inflicting injury to himself - as 'dreaming', then it is clear that the meaning of these actions cannot be established by reference to the European concept of 'dreaming'. The Aborigine, as he does, must have quite a different concept of 'dreaming'. It is this different concept of objects, physical or abstract, which brings us to our third point: Aboriginal actions can only be understood by non-Aborigines through a process of participation and seeking Aboriginal interpretations. In other words, interpretative analysis should not be made at the expense of indigenous interpretation:

in fact, we accept, that it has to be grounded in indigenous interpretation.

A fourth point concerns the dichotomous nature of Aboriginal action. By this we mean that within a colonial setting actors appear to play out two distinct roles: the first of being an Aborigine; and the second of being an Aborigine living in or attached to Euraustralian society. Whether or not the first role is more noticeable inevitably depends upon such factors as the degree of socialisation and contact with Aboriginal society. Here, then, we have classified these actions into two distinct categories - those which are 'traditional', defined on the basis of how Aborigines in the traditional setting organise and carry out their everyday life; and those which are 'Europeanised' or 'urbanised'. Assignment of actions to either category is essentially actor-dictated. Those who make a definite choice, that is those Aborigines who see their actions as either being 'traditional' or 'urbanised', are recorded here as such. In the case of those who prevaricate or appear indecisive, recourse has been made to how others see them and their actions. In other words, we have adopted a 'self' or 'other' selection process for actions, and positively avoided any kind of external value ascription to the kind of actions described.

Our final point is one concerned with selection. Namely, how can resistive actions be distinguished from all other actions? One thing we are certain about is that they cannot be divined with sociological tools forged outside the action situation itself. Such an approach often tends to miss the essential meaning attached to or, indeed, which is action. For example, the actions of a group of drunken Aborigines sitting in the middle of Todd Street, Alice Springs, or an Aborigine who refuses to answer a magistrate's

question could, without reference to actors' views, be explained as 'deviant', 'destructive', 'hostile', 'primitive', 'compensatory', and so on (in the first example), or 'non-cooperative', 'diffident', 'fearful', 'ignorant', 'guilty', and so on (in the second example). All such explanations would be pointless unless the actors recognised and understood these descriptive labels as being accurate. So as to avoid the potential absurdity such an approach suggests, all resistive actions in this thesis are selected on the basis of actors' definitions. So the Todd Street Aborigines who told us they were v-signing tourists and sitting on the road they 'owned', or the Aborigine who informed us he did not accept 'whitefeller law', were defining their actions resistively. This approach obviously raises questions concerning the truth of actors' statements; and our position on this should be made clear. In short, we feel that actors' statements have to be accepted as being truthful, or else either we have to assume that we possess more knowledge about actions than the actors, or that all actors are living, including ourselves, in a world of lies and self-delusions. Although there is a slight possibility that this may be the case, here we are going to assume the opposite view!

Inherent in our overall approach is the primacy given to actors statements and interpretations of their own and other situations. Because of this, we have not attempted to relate Aboriginal resistance to a wider body of race relations literature, for to do this would be to deny what actors consider to be the uniqueness of their own actions and situations. Although Aborigines tend to see similarities between their own position and that of other black oppressed peoples - especially other black indigenous minorities like the American Indians - they refrain from drawing direct parallels; instead they insist that they were 'the first born' and the situations

in which they find themselves resulted from a different set of experiences than those which partially account for black actions in Britain or America. Out of respect for this view and, indeed, the distinctiveness of Aboriginal settings (or empirical worlds), we have, as far as possible, avoided drawing comparisons or standardising experiences and actions by attaching and relating them to other race relations situations[30]. By employing this kind of methodology we hope to be able to accord total respect to the nature of the empirical world discussed in the chapters which follow.

Briefly, then, the main purpose of this dissertation will be to show how and why Aboriginal resistance is socially defined, constructed, and organised. It will be argued that from both a historical and current perspective resistance has evolved out of a social need to preserve (traditional) or rediscover (urban-based) Aboriginal values and institutions. With a stress on inter-connectedness, the main institutions that will be discussed will be 'my country', 'dreamtime', and 'community'. It will be also shown that Aboriginal resistance has been directed against European authority which, from the initial stages of contact to the present day, has attempted to destroy and undermine Aboriginal social life.

Chapter One will be therefore concerned with how Aborigines see their social roots, rather than how we or others view them. From this Aboriginal starting point, in chapter two, we shall attempt historically to review the Aboriginal response to European contact, establishing whether or not resistance in fact occurred, before discussing in more detail the nature of Aboriginal resistance in Chapter Three. The second part of the thesis, contained

in Chapters Four to Six, looks at three key Aboriginal concepts - 'my country', 'community', and 'dreamtime'. The maintenance and rediscovery of these social roots provides the chief focus of this second part. An attempt will be made to reveal the social significance of each Aboriginal concept and the relevance it possesses to an understanding of Aboriginal resistance.

The fieldwork for this project was carried out between July and December 1974, spending a full six-month period in black and white Australia. In July, we familiarised ourselves with the urban situation, federal and state policies, and the European urban attitudes towards Aborigines. A research tour of rural communities, with particular emphasis on Missions, Reserves, and Settlements, was undertaken in August and September. October was spent investigating urban-based Aboriginal society, and past and present government policies in more detail. During November and December we returned to 'selected' rural communities to carry out further investigations and to augment the material we already possessed.

Forty hours of formal tape recorded interviews, together with many formal interviews, some taped, others recorded in note form, provided a lot of the basic material on how Aborigines see their own situation, their world views and interpretations of historical and current events. As no one 'tribal' Aborigine could talk without recourse to other members of his group, we also employed the method of group interviews in order to respect their wishes and gain their essential support. Material on historical and current issues was obtained through attendance at more meetings, conferences, and seminars than we can remember, reports, legislative and policy documents, newspaper cuttings, Aboriginal writings and other published and non-published work of people specialising in the

field. Continuous and, we hope, intelligent observation for the first three-month period of fieldwork and odd weeks thereafter, in rural and urban Aboriginal communities, provided us with more material than we are able to include here, and the project's orientation.

It should also be mentioned here that we experienced no access problems in relation to the Aboriginal community, as we had been invited to Australia by the National Aboriginal Forum, an all Aboriginal body, to write a report on Aboriginal conditions[31]. Besides unlimited hospitality, it also meant free access to Aboriginal communities, organisations, and other situations. The only access problems we encountered were with minor European officials who thought that our project was going to be 'yet another attack on the work they were doing'.

NOTES

1. From an interview with Bruce McGuiness on 24th July, 1974. As well as being one of the six Aboriginal undergraduates in Australia, he is one of the Victorian representatives to the National Aboriginal Congress, an Aboriginal consultative body set up by the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs in 1973; an executive member of the Victorian Aboriginal Advancement League; the chairman of the Victorian Aboriginal Housing Co-operative; and a member and leader of several other Aboriginal movements in and around the Melbourne district. In the 1972 national election he stood unsuccessfully as a member of the Independent Party, a locally-based and mainly Aboriginal political party.

2. From an informal conversation with a white Victorian after I had delivered a paper on International Racism at Monash University, Melbourne, on the 25th July 1974.

3. A preliminary definition of resistance as it will be used in this dissertation will be found on page 28 . Further elaboration and a discussion on both its construction and use will form the basis of Chapter Three.

4. Russel Ward, The Australian Legend, Melbourne, 1958. In another place under the title Home Thoughts from Abroad: Australia's Racist Image, he believes that Australians are being misunderstood: 'Most Australians today do not harbour racist feelings... Colombo Plan students are generally treated as brothers and friends... we are trying, belatedly, to atone for our ancestors' genocide of the first black Australians". Here again we have an illustration of the dilemma in which

many Australian historians and other academics experience: where conscience and historical facts conflict with self-image, the belief that Australia is the most democratic and egalitarian society in the world.

5. Quoted in Hartwig's paper, p.9 Aborigines and Racism: An Historical Perspective, which in turn is taken from Ward's An Australian Legend in the Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings, December 1961, pages 335-51.

6. Some of the books to which Stanner refers are Barnard Eldershaw's My Australia (1939); which points out that Aborigines are only marginal and irrelevant to the author's story; Hartley Gratton's Introducing Australia (1942); Brian Fitzpatrick's The Australian People (1946) which refers to Aborigines only once or twice in its 260 pages; H.L. Harris's Australia in the Making: A History (1948); Geoffrey Rawson's Australia (1948) which in a chapter entitled "Aborigines" deals with wild life, so the chapter, as Stanner points out, could well have been entitled "Aborigines and other Fauna", after the style of John Henderson who wrote in 1832 some "Observations on Zoology from the order Insecta to that of Mammalia: the latter including the Natives of New Holland"; George Caiger's The Australian Way of Life (1953) which like so many other books fails to even mention the word Aboriginal except in a caption under a photograph which displays two of Australia's scenic attractions - the Aborigines and Coogee Beach! ; Gordon Greenwood's Australia: A Social and Political History (1955) which is a scholarly and most influential text-book only mentions Aborigines five times - twice quite briefly for the period 1788-1821, twice again, and just as briefly, for the period 1820-1850, and once, in a side-long fashion for the period 1851-1892, and thereafter not at all;

and, finally, Peter Coleman's Australian Civilisation (1962) which leaves little of the Australian life and thought unexamined, but, as Stanner points out, "its total silence on all matters Aboriginal seems to argue that the racial structure which is part of (the Australian) anatomy of life has no connection with our civilisation past, present, or future". See Stanner, W.E.H., After the Dreaming, 1969.

7. Stanner, pp. 24-25. op cit.

8. Humphrey McQueen, A New Britannia, pages 15 and 42. McQueen argues that "the Australian legend consists of two inextricably interwoven themes: radicalism and nationalism. In the minds of their devotees these concepts are projected into socialism and 'anti-imperialism'. Nineteenth-century Australia is seen as a vast spawning ground for all that is politically democratic, socially egalitarian and economically non-competive, whilst our nationalism is anti-imperial and anti-militarist" (p.15). He sees the legend as "anti-radical and counter-revolutionary", and "by harking back to great days of yore it is a brigand of contemporary hopes and a debaser of present struggles" (p.16). His main purpose is "to reveal the components of this radicalism and nationalism and, in penetrating beneath the surface of words, confront the attitudes and attributes which were its sustance and dynamic" (p.17). He argues that "racism is the important single component of Australian nationalism"; but "it is in their discussion of racism that the radical historians have failed most seriously because they attempt to minimise its significance even when... they are painfully aware how widespread is its influence" (p.42). He goes on to discern three racist elements inherent in "Australia's

economic and geographic position as the avant guard of European conquest": the destruction of the Aborigines, the dominance of the Pacific, and the fear of an Asiatic invasion (p.42).

9. Hartwig, op cit., p.11.

10. Captain William Dampier Dampier's Voyages; but extract quoted in Alan Moorehead's The Fatal Impact, pp.101-102.

11. A.P. Elkin's The Australian Aborigines: How to Understand Them. p.366.

12. Stanner, op cit., p.35.

13. Hobhouse, Wheeler, and Ginsberg's The Material Culture and Social Institutions of the Simpler Peoples.

14. Emile Durkheim, Elementary Forms of Religious Life, p.3

15. Emile Durkheim, The Rules of Sociological Method, Ch.IV, "Rules for the Classification of Social Types", pp.76-88. In a footnote on page 88, he dismisses the method of classifying species according to their state of civilisation as irrelevant to his discussion because it is concerned more with historical phases than social species, and tends to produce "indecisive results of little utility". Although this, indeed, may be the case, it would still appear that his method of classification still depends upon an evaluative concept like 'simple', and all its relative gradations. By embarking upon the task of classifying societies "according to the degree of organisation they present, taking as a basis the perfectly simple society or the society of one segment" (p.86), he inevitably has to differentiate between the degrees of organisation; and it

is at this point where he considers Aboriginal society to be representative of his 'first or simplest order'. As Elkin points out, op cit., Aboriginal society is far from being 'simple', and, in fact, the organisation of Aboriginal society is still not completely understood. As Durkheim based much of his knowledge about Aboriginal society - and this is not a criticism in itself - on early and, largely, inaccurate anthropological findings, he tended to have a romantic, 'simplistic', and distorted view of Aboriginal social organisation. Possibly, a period of field-work experience in Australia would have left him better informed and better equipped to theorise about Aboriginal society.

16. Stanner, op cit., p.37. On a more general level, Goddard's criticism of British anthropology can be extended to include much of the work already cited here. No account appears to be taken of the 'colonial situation'; in fact many scholars have consistently avoided it by formulating their enquiries as studies of 'simpler' or 'primitive' rather than 'colonised' peoples. (Goddard, 1969, pp.79-89). For a more detailed discussion of the relationship between anthropology and colonisation see Talal Asad, (ed), 'Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter', (1973).

17. The first stage of rememberance occurred between the 1870s and 1930s and is associated with the preoccupations and orientations of the literature during this period; and could equally be termed 'the Savage stage'. Heralded in with Elkin's contribution towards 'the understanding of Aborigines', the second stage spanned the years between the late 1930s and mid-1970s, and was characterised by

its concern to elevate Aborigines to the status of human beings, and therefore worthy of paternal consideration and 'kindness'. This stage could therefore be described as 'the Human stage'; but the final stage - 'the Aboriginal stage' - has yet to evolve. Already, as will be shown, several factors can be isolated which distinguish this stage from the others - the acceptance of racism and Aboriginal resistance to it as a historical and contemporary reality; the removal of white society's authority and presence in Aboriginal affairs; and the increase in Aboriginal literature, like Kevin Gilbert's book, Because a White man'll Never Do It. But to expand on how this third stage is going to manifest itself would be simply too speculative to be of any use.

18. Elkins, op cit., Ch. XIV, "The Aborigines on the March", pp. 362-381; and for a further discussion on Elkin's concepts of 'clash' and 'intelligent parasitism' see his Reaction and Interaction: A Food gathering people and European Settlement in Australia, American Anthropologist, vol. 53, no.2, 1951.

19. Kenneth Maddock, The Australian Aborigines: A Portrait of their Society, p.20.

20. C.D. Rowley has produced three volumes on Aboriginal Policy and Practice: The Destruction of Aboriginal Society, Outcasts in White Australia, and The Remote Aborigines. This extract is taken from his first volume, p.17.

21. Rowley, op cit., p.5.

22. Rowley, op cit., p.340.

23. Mazrui in Protest and Power in Black Africa makes distinctions in terms of the objectives of protest movements. He constructs four categories to describe such movements - conservation, restoration, transformation, and corrective censure. He defines protests of conservation as defensive actions in response to "a sense of impending peril to a system of values dear to the participants" (p.1185); protests of restoration are those which seek "to restore a past which has already been destructed or destroyed" (ibid); and protests of transformation, committed to radical change, are a "manifestation of a profound disaffection with an existing system of values, or systems of rewards and penalties" (ibid); and his last category, corrective censure, is designed to bring about "a particular modification in the system" (ibid). Like Mazrui, Eisenstadt in his Modernisation: Protest and Change pp.31-35 makes similar distinctions in terms of the objectives of protest movements. Moloney, on the other hand, considers that the nature of strategies employed by protest movements is more significant than their objectives. In his survey of Aboriginal Actions in the North, pp. 18-23, he outlines three categories: confrontation, compromise and normative. Quoting examples for each, he tends to minimise the importance of why Aborigines are protesting (resisting) in the first place. Clearly, both determinants of protest or resistance, as Duncan shows, the objectives and the strategies employed, need to be brought together in any satisfactory model or typology of protest or resistance; so one of the main concerns of Chapter Three will be to do just this.

24. Leith Duncan, Protest and Aborigines: an initial view, p.607.

25. From an interview with Harry Nelson, a Walbiri Aborigine, on the 3rd August, 1974, at Yuendumu Aboriginal Reserve.

26. Samiluno was also present during the interview with Harry Nelson, who was the spokesman for a group of ten or more Walbiri men.

27. From an interview with Bill Parry, a Brinken Aborigine, on the 22nd August, 1974 at the Daly River Missinn (Roman Catholic) on the Daly River Reserve.

28. Bobby McLeod, What Does It Take for a Koorie to Use a Gun, p.1.

29. Jing-Grala (Bobby McLeod), op cit., p.4.

30. Oliver Cromwell Cox in Caste, Class and Race defines race relations situations as those in which "the aggressive whites have sought most conveniently and efficiently to exploit the human and natural resources of the coloured peoples" (p.353). He outlines and discusses seven kinds of race relations situation: the stranger situation, the original-contact situation, the slavery situation, the ruling-class situation, the bipartite situation, the amalgamative situation, and the nationalistic situation (pp.353-391). Although Cox's situations are extremely useful as rough guides, it is quite clear that, firstly, many societies exhibit more than one of these situations, and, secondly, that over a period of time, one situation has often given way to another. For example, in Australia the 1770-1840 period could accurately be described as an example of an original-contact situation, but today, two centuries later? Similarly it could be pos-

tulated that Australia during the 19th century presented examples of the original-contact situation (New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia), the slavery situation (Queensland, and the northern parts of Western Australia), the ruling-class situation (as existed in the northern parts of Australia where the Aboriginal population outnumbers the European), and so on. A more precise definition is therefore needed, one that includes Cox's attitudinal, race, social and economic perspectives, but which is sufficiently broad to include all forms, stages, and modern interpretations of racist social behaviour. I am of the opinion that John Rex in his Race Relations in Sociological Theory, pp. 159-160, offers such a definition, and one which will be used here. He states that race relations situations and, indeed, problems, possess certain characteristics. "They refer to situations in which two or more groups with distinct identities and recognisable characteristics are forced by economic or political circumstances to live together in a society. Within this they refer to situations in which there is a high degree of conflict between the groups and in which ascriptive criteria are used to mark out the members of each group in order that one group may pursue one of a number of hostile policies against the other. Finally, within this group of situations true race relations situations may be said to exist when the practices of ascriptive allocation of roles and rights referred to are justified in terms of some kind of deterministic theory, whether that theory be of scientific, religious, cultural, ideological or sociological kind and whether it is highly systematised, or exists only on the everyday level of folk wisdom or in the forshortened factual

or theoretical models presented by the media".(p.160).

31. See Chris Mullard, Aborigines in Australia Today, 1974.

CHAPTER ONE: ROOTS

I am one of the indigenous people

A coloured man

My roots are buried deep

In this ancient land

The awakening of a far off dawn

Gave my heritage in this land where I was born

My ancestors put down the roots and sowed the seeds

Of art and culture for the Aboriginal breed

From the Dreamtime onward

They were nursed and nourished

Through the countless years

They grew and flourished

Of these and my heritage

I am justly proud

As I mingle and merge

With a different crowd..... [1]

Before January 25th 1788, the date on which Captain Arthur Phillip hoisted the Union Jack, toasted the King, and officially established Australia's first European settlement, the inhabitants of the continent had been going about 'Aboriginal business' for nearly 40,000 years. The wattle trees had flowered each year; the pink galahs, parrots, wild ducks, bush turkeys, and exotic birds of every description had painted their patterns across the clear blue sky each day between dawn and dusk. Sometimes swurling with surf, sometimes calm, the sea had guarded the yellow coastline and the land known as 'ours' beyond. This

was a land of beauty, where, according the Dieri's Kadimakara myth, even:

> "... the deserts of Central Australia were fertile plains. Forests of giant trees grew there. The land was traversed by rivers and contained lakes and lagoons thickly fringed with waving reeds.
>
> "Instead of the present brazen vault, the sky was covered by clouds so dense that it appeared solid. The air, that is now filled with blinding, salt-laden dust, was washed by soft, cooling rains.
>
> "The deep, rich loam of this land supported luxurious vegetation which spread, from lakeshores and river banks, far out across the plains. The trunks of lofty gum-trees rose through the close undergrowth and held up a distant sky of inter-lacing branches and foliage. In this sky-land lived the monsters called the Kadimakara..."[2]

This fertile, beautiful land supported more than 300,000 people (Elkin, 1964, pp.24). Denser in the coastal regions than anywhere else, where fresh water and food was more easily obtainable, the population was divided into over 500 tribes, occupying at least 700 distinct territories[3]. Fifty languages were spoken, and family groups, rather than a tribe as a whole, meaningfully roamed their country, coming together at corroborees to carry out fertility ceremonies, initiation rituals, and other 'Aboriginal business'.

"Some tribes numbered several hundred while others had as many as a thousand or more. Anyone who trespassed onto another tribe's land except on recognised business was in danger of attack. The inheritance of land was totally secure, a never-ending state of possession that extended

generation after generation to all those born within the material and spiritual boundaries of their tribal areas. Each member of the tribe had his rights and responsibilities - the right to sustenance from the land and the responsibility for its upkeep. Food taboos ensured that no birds, plants or animals were too heavily hunted - a type of natural conservation that helped preserve the balance of nature.

"The tribes led a nomadic life through necessity because there were neither plants nor animals suitable for domestication. To maintain a balanced diet the people had to keep on the move, seeking the Quondong here, the kangaroo there, emus, wild ducks, honey, fish, and nardoo in other places...."[4].

In short, the Aborigines belonged to their country, and their country belonged to them. They had used it, and it had used them, ever since the beginning of Aboriginal 'time'. This relationship formed a central feature in Aboriginal thinking and survival. Social life was organised therefore in such a way as to preserve the social, economic, and spiritual relationship between man and nature, nature and man.

Essentially cognitive and social, the relationship was based on a profound knowledge and understanding of nature, its beauty, harshness, and kindness. Without this understanding, this intelligent reciprocity, which depended upon man's respect in return for nature's protection, existence would have been inconceivable. If the Aborigine had organised his life in a way which took no account of 'the ways of the land' he

would have long since perished. Rather than changing or attempting to control nature, the Aborigine lived in harmony with it, constructing a society which was flexible enough to reflect the evolving needs of man and nature. How this socially happened, and how Aborigines today interpret the actions of their ancestors who 'put down the roots and sowed the seeds' are the chief concerns of this chapter.

ROOTS

For the tradition-based Aborigine, those who still live on tribal lands and maintain, as far as possible, the customs, ceremonies, and traditions of Aboriginal tribal life, explanations for the beginning are to be found in the time of Altergeringa, Bieingana, or Kardoorair - that is, 'In the Beginning' or 'Dreamtime'. Concerned with the story of genesis, the creation of mountains, lakes and rivers, the flora and fauna of 'my country', the time of Altgeringa amounted to more than a first chapter in Aboriginal natural history: it established a series of cultural signposts which showed Aborigines how to live, where to hunt, gather food, hold corroborees, and how to resolve disputes, and conduct all 'Aboriginal business'. It was during the Dreamtime, which will be discussed in more detail below, that the ancestral beings established the rules which were to guide Aboriginal social and political actions, and which, together with the beliefs they symbolised, were to become an integral part of Aboriginal consciousness. In other words, justification for most Aboriginal actions can only be sought by reference to a former time, a time when the rules which govern Aboriginal social life were constructed. Likewise the meaning Aborigines ascribe to their actions can only be comprehended within the time and experiential perspective of the infinite Dreamtime, which extends both backwards and forwards.

a) Traditionally-based Beliefs

An illustration of this cultural definitinn of action is embodied in Tonanga's account of 'The Old Man and his Six Sons';

which also shows that the powers of ritual birth and initiation are possessed by Arunta men[5]. Concerned with the distributing of population the theme of the story deals with the respective roles of fathers, sons, and wives, and, more importantly, the oneness of nature which is reflected in the final metamorphoses of the ancestor and his six sons[6]. Tonanga begins his narration at 'the beginning' when:

> "An old-man started out from a cave in a hill at Merina, which the whiteman calls Haast's Bluff. He carried a big tjurunga with him (a large, flat stone, inscribed with sacred designs, which contains the indestructible spirit of the ancestor), and he carried a spear and a womerah. Six namatoona (smaller copies of tjurunga), who were his sons, he carried in a dilly-big round his neck. If the old man wanted meat, he sent his six sons out to get it for him. He would take the namatoona out of his dilly-bag, rub some goanna fat on them, and the namatoona would stand up as six men, his sons. The old man would give each of his sons a spear and womerah and his sons would go out hunting.
>
> Those six sons did not eat meat. They fed only from a vein in the old man's arm. The old man would open a vein in his arm, fill up a womerah with his blood, and the six sons would eat from the blood in the womerah. The old man came close up to a big camp. He stopped and took the six namatoona out of his dilly-bag and sent them out hunting. Those six sons had to come back to the old man just after sundown. The old man went into the camp and sat down and made a big smoke. Some women came up to the old man and said to him: 'Hey, old man, why do you make this big smoke?' The old man told the women to make six camps for his sons. He told them that he had six sons to give them in marriage that night. Just after sundown the six men came into the old man's

> camp. They brought back with them kangaroo and emu, euro and printi, and put the meat down in six different heaps near the smoke. The six sons sat down in the smoke in the camp of the old man. Then the old man called up the six women and told them that they must each take one of his sons in marriage.
>
> The old man did not sleep near the six men and women. He made his camp a little bit away from them. Early in the morning the old man got up from his camp. He came up to his sons who were still sleeping with the six women. From the hair on the head of each man he pulled out the namatoona and put each one back in his dilly-bag. When the women woke up, the men were gone. Each woman looked about the camp for the man who had been given to her. The men were nowhere in the camp. The old man had travelled away with the six namatoona in his dilly-bag. The old man came to another camp..."

The sons were again given in marriage, and for all his days on earth, the old man travelled around his country carrying his tjurunga, spear, womerah, and his six namatoona in his dilly-bag. After each night he would pluck the six namatoona from the hair of his six sons, put them back into his dilly-bag and proceed to the next camp. On one occasion a woman woke up and saw the old man taking the namatoona out of the hair of her man; but before she could call out, the old man had drove his spear through her and killed her, and then, with his six namatoona, journeyed on to the next camp.No other person ever interfered with his sacred mission, his authority was accepted, and he continued his journeys until:

> "When (he) got tired and properly old, he died. He made his camp and laid down and put his dilly-bag alongside himself. When the old man was dead, the six manatoona in the dilly-bag wanted to get out. They started to roll

about in the dilly-bag and the dilly-bag rolled round and round in a circle. The old man turned into stone. Underneath that stone is a big tjurunga belonging to the old man. And near him is a black stone which is the dilly-bag with the six namatoona inside".

Besides the obvious symbolism here - with the old man emerging from the cave-womb, the phallic significance of his spear, the dilly-bag as mother, (the womb), and the feeding of the six namatoona only from the ancestor's blood which is not unlike a mother who gives her blood to the embryo - the Arunta myth also symbolises, today as it did yesterday, the importance of tribal unity and cohesion. Without procreation there can be no tribe, and self-gratification must at all times, for fathers, sons, daughters and mothers alike, take second place, if permitted at all, to the general welfare and well-being of the community as a whole. Sons have to hunt and collect food for their father who possesses the tjurunga, the most sacred ritual object in the tribe; wives or mothers must suppress their maternal or conjugal desires if the community's survival is dependent upon their doing so; and the sons, although eager to return to their wives, have to accept the inevitability of their destiny in order to preserve the authority of ancestors or the old men of the tribe. The rules embodied in this well-known Central Australian story are mandatory for all Arunta Aborigines: they, along with others provide the essential guidelines for all Aboriginal action, past, present, and future. Those who do not abide by them are considered by both their peers and the wider group to be 'atwe', or non-Aboriginal. Not only then is race group membership action-defined, but it is also based upon beliefs which stretch back to 'the beginning'.

In fact, central to most Aboriginal beliefs concerned with 'the beginning' is also the related idea that man originally arose out of the earth, and that his identity was defined in terms of his relationship with the earth. The story of Ankotaringa, the ancestor of Ankota, begins with such an account:

> "In the beginning there was living at Ankota a man who had sprung from the earth without father or mother. He had been lying asleep in the bosom of the earth, and the white ants had eaten his body hollow while the soil rested on him like a coverlet. As he was lying in the ground a thought arose in his mind: 'Perhaps it would be pleasant to arise'. He lay there, deep in thought. Then he arose, out of the soft soil of a little watercourse..."

After travelling through his country, encountering other strange beings and populating its various regions, he changes into a monster, which is killed by a man who 'comes from the west'. At the end of the story:

> "The dead body of the monster is lying on the ground, but the severed head is still alive. The head reflects: 'My home is not far away; let me return to it for my last rest'. And so the head rolled back, underneath the ground and emerged finally out of a little watercourse near Ankota. And there it remained and passed again into the earth for ever."[7]

Perhaps the most vivid account of 'the beginning' and the relationship Aborigines have with nature is to be found in the story of 'Einganga the Mother'. As well as being an explanation of the first appearance and nature of Einganga, the great earth mother, it shows how she is fertility itself, the source of all life, all forms of being, and the narrative as it unfolds portrays

the Aboriginal conception of life and spirit in continuous cycles of birth, death and rebirth. In his telling of the story, Rinjeira explains:

> "That first time, the creation time, we call Bieingana. The first being we call Eingana. We call Eingana our Mother. Eingana made everything: water, rocks, trees, blackfellows: she made all the birds, flying foxes, kangaroos and emus. Everything Eingana had inside herself in that first time.
>
> "Eingana is snake. She swallowed all the blackfellows. She took them, inside herself, down under the water. Eingana came out, she was big with everything inside her. She came out of Gaieingung, the big water hole near Bamboo Creek. Eingana was rolling about, every way, on the ground. She was groaning and calling out. She was making a big noise with all the blackfellows, everything inside her belly.
>
> "One old man named Barraiya had been travelling a long way. All the way he had heard Einganga crying out, rolling about and moaning. Barraiya sneaked up. He saw Eingana. He saw the big snake rolling and twisting about, moaning and calling out. Barraiya hooked up his stone spear. He watched the big snake. He saw he must spear her. Barraiya speared her underneath, near the anus. All blood came out of that spear wound and all the blackfellows came out after the blood.
>
> "Kandagun the dingo chased after all those blackfellows. He chased after them and split them up into different tribes and languages. When Kandagun chased the black-fellows, some flew away as birds, some bounded away as kangaroos, some raced away as emus, some became flying-foxes, porcupines, snakes, everything, to get away from Kandagun.

"That first time, before Barraiya speared Eingana, nothing and no one could be born as they are now. Eingana had to spew everying out of her mouth. Blackfellows had to spew everything. Children could not be born as they are now. That is why Barraiya had to spear Eingana. The old man Barraiya had been travelling from the east across to the west. After he speared Eingana, the old man went back to his place Barraiyawim. There he painted himself on a rock. He turned into the blue-winged Kookaburra.

"Eingana made the big Boolmoon River, she made the Flying-fox River and the Roper River. Every river she made. We have water now. That's why we are alive.

"Eingana made Bolong the Rainbow-Snake. In the first time when Eingana swallowed blackfellows, she spewed them out and these blackfellows became birds, they became Bonorong the brolga, Janaran the jabiroo, Baruk the diver. Eingana spewed out blackfellows who became Koopoo the kangaroo, Kandagun the dingo, Galwan the goanna, Nabininbulgai the flying-fox. All these birds, animals, all these things, Einganna took back. She talked: 'I think that you fellows have to follow me, you have to go my way'. Eingana took them all back. She swallowed them again. She let them go into the water as snakes, as Bolong the Rainbow-Snake.

"No one can see Eingana. She stays in the middle water. She has a hole there. In the rain-time, when the flood-water comes, Eingana stands up out of the middle of the flood-water. Eingana looks out at the country. She lets go all the birds, snakes, animals, children belonging to us; Eingana lets all these things go out of her.

"Eingana floats along on the flood water. She stands up and looks out of the country. She lets every kind of life belonging to her, go. When the flood-water goes down Eingana goes back to her camp again. She comes

> back no more. No matter cold weather or hot weather, she does not come out. Next rain time she comes out and lets go every thing that belongs to her: snakes, birds, dingoes, kangaroos, blackfellows, everything.
>
> "Eingana keeps hold of a string, a sinew called Toon. This string is joined to the big sinew of any kind of life, behind the heel. Eingana keeps hold of that string all the time. Because we call her mother, you see. When we die Eingana lets that string go. I die. I die forever. My spirit, Malikngor, follows the way of Bolong. It might be that I die in another place. That one, Malikngor, my spirit goes back to my country, where I was born. Everyone's spirit does this.
>
> "Eingana gives back spirit to man and woman all the time. She gives them the spirit in children. Eingana gives spirit a little bit first time to lubra, then more and more. You cannot find this spirit yourself. That one Eingana, or Bolong, has to help you.
>
> "If Eingana died everything would die. There would be no more Kangaroos, birds, blackfellows, anything. There would be no more water, everything would die."[8]

For Ringeira who related the story, and many other Aborigines, Eingana is not a figment of the imagination, an ancestral being who may or may not have created man and nature - she exists. When Robinson, for example, was given the narrative, he was 'on the ceremonial ground of the Kunapipi ritual where initiates, under a ban of silence, and in mute subservience to the tribal elders, were awaiting their ritual birth' (Robinson, 1966, p.34). (In fact it has been 'the general tendency of functional anthropology (and other disciplines)... to assimilate indigenous history to the category of myth - that is, to view it in terms of instrumentality rather than of truth in the classical non-pragmatist sense' (Asad, 1973, p.13).) Needless to say Aborigines do not see these stories in the same light as most European investigators: they

see them as part of their history, a vital part of their total experience which is as real to them as any historical document might be to a European historian. In other words they make no verifiable distinction between pre-history (unrecorded) and history (recorded). All experiences and actions since the beginning constitute one long historical narrative, and thus all accounts of 'the beginning' possess historical rather than mythological significance for Aborigines. This was as evident from our own observations as the fact that most tradition-oriented Aborigines subscribed to a similar view of 'the beginning' as unfolded in the story of Eingana[9].

At Adelaide University, for example, on the 16th October, 1974, four Aborigines from Indulkana, South Australia, attempted to explain to the Vice-Chancellor and a group of academics the importance of incorporating Aboriginal music, as an optional subject, into the Music degree, a subject which they insisted should be taught by them or their appointed representatives (the urban-based Aborigines)[10]. Before the discussions got underway the Vice-Chancellor invited the Aborigines to introduce themselves. In pitanjarara the first Aborigine, one of the elders, began:

> "... my people come from the earth... we all, everything, came from the earth.. in 'the beginning' we all came from there.... you (as Europeans with a different cultural heritage) think not so... but this what we believes... our music come from there, like bush and all things... we belong there, we go back there... music go back... the music given to we... we look after it long time... all my people knows this... we share music with brothers here (Adelaide-based Aborigines) and you... but we look after music..." [11]

Second Aborigine:

"What my brother says true... we earth people, not know your ways....

Third Aborigine:

"That's right, what my father says is right... we come from the earth... the old man is right... he says true things because he knows... he talks for us..."

Fourth Aborigine:

"My peoples are right... I can't say no more..."

Although beliefs have been slightly adapted to take into account new knowledge and experience - the awareness, for example, that sexual intercourse leads to physical (but not spiritual) conception - the essential meanings have not changed. Man, like the dingoes, birds, kangaroos and emus, are the product of the great earth mother, Eingana, or Biame for some, Munji for others; and through a totemic system of identification all beings are inextricably related to each other. Whatever happens man's spirit will always return to his country, where he was born, and where the source of life, and meaning for and of Aboriginal man is located. Through his social, economic, and spiritual relationships with his country, he is able to realise himself as an Aborigine. Defined by Eingana, the old man, or Ankotaringa, the tradition-based Aborigine's conception of 'my country', 'Dreamtime', and 'community' is thus derived from a long history of social and spiritual experience: it provides a conceptual and social basis for Aboriginal identity and existence.

b) Urban-based Beliefs

This, also, equally applies to the more urban-based Aborigines. But their interpretations, because of greater contact and, in some cases, involvement, with European society, are often more oblique

and varied. In order to disentangle the common cultural thread which appears to be present in all urban-based groupings, it is necessary to look at two distinct, though closely-related, Aboriginal social groups: the fringe-dwellers, and the inner-city-dwellers.

(i) Fringe-dwellers

Although many social scientists have attempted to define what they mean by fringe-dwelling communities by isolating significant variables and constructing lists of social determinants, (socio-economic, educational, social distance, and cultural factors) we would prefer to rely on actors' own accounts, as it is only from their own understanding that they or others are able to portray 'how it is or was'.[12] Geoffrey Shaw, the leader of the Mount Nancy fringe-dwelling camp three miles outside Alice Springs states:

> "I am, and all of us here, ten or so families, are what they call fringe-dwellers... We have no where else to go. Even if we wanted to, we couldn't get houses in Alice, as they think we wouldn't look after them. I suppose we are not part of any society, and that's why we're camped here; we've been here for years on our country, and though they've tried to put us on the reserves or in the missions, we always come back here because this is where we belong. This is my country, here, and I don't belong out there at Yuendumu or Hermmansberg mission, that's Walbiri and Luriga country, and I'm Arunta; this is where we all come from where they've built Alice, so we stay here and fight for our country back. They don't like us here, they have no time for us, but then we have no time for them... you can never trust them; they come round with their cameras and you don't know whether they are going to use their film for us or say: 'Look how bad they live,

> they can't even help themselves!' But if we live in poor conditions, and we do... we only have one tap for all our families and no toilets... then it is because they have made us like we are. They've taken away our country, split us up all over the place, and told us that our old traditions and ways are wrong. Therefore many of us have nothing left... some of us, not even our old ways, but we know we belong here at Mount Nancy, so we stop here as fringe-dwellers".[13]

As victims of what many Aborigines call 'land-theft', the expansion of European settlements throughout Aboriginal-Australia, fringe-dwellers have been forced to change their old ways, and adapt their beliefs accordingly. This is reflected in some of the 'adapted' stories which Robinson describes as 'transition-al' narratives, 'narratives of the change from a richly integrated tribal culture and life to a limbo between two worlds, the security of the communal life of the tribe to the insecurity of the individual in this modern world' (Robinson, 1966, p.173)[14]. What emerges from these stories or folk-tales is the same insistence, as conveyed in the traditionally-based beliefs, on the importance of 'my country', 'dreamtime', and 'community', although one or all three may have been physically and temporarily lost. Race memories, along with accounts of contact, violations, and 'land theft', also feature in the nostalgic recollections of a past time. The story of 'The Attack at Tabulam', which is possibly a typical illustration of what occurred in many parts of the continent during white settlement, also reflects the fringe-dwellers' belief, however fragmented or embellished, in ancestral powers, the inner-authority (and eventual success) which is derived from 'knowing the ways'. The story related by a fringe-dweller begins with an explanation of why fringe-dwellers exist and ends with a description of reconciliation and victory.

"The shooting of the Aborigines in Ogilvie's time was the beginning of a fear in the Aborigine, and a terrifying of him which eventually drove him from his tribal life and place. It happened in about 1835.

"Ogilvie started a grazing station at Baryulgil, and the area of his grazing even came as far as the southerly part of Tabulam. He had sheep grazing on the area, and it was reported to him that his sheep were being killed. He came up to the place where the sheep killing had been reported. He blamed the Aborigines for killing the sheep instead of blaming the dingoes. He got Aboriginal and white stockmen from Grafton and they gathered to attack the tribe at Tabulam.

"Through the night, they prepared to surround the camp of the Aborigines and to attack at dawn to get everybody unawares.

"So, when the Aborigines at Tabulam knew that they were going to be attacked, they were warned by their divine powers, they also prepared. They told their women and old men to pack up and go up Rocky Creek to the mountainous country at a place they call Bull-Dog. All the clever-fellers, the Wee-uns, were left with the warfaring Aborigines to await the attack.

"The clever-fellers, the Wee-uns, said, 'We'll wait until they attack the camp and then we'll see who had the power. The bullets will not hurt us. We'll stop them with our magic power'.

"So they waited. Of course, the Aborigines who were affiliated with Olgivie thought with delight how they would have the women of the Tabulam men after the camp was attacked. That was the custom of the Aborigines, to take such women back to their own camp.

"Well, on the morning of the attack, Ogilvie and his stock-men surrounded the camp while it was still dark. The Tabulam Aborigines had kept fires going in their

camp all night. Apple-wood was the notable wood used, it would burn all night.

"Just at dawn the attackers had the camp surrounded. The Tabulam men were painted up, they were painted white, waiting for the attack. They were singing their sacred songs in order to paralyse the gun-power. At day-break the attackers sang out to the camp, 'Will you surrender?' The Tabulam Aborigines said, 'We won't surrender, but if any of us gets shot in the legs or arms, we'll finish you. You'll pay the penalty'. But Ogilvie and his men pulled out their guns and started firing.

"The Tabulam Aborigines never flinched. Their sacred songs had paralysed the guns. The bullets were deflected and half the guns never went off.

"The Tabulam Aborigines called out, 'Look out if you hit any of us, you'll pay the penalty.'

"So when one of the Tabulam blokes who wasn't so clever was hit in the arm, he sang out in the language, 'I am hit!' 'All right', said the Tabulam clever-fellers. 'That's good enough'.

"Then one of the Wee-uns, the clever-fellers, pulled out a spear and speared the white man, who had shot the Tabulam man, through the heart.

"Ogilvie, when he saw this, threw up his arms and cried 'That's enough! That'll do now!' He surrendered and all his mates surrendered.

"Then the Tabulam Aborigines sang out, 'We Jabilum! We Jabilum!' and stamped on the ground. This meant, We belong to this place. We are the originals!'

"Hello', Ogilvie said, 'they're telling us that this place is Tabulam'. And that's why the name Tabulam remains to this day.

> "Then Ogilvie said, 'We're friends now!' And he told his Aborigines to make friends. The Tabulam Aborigines said that since Ogilvie had surrendered they would make peace. They buried the man who was speared. Then, afterwards, Ogilvie invited the Jabilum men down to Baryulgil. The Aborigines explained that the sheep had never been taken by them. They had no need to kill sheep, they had plenty of food of their own, possum, duck, fish, wallabies and yams. They told the whiteman that it was a bad report that they had been killing the sheep.
>
> "And Ogilvie quite admitted, by surrendering and making a peace, that he was wrong. And the tomb of the man who was speared is there to this day at Tabulam".[15]

It is clear that 'The Attack at Tabulam' sybolises many things and, like any account, can be interpreted in many ways, depending upon the interests and orientation of the interpreter. But, as several details and recurring themes are strikingly forceful, it is not difficult to arrive at some general conclusions about what or how it was related. One such conclusion must concern the narrator's identification with the Tabulam Aborigines. It tends to bring a life to his description which, perhaps, is more significant than the attack itself.

For him, it would seem, the Tabulam Aborigines and their actions represented feelings, emotions, and desires, which he had experienced, but, possibly, had never been able to express other than in stories about the past[16]. His admiration for the 'clever-fellers', their white painted bodies, and the belief that their sacred songs would, in fact, paralyse Ogilvie's gun-power, is only eclipsed by the jubilant victory - 'We Jabilum! We Jabilum!

He applauds and identifies with the courageous defence of what the Aborigines, and later Ogilvie, saw as their inalienable rights as 'originals', to remain in their country, and, as men, to be accorded justice, neither to be blamed for an act which they did not commit, nor treated as pests like the dingo or kangaroo. It is also evident that the expression and assertion of these rights is based, not upon whitefeller's law, but on what has always been so, the traditions and beliefs which had given meaning to Aboriginal society for several millenia. And conscious of these, the narrator purposefully relates (or even re-enacts) the attack in a way which elevates these beliefs above those held by white-settler society, and which suggests that they form part of his own social experience. He, like the warriors of Tabulam, is, deep down, and despite contact and European cultural influences, still an Aborigine.

He knows, like the fringe-dwellers who live in the dried up bed of the River Todd, that two hundred years of white settlement cannot erase the memory of the past or minimise the importance of that memory to the present.

> "We may not be tribal like our brothers out there, but we still stick together against them (the white residents of Alice Springs). We eat together... no we don't do that together, brother, but we do everything else together, don't we?... We are our own tribe, the Todd River blackfellers... we believe in the old ways, the ways of our spirits ... and this is our country... they may push us into here (the Todd River), but we know this is our country, and they can't take it away from us, can they brothers? We always fight them and soon, not long, they will have to pay for everything they've done to us..."[17]

And Geoffrey Shaw again:

> "We are really all one people. Whitefellers try and divide us up by calling us tribal or non-tribal, but really we are all the same. We believe in the same things; we are victims of the same prejudice; we know that this is our country like our brothers do out there; we all live in communities and do things together, unlike those in town, and we have a knowledge which goes back thousands of years, which the whitefellers can't touch and don't even know about. All of us here know our sacred sites, and many of us go and visit them at certain times; we keep in touch with our brothers in the bush and they keep in touch with us, because we are all related... all us blackfellers have a lot in common and that's why we're blackfellers. Whether we live here at Mount Nancy, in Sydney, or at Yuendumu makes no difference - at the end of the day we're all Aborigines"[18].

(ii) Inner-City-Dwellers

Unlike the tradition-based and fringe-dwelling Aborigines, the inner-city dwellers have long since lost their 'old ways'. After some decades of living in an inner city area- Redfern in Sydney, Fitzroy in Melbourne, North Perth, or the Port area in Adelaide - they have become alienated from both the old and new ways. Historical and social experience, which we shall discuss in the next chapter, has shaped their view of their world and themselves, and, as this accumulative experience has been quite different from that of the tradition-based or fringe-dwelling communities, their self and world views are also different. But, it should be remembered, however, that the majority are 'justly proud' of the past, although, as the poem which opens this chapter concludes, they have to 'mingle and merge with a different crowd...'

Whereas the other groups discussed possess a strong sense of identity, based upon their relationship with the land, a knowledge of the Dreamtime, and the supportive and reaffirming institutions and actions which make up community life, the inner-city-dwellers are actively in search of an identity, one which recognises but yet, at the same time, rejects the 'different crowd'.

This conflict can be seen clearly in much of the urban-based Aboriginal writing which attempts to state race and social situations as individual actors see them. Most of it is therefore concerned with a sense of lost (alienation), a 'song of hope', or wish to rediscover (action), and rediscovery itself (identity)[19]. Embedded in each expression is a call for self-realisation, an image of yesterday pressing on tomorrow. Jack Davis, a distinguished urban-based Aboriginal poet, best illustrates this in his well-known poem, 'The First-Born':

> "Where are my first-born, said the brown land, sighing;
> They came out of my womb long, long ago.
> They were formed of my dust - why, why are they crying
> And the light of their being barely aglow?
>
> I strain my ears for the sound of their laughter.
> Where are the laws and the legends I gave?
> Tell me what happened, you whom I bore after.
> Now only their spirits dwell in their caves.
>
> You are silent, you cringe from replying.
> A question is there, like a bow on the face.
> The answer is there when I look at the dying,
> At the death and neglect of my dark proud race." [20]

Another poet, Mary Duroux, also makes a similar plea. She is stranded in the urban world and wants to rediscover all that she has lost. In Darwin, last October, she met (Daisy) Utemarrah, a tradition-based Aborigine, to whom she explained her predicament.

Utemarrah was so moved by Mary's plea that, in sympathy, she wrote her very first poem in Worra, her traditional language:

"Nguru ngolgeturi wheni
Aingai nguunma
Mumagul nguni - yarru
Woa jolli
Pungnjangwiun ungai wunjud
Ngunbuna nyunu
Wuoa gail
Pura-mun mumagul ngamagaia
Ngulla nulla
Nidji nguru ngungarnguri
Unjangalbun galea
Ngunberi jollie yarnguru
geh pitchja
Qu wari ngunn
Nidji ngulla ngula
Ngurru ngurunggangururi".

In English this reads:

"Where am I
You, my people
Where am I standing.
Take me back
 and hold my hand
I want to be with you
I want to smell
 the smoke of burnt grass.

Where are you my people
I am lost;
I've lost everything: my culture
 that should be mine own.

Where am I
The clouds
 o'ere shadow me
 but my memories are there.
But I am lost.
 my people,

Take me back
And teach the things
I want to learn.

Is it really you my people,
The voices,
The soft voices that I hear."[21]

In more prosaic language, but equally poignant, Kevin Gilbert writes:

> "Blacks as a separate entity are going to increase despite all the assimilation policies and wishful thinking about a homogenous society. The influence of a new black consciousness is going to militate more and more against part-Aboriginal people, however pale, dropping out into white society. While conservatives tend to rubbish anything that is traditionally Aboriginal, a more wholesome instinct is manifesting itself in the young blacks who are taking tentative steps to go back, to revive the knowledge of things traditional and to promote them as something for blacks to be proud about."[22]

Paul Coe, the president of the New South Wales Aboriginal Legal Service, based in Redfern, Sydney, comments:

> "We're trying to invite tribal people to come to Sydney to teach young kids. Even if they don't teach us the culture of our particular tribes, at least we'll be able to learn aspects of the Aboriginal culture from certain other tribes - which will be invaluable."[23]

And again, two years later:

> "Since then we have learnt a lot from tribal visits, and many of us are spending a considerable amount of time with our tribal brothers, both here in Sydney and in the outback. We have learnt that we come from the land, and the importance of land to us; we now know something of our Dreamtime, and how this relates, not just to the past, but to the present and future as well; and we have re-learnt how to live in and be part of a

> community again. What our experience has shown is that the values and customs of white society are no longer relevant to us - we have our own and we have always had, although, for a long time, many of us didn't realise this..... Many of us are still finding our feet, but through knowledge revealed to us by our tribal brothers and through constant contact - they coming here, we going up north - we have started to re-focus our directions and objectives; spiritually, politically, and culturally, we now realise more who we are and what we have to do... Our roots go deep,and even though white society has tried to sever us from them, we have not totally lost them: in fact we have rediscovered them with a vengeance. We are Aborigines, and, once again, we are proud of it!."[24]

For most Aborigines personal and group identity is an extricable part of the Dreamtime. Whether Aborigines are engaged in the social process of rediscovery or in a tradition-oriented way of life, the acting out of their social life is root-based and rule-governed. Cultural rules or a notion of what these rules once were, in the case of urban-based groups, provide the social direction for all actions. The historical stories related here then not only contain prescriptive guides, but also moral justification for all actions. Any historical-story, once subjected to an analysis more revealing than Robinson's literary criticism or 'isn't this interesting (odd)' approach, appears to combine this dual function. The relating of such stories to the non-initiated is more than just an example of how cultural knowledge is transmitted: because of their moral, documentary, and prescriptive value, they become an example of how to live and how to conduct Aboriginal social life. The Old Man stresses the importance of tribal unity and authority, and with the help of his Six Sons, the importance of procreation and group survival; Eingana, on the other hand, as the creator, established systems of respect, the relationship between

man and nature, man and man, and the cyclical concept of life; whereas in The Attack at Tabulam the new initiate is clearly told that he has a moral (Aboriginal) duty to defend the country of his ancestors, to trust the power and authority of those who had always protected his country, and to resist anything or anybody who attempts to undermine or break that authority.

Those who do not take heed, obey the rules, and follow along the same social path, or what has become commonly known as 'Walkabout', as the ancestral spirits, are perceived by those who do as being non-Aboriginal. For those urban-based groups, who are not Aboriginal in this sense, Aboriginality can only be acquired through a process of rediscovery. Those who are engaged in such a process, according to traditional Aborigines, culturally qualify as Aborigines. In other words, and to repeat a point made earlier, the degree of culture-directedness individual or group actions contain defines whether or not the individual or group is Aboriginal. Thus, the importance of what Aborigines term 'our roots' becomes self-evident: the acceptance of them not only determines the nature of past, present, and future actions, but also the cultural right to be known and treated as an Aborigines by other Aborigines.

NOTES

1. Indegenous One by Edward Rickards, published in Identity, vol 1, No.8, October, 1973, p.26

   Identity is a 'National Journal of 'Opinion' published by the Aboriginal Publications Foundation. Established by the Australian Government in August, 1970, through the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Foundation has the following aims:(a) to publish books, pamphlets and other publications by and for Aboriginal Australians; (b) to commission such work for publication; (c) to organise training for Abroginal Australians in literary, visual, and other relevant arts and crafts; (d) to provide scholarships, fellowships, and advances and other assistance for Aboriginal creative artists of promise; and (e) to conduct competitions, arrange exhibitions, and in other ways recognise and reward distinguished performances by Aboriginal Australians in the literary, visual and related arts and crafts. For further information on the A.P.F. see the Department of Aboriginal Affair's booklet Guide to Aboriginal Assistance and the A.P.F.'s annual reports since 1970.

2. Aboriginal Myths and Legends by Roland Robinson, pp.112-114. According to Robinson this myth 'provides us with some idea of the period of time in which Aborigines have inhabited the continent. The myth faithfully describes a previous geological era. Geologists confirm that the now arid, burning deserts of Central Australia were once a lush, fertile region of the Permian period. The great fertility of this region supported huge, pre-historic mammals and reptiles. This has been proved by the discovery of bones of such creatures around the shores of Lake Callabonna and Lake Eyre in Central Australia. The

complete skeleton of one such creature, the diprotodon, is in the Adelaide Museum'. Throughout this chapter we have depended heavily upon some of the myths and legends recorded by Robinson. Although we heard similar accounts of, for example, Eingana The Mother, quoted in full later on in this chapter, we were never able to piece them together into a complete narrative, partly because some of the facts conflicted with each other, and partly because we only heard half-stories with the narrator assuming that we knew the rest.

3. It is very difficult to see how the figure of 300,000 is derived at, especially when white settlement for nearly 75 years was concentrated in and around the coastal regions. If the present Department of Aboriginal Affairs' estimate is anything to go by this figure, like the 250,000 figure for 1970, can be at least doubled. Even in 1970, with helicopters, four wheel drive trucks, and many hundreds of officials, the Census Department felt it necessary to preface its report with the words: ' these figures can only be viewed as good estimates...' see Rowley (Appendix B) op cit. for further discussion on population statistics. Both Professors Berndt in his The World of the First Australians and Elkin, op cit., use the figure of 300,000 as a demographic starting point for their descriptions of Aboriginal traditional society. It should also be noted here that sub-sectional tribal groups often occupied distinct territories, which accounts for the apparent discrepancy between the number of tribes and territorial areas. Lancaster Jones Australia's Aboriginal Population is worth consulting for a detailed analysis of past and present Aboriginal populations.

4. Kevin Gilbert, op cit., pp. 2-3. His understanding of the way his ancestors lived is based not inclusively on anthropological findings, but also on his experience as an Aborigine. For example, his explanations of Aboriginal nomadism conflicts with that of Elkin, Berndt, Stanner and Radcliffe-Brown's, who seek the reasons for nomadic life in the spiritual and mythological beliefs of Aboriginal society; but this is not to say that Gilbert's explanation is invalid: it is just the way he sees it. To argue that Aborigines could have cultivated yams, fruits, and so on would be missing the point: 'tribes led a nomadic life through (economic and social) necessity' and were not just roaming about without reason or purpose.

5. Tonanga was Albert Namatjira, the world famous Aboriginal artist. Albert was the name given to Tonanga by the Luteran Mission at Hermansberg, where he was born, lived, and painted most of his life. His second name, Namatjira, is an Arunta tribe term for a man whose status rests between the first and second initiation ceremonies. Tonanga, as he was known to his brothers and sisters, belonged to the flying-ant totem. Born in 1902, he held his first exhibition in Melbourne during 1938, and, according to Battarbee, he was enormously successful (in European terms) from that date until he died at the age of fifty seven. What Batterbee does not comment on, 'because the story has been told many times' is that the last days of Tonanga's life were mostly spent in prison. In the fifties when, in all states, it was a criminal offence for most Aborigines to possess or drink alcohol, Tonanga, not only celebrated his 'international success' in a European way, but also invited his Aboriginal relatives and friends to do so. He was duly charged, convicted, and sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

Shortly after his release 'he died of a heart condition which had shadowed the last ten years of his life'. Needless to say his family, whom we met and talked with for some time, do not believe the 'official story'. They are of the opinion, like many black and white Australians today, that the prison sentence was the major cause of his premature death. For an appreciation of Tonanga's paintings see Battarbee's Modern Aboriginal Paintings, but for full biographical notes see a leaflet called Tonanga Namatjira published and distributed by the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress.

6. Here we are not concerned with the various and contentious theories on how Aborigines arrived or where they came from: our interest is to try and reflect how tradition-based Aborigines explain and view their arrival. The debate on the origins of Aborigines, which has been going on for decades, is, we believe, more ideological than scientific. As in South Africa, it seems that European settlers are of the opinion that if they can prove that the Aborigines or Bantu are not 'indigenous' then, illogically, they can claim that they had as much right to settle as the people who settled before them. Thus many European scholars, on the basis that the so-called 'Australoid strain' has also been found amongst the people of the Nilgiri Hills in south India, the Veddahs of Sri-Lanka, and the Ainu of Japan, believe that the Aborigines came from somewhere in southern Asia (Berndt, 1964, pp.1-5, Elkin, op. cit.) . It is also believed that they came by sea 'during one of the early or in the last of the glacial phases' (McCarthy, 1957, p.19). As for the origin of the Tasmanian Aboriginal population, there is even more doubt expressed. McCarthy is of the opinion that 'they drifted from New Caledonia, possibly landing and

travelling along the east coast south of Queensland to Tasmania' (McCarthy, 1957, p.24). Howeels, on the other hand, considers they are not really different from the mainland population and therefore could be 'an Australian population which has been modified, in part at least, by an invasion of woolly-haired Melanesians from the east' (Howeels, 1937, p.76). But then, if these theories held any substance at all, would not Aboriginal history contain some stories about the migration and the former culture, asks Robinson, and would not the stories concerning creation be Asian rather than Australian based? (Robinson, op cit.). What can be said with some certainty is that none of these scholarly theories mean very much to the Aborigines, who know and have always known from where they originated. And it is this kind of knowledge which concerns us here.

7. The Old Man and His Six Sons was taken from Robinson, op cit. pp.5-8; and Ankotaringa, pp.24-29.

8. Eingana The Mother, Robinson, op cit., pp.34-37.

9. At the beginning of our research we found that we knew many facts, but only understood a little of their significance. We feel the reason for this was because our conception and view of the world was quite different from that of the tradition-based Aborigines. For many Aborigines things are so, and it took us some time to fully understand this and the implications it possessed for research. Explanations were not openly sought; that is the question why is not asked - things are just accepted because that has always been the case. Thus stories concerning the beginning are neither questioned nor explained: they exist and are therefore part of the Aborigines' real

world. To offer further explanations would be, no doubt, to denigrate their spiritual and social value and undermine Aboriginal social life.

10. The fact that urban-based Aborigines were chosen as their representatives is extremely significant, especially when there were many European social anthropologists and musicians who were specialists in the field and well known to the Indulkana Aborigines. It seemed to us that, at the meeting, the tradition-based Aborigines were saying to their Adelaide brothers 'we see you also as Aborigines'. This could have been an initial attempt to construct a new role for urban-based Aborigines within the traditional setting. It could have been the culmination of the urban-based Aborigines actions and wishes to identify with their traditional brothers. This was expressed to some extent by the interpreter who kept referring to the way she had been received by her brothers, the way they had taught her the language, and the way many of the customs and beliefs had been revealed to her. Like the Indulkana Aborigines, she felt, we believe, that this decision was a sign of acceptance, the beginning of a new relationship and era of understanding between tradition- and urban-based Aborigines in South Australia.

11. This extract and the three others which follow was based on notes taken at the meeting. Although the interpreter may have used some licence in her translation, the essence of what the Indulkana Aborigines said was, according to others who understood the pitanjarra language, accurately conveyed. At the start of the meeting the Vice-Chancellor of Adelaide University announced that the meeting was an historic one, as

it was the first to be held between tradition-based and academic staff at the University. He went on to state that, although the University, lamentably, had never made any formal contact with Aborigines since its foundation at the end of the nineteenth century, he hoped the meeting would mark the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship. He felt that both cultures had something valuable to offer each other, and now that the political atmosphere was more conducive to a better understanding between the two, he hoped that the University, as the oldest seat of higher education and learning in the State, would help to dispel ignorance and nurture a more sympathetic relationship.

12. See Rowley's Outcasts in White Australia for an account and discussion on fringe-dwelling communities. In Aborigines in Australia Today we have remarked that: 'On a fairly simple level a fringe-dweller is a person who lives geographically, socially and culturally on the fringe of a town, and the dominant culture, values, and mores of its residents. This has been the sociological or social anthropological explanation employed to define such a person or group. Embodied within it are a number of assumptions: (a) there is the assumption that fringe-dwellers somehow mysteriously occupy inner or outer city sites without European permission.
(b) that there is something wrong with them because they do not abide by European town traditions and culture.
(c) they have no right to be there in their present socal condition.
(d) that European values and social organisation systems are inherently superior.
(e) that they are an ostracised and alienated group based on a sub-assumption that it would be in their own interest to

integrate freely or to be forced to integrate into normative urban life.

(f) that the definition has sprung from and is couched in the language of the dominant; that it reflects the present power relations which exist between black and white goes un-noticed by white academics; in other words the definition is coercive and implicitly contains a threat to conform.

So the largely accepted definition of a fringe-dweller is a European one; it takes no account of moral and legal points - for example, that the land culturally belongs to and is owned by the Aborigines; that many of the towns and new developments have been built on this land without Aboriginal permission; and that many Aboriginal groups are forced to live on the fringe because of the relations that exist between whites and blacks, both from a historical and contemporary perspective' (Mullard, 1974, p.40). Although we do not wish to retract from this statement, it does now seem that it could be improved by adding the so-called fringe-dweller's view of what he is or is not! Within our discussion on Institutions? pages 15-49, we have mentioned another group not mentioned here - the Suburbanites. The chief reason why we have excluded them here is because they do not identify themselves as being Aborigines; in fact they define themselves as being assimilated into a European way of life, and therefore offer no present-day resistance to European values, ways, and policies.

13. Taken from an interview with Geoffrey Shaw on the 1st August 1974.

14. Most fringe-dwelling Aborigines would not accept Robinson's view that they are in a state of 'limbo between two worlds'. They argue that their roots are firmly established in and nourished by tradition-based society. Thus the so-called 'myths' are not 'transitional', as most fringe-dwellers have no intention of assimilating with or integrating into White society: their 'myths and legends' are simply statements which reflect their past and present situations since European contact. Until recently, Robinson's view may have been a more appropriate description of inner-city-dwellers, because, unlike other groups, they have had little choice but to adapt or attempt to adapt to an alien culture - so many of them have been in a state of transition for a long time and this is reflected in their views about the past and present.

15. "Attack at Tabulam" in Robinson, op cit., pp.179-182.

16. This has become a common strategy employed by many oppressed groups. In legitimate exercises, like relating their history to non-Aboriginal people, Aborigines are able to portray their own feelings. For other examples of this in different race relations areas see Hannerz's <u>Soulside</u>, Rainwater's <u>Behind Getto Walls</u>, Cleaver's <u>Soul on Ice</u>, and Malcolm X's <u>Autobiography</u>. One explanation of Aboriginal drunkenness has been that it is only whilst drunk that Aborigines can escape from the realities of racism, recall a better past, and relive and re-enact, as integrated beings, a former time. For further elaboration see Duncan, op cit., Schapper's <u>Aboriginal Crime and Delinquency</u>, pp.188-190 in his <u>Aboriginal Advancement to Integration</u>; Robinson's paper <u>Imprisonment of Aborigines and Part-Aborigines</u>

in Western Australia in Berndt (ed) Thinking About Australian Aboriginal Welfare; and Rowley's Outcasts in White Australia.

17. This extract was constructed from our notes after spending three days and two enibriated nights with the Todd River fringe-dwellers in the second week of August, 1974.

18. Taken from a second interview with Geoffrey Shaw on the 12th August , 1974.

19. What Kath Walker calls 'A Song of Hope', the title of her poem for Aboriginal Australia's Day, 12th July, 1974, is really a challenge to urban-based Aborigines to rediscover themselves as Aborigines, to stop hating and embark upon a 'new Dream Time'. The last three verses of her poem urge Aborigines into hope and action.

So long we waited
Bound and frustrated,
Till hate be hated
  And caste deposed;
Now light shall guide us,
No goal denied us,
And all doors open
  That long were closed.

See plain the promise
Dark freedom-lover!
Night's nearly over,
  And though long the climb,
New rights will greet us,
New mateship meet us
  In our new Dream Time
To our fathers' fathers
  The pain, the sorrow;
To our children's children
  The glad tomorrow

20. Jack Davis's The First Born: taken from a collection of poems recorded by A and R, jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Melbourne, and the Aborigines Advancement League, Northcote, Victoria.

21. We witnessed this whole creative experience at the Aboriginal Writers' Workshop, held in Darwin, October 21-23rd, 1974. The poem has since been published in Identity, vol. 2, No. 3 January, 1975, p.27. The Workshop was organised by The Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australian Council for the Arts. Not unlike the Aboriginal Publications Foundation, this Board consists of a group of Aboriginal artists and craftsmen appointed by the Australian government as an advisory panel to the Australian Council for the Arts. It was established, primarily, to investigate ways of involving Aborigines in a wide range of cultural activities in the visual arts, performing arts, film making and literature. It arranges seminars for Aboriginal artists, such as the Darwin Workshop, and makes recommendations for Art Council grants.

22. Kevin Gilbert, op cit., p.184.

23. Quoted in Kevin Gilbert's book, op cit., p.184.

24. Taken from an interview with Paul Coe on September, 25th, 1974.

CHAPTER TWO: CONTACT WITH CONFLICT

> "If anyone speaks, make sure they know the truth about Aboriginal history since white colonisation. Not what you've been told through your white history books... because our full-blood fathers did fight, and they fought because the whiteman were hunting our families, and destroying our land..."[1]

> "We have to rewrite history, and tell it as it was, not how whites, but how blacks see it. For too long now we have been the victims of white racism, persecution, and oppression. Our children must know this, and this is one reason we established this school (in Townsville, Queensland, the first and only black community school in Australia); another is because we feel our children need a head start, to find themselves and understand themselves before going on to a white secondary school. If it wasn't for what we do here, they would know nothing about their past: they would be lost and afraid over there."[2]

Views such as these are based upon experience, concerned with the portrayal, by social scientists and historians, of Aboriginal society as being socially inept; incapable of using land, building villages, establishing gardening economies, and offering resistance to white settlement. According to many European writers, Stanner's window is structurally sound enough, and the story of Eingana, and The Attack at Tabulam are only 'legends' and 'myths', non-scientific, imaginary, and of little importance or consequence. For the Aborigine, however, these stories, as we saw in the last chapter, are as real as the kangaroo or the whiteman's

occupancy of 'his country'. Encapsulated in many of them, are views about their own history since white colonisation - views which are just as important, if not, more so, than those propounded by Euroaustralian scholars specialising in the field. It would seem from an analysis of some of them, that resistive action, directed against colonial authority, was a daily occurence. But, yet, according to Elkin, we find that:

> "The general picture all over Australia from 1788 onwards was that on first contact with definite settlement the Aborigines were usually shy and harmless. They gradually made a nervous and tentative approach to the trespassers, and if not rebuffed, readiness was shown by some to help the latter in small ways when asked. This was no doubt based on the assumption that the newcomers were temporary sojourners only. It was a transition phase marked by observation and careful contact. Incidentally, this also applied to the settler or settlers"[3].

In contrast Hart and Pilling suggest that:

> "To such visitors from outside, the Tiwi were consistently and implacably hostile. Their own traditions and what little written history there is of 'Malay' penetration into the Arafura Sea both tell the same story. Outsiders who landed on the islands were massacred or vigorously resisted. Whether they were classified as Malai-ui ('Malay's) or Wona-rui (mainland Aborigines) they were not Tiwi and hence not real people, or at least not human enough to share the islands with the chosen people who owned them.
>
> "Thus, the word 'Tiwi' did not mean 'people' in the sense of all human beings, but rather 'we, the only people'... This exclusion of outsiders

> from real 'us-ness' and hence from real 'human-ness' was continued when the Europeans began to arrive in the early nineteenth century, and certainly as late as 1930 the Tiwi continued to call and think of themselves as Tiwi, the people, and to use all other words for all non-Tiwi, whether they were mainland Aborigines, Malay fishermen, Japanese pearl-divers, French priests, or British officials, who penetrated into their exclusive little cosmos"[4].

The difference of view here is significant. As Hart and Pilling are American social anthropologists, they are not ideologically restrained or pressurised by local considerations to minimise Aboriginal resistance: they are the outsiders looking on. This is not to say that Elkin has deliberately distorted his analysis in order to fit a certain ideological predisposition, but it does raise the question of how influenced are Australian social scientists by white Australian values and ideological interpretations of history. Although it could be argued that Tiwi country, Bathurst and Melville islands, sixty miles north of Darwin, is isolated, and that this alone accounted for Tiwi 'us-ness', hostility, and resistance, the argument by itself is not a convincing one, as mainland tribes were just as isolated.[5]

More to the point is that Elkin's concept of 'tentative approach' only takes into account some contact situations, and consequently, does not cover the complexity of others which existed between 1788 and 1860. It is purely a general term to describe all initial contact situations, rather than a particular term to describe contact actions and subsequent behaviour. He is more concerned with tracing the phases of Aboriginal adaptation to the dominant European society, than discussing, in detail, contact situations, or what he refers

to as 'clash (resistance). His functionalist analysis, thus, tends to preclude any real description of 'clash', other than to say it existed. He argues that limited resistance arose out of a difference in opinion, but was soon replaced by a phase of 'intelligent parasitism': a form of adaptive behaviour dependent upon the goodwill of station owners, white settlements, and, later, reserve administrators. The basis of his argument, like that of the historians discussed earlier, seems to be that Aborigines were soon overwhelmed and pacified by superior force, and rather than choosing heroic death, they chose to survive, as best they could, by adapting their behaviour and acquiescing to the demands placed upon them by colonial authority. But as one tradition-based Aborigine pointed out:

> "We don't believe their ways... we keep fighting all time, with heads, not spears... My father brought here on neck-chain, and whiteman keep him in this place all the time; my mother brought here from another country, and we all stop here. Bossman try make us work, but we do other things, so Bossman lock us up, and we get all our people together and have big fight; they bring to this place more policeman, and more policeman, but no good, we not work, we go on with big fight. My father fight, my mother fight, my brothers fight, and me fight. All we people fight because we sad .... whiteman think we quiet, but we think and not work...."[7]

Supported by many other Aborigines, this view of their situation suggests that for a long time resistance, rather than passive acceptance or 'intelligent parasitism', has been a conscious objective. What has often been mistaken as passivity may, in fact, be a form of passive resistance.

So-called docility, non-cooperation, and laziness may too indicate that Aborigines have neither adapted nor internalised European values but, defensively, have constructed social and psychological barriers in order to resist cultural penetration. A broader discussion on the nature of contact is thus required if we wish, historically, to trace Aboriginal resistance and to see, from the actor's viewpoint, whether or not it constitutes a part of his everyday life.

Contact Situations

Many sociologists, and we include anthropologists in this term, have been interested in the sociology of contact[8]. From their studies two uses of the term have arisen: firstly as a descriptive label to describe the meeting of one person with another of a different racial and social background (personal contact); and secondly, as a behavioural concept which denotes the kind of relations which are established between two groups of different racial and social origins (collective contact). A further distinction is also often made between what Maunier calls pre-contact and post-contact situations (Maunier, 1949, pp.428-429).[9]

Pre-contact situations are those in which relations are formed between one individual or group and another before any assured and continuous social order is established between the two. Such, for instance, was the relationship between Cook and the Kurnell Aborigines at Stingrays Bay (later to be re-named Botany Bay), in April 1770. Contrary to popular opinion they discovered each other and, as we shall

see, formed an intial relationship before any continuous or legally enforced one existed between the Aborigines and British colonists. In post-contact situations, however, the relations between two individuals or groups are regulated after a collective order and society have been founded. Thus, after the first settlement was established in 1788, colonial law and administrative practice in the form of the Native Police Acts and orders concerning 'bush-walks' regulated the relationship between Aborigines and Europeans. Both situations existed in Australia, and it would seem that from even a most superficial knowledge of white Australian history that all pre-contact situations were marked by what Elkin calls 'tentative'approach strategies; and that post-contact situations, which lasted for more than a century, were far more complex and varied than many writers consider. A re-interpretation of white Australian history would suggest that the post-contact phase and hence the relations that defined it, included,at least,encroachment, martial, squatter and protection situations.

Further, as the continent was colonised on a state by state basis, beginning with New South Wales in 1788 and ending with the Northern Territory in 1911, and as each state possessed sovereignty, owing its allegience directly to the Crown, it would also suggest that contact situations cannot be equated with definite historical periods: they tended to overlap, and in any one state, depending upon the density of settlement and Aboriginal resistance, more than one situation could exist. In Queensland, for example, which broke away from New South Wales in 1867, at least three different situations could be identified at the turn of the twentieth century. Around Brisbane, where relations between white and

black had crystalised, and where the Meston report had been implemented, urban-Queensland in 1897 became the third state to introduce protection policies; on her northern tropical frontier, however, a state of martial law existed right up until the mid-1920s; and, yet again, the relations established in the eastern canefields, which employed indentured Kanaka labour, were quite different from those in the mining mid-west desert areas[10]. Clearly, then, any attempt to distinguish between various contact-situations must be qualified by these considerations; and the discussion which follows should be viewed in this light.

(i) Tentative Approach Situations

Although little evidence exists as to the kind of approach William Dampier made to the Aborigines he met on the north-west coast on 4th January, 1688, it can be assumed from his description of the people as 'wild, cruel, black savages ... poor and abject wretches' that the approaches he made were tentative. It was not until his second voyage in 1699, after he had dispelled the popular belief that the inhabitants of Australia walked upside down, that we have some indication of the kind of relationship established. He informs us that after one of his sailors had been speared he retaliated with musket - power and:

> "... frightened them (the Aborigines) at first, but yet they soon learnt to despise it, tossing up their hands and crying Pooh, Pooh, Pooh; and, coming on afresh with great noise, I thought it high time to charge again, and shoot one of

them, which I did".[11]

From this brief and colourful account we can already establish several strands in the initial pre-contact relationship. Firstly, the north-west coast Aborigines attempted to resist what they probably misconstrued as an invasion; secondly, their resistance was met with musket-power; thirdly, Dampier considered them to be inferior, 'savagely' childlike (Pooh, Pooh, Pooh); fourthly, not deterred by the shooting sticks, the Aborigines came 'on afresh', and, fifthly, the incident ended with a display of superior power - the charge and eventual murder. All these strands were to re-appear again when Cook on the 29th April, 1770, nearly a century after Dampier's first encounter, weighed anchor in Botany Bay.

According to his own version of the landing we find that a large band of Aborigines were not at all frightened by his armed party of thirty men or the Endeavour anchored in the bay[12]. No doubt afraid of a violent confrontation, he was forced to fire a warning shot over their heads. As this did not disperse or scare them, he aimed, from forty yards, a second round of shots at their legs. This too, had little effect: several retreated to the bush for cover, whilst the others, unnerved, held their ground, waiting for the landing party to come into spear range. Then they threw their spears. It took another two rounds of shots before all the Aborigines were driven into the bush, and Cook could set up camp. His own account thus supports the typical Aboriginal view that:

> "We acted like anybody would... we'd never seen a large sailing ship before... it meant trouble, and when Cook's mob started shooting at us we knew it meant trouble... we probably thought they were evil, as we knew

> about evil spirits from our culture: but the real point is that we defended ourselves against them, and didn't, as the history books tell us, run off screaming and shouting - we stood our ground."[13]

Again from Cook's own descriptions of the small scale attacks, spear-throwing and bush-burning, which made it difficult for the Endeavour's crew to collect wood and water, we can understand why he concluded: 'all they seemed to want was for us to be gone'.

What made Cook's encounters significantly different from those of Dampier's were his instructions. Dated 30th July, 1768, he was ordered:

> "..... to observe the Genius, Temper, Disposition, and Number of the Natives, if there be any, and endeavour by all proper means to cultivate a Friendship and Alliance with them, making them presents of such Trifles as they may value, inviting them to Traffic, and Shewing them every kind of Civility and Regard; taking Care however not to suffer yourself to be surprised by them, but to be always upon your guard against any Accident.
>
> "You are also with the Consent of the Natives to take possession of Convenient Situations in the Country in the Name of the King of Great Britain; or, if you find the country uninhabitated take Possession for His Majesty by setting up Proper Marks and Inscriptions, as first discoverers and possessors"[14]

Here we see a clear colonial interest, whereas Dampier's voyage was purely exploratory. To have killed an Aborigine would have spoilt any attempt 'to cultivate a Friendship and Alliance with them', and to have treated them as 'savage' would

have been a contravention of the Admiralty order. But the colonial interest also meant a new strand in the pre-contact relationship: the possibility of mutual cooperation; but this was soon dashed when a final element appeared in the relationship - namely that of irreconcilable cultural conflict.

The first real indication of this, although all the incidents discussed so far are suggestive, occurred on July, 20th, 1770, when Cook's ship anchored for repairs in the Endeavour River. Met by a group of twenty or so Aborigines, who had congregated on the banks, Cook, armed 'with presents of such Trifles they may Value', persuaded the warriors to lay down their spears and boomerrangs and visit the Endeavour. Less impressed with the rigging and guns on board than the turtles stranded on the deck, they asked for some of the turtle meat. Turtles were food, and for them, all food was a communal thing to be shared. After being refused, on the grounds that the sailors required fresh meat for their journey, they attempted to drag two turtles over board with them. The sailors reacted angrily and ordered them off the ship. Once ashore, they made their way to the four-foot high dry grass on the bank and 'set it on fire with the obvious intention of burning down one of the ship's tents and some clothes and nets that were hanging out to dry' (Moorehead, 1967, p.116). [15] The blaze that resulted would have destroyed all the Endeavour's stores on shore had not Cook resorted to musket-power.

This incident, an adumbration of the future competition for possession of the country and its natural resources, is not only the first recorded example of culture conflict, but also a complete example of the pre-contact tentative approach

situation. All the stages within the relationship, from the initial tentative approach to the final use of force, were enacted on the banks of the Endeavour.

> "When Cook's mob landed our forefathers knew they were different... they wore uniforms, they carried shooting-sticks... they were white, and they had different ways. We have always shared things, like our food, but they never shared anything. At Endeavour River they'd not even share the turtles which were ours anyway... Then, like today, we could see their values were different, and we didn't like what we saw, so we fought off their attempts to destroy us, our ways and beliefs...."[16]

Although coastal Aborigines certainly 'fought off' what they considered to be an invasion, they did not realise that, under English Colonial law, on the 22nd August 1770, Cook had claimed the whole eastern seaboard of their country, re-designated New South Wales, for King George III. If they had, then, perhaps, the new Chapter in Aboriginal history which opened with Cook's attempts to 'observe their Genius, Temper, Disposition, and Number' would have closed quite differently.

(ii) Encroachment Situations

Captain Arthur Phillip's orders, unlike those of Cook's, were to settle and establish a penal colony at Botany Bay. We know that at first sight of the Supply on 18th January, 1788, a group of fifty or so Aborigines, who had been fishing on the south shore, beached their canoes, gathered their women and children, and retreated into the bush for a

hurried meeting (Younger, 1969, p.63)[17]. We also know that several of the elders and younger men emerged from the bush in order to challenge the invaders and, brandishing their spears, to tell them to depart (Younger, op cit.). This small band displayed such resistive hostility that Phillip was forced to abandon his attempt to land, and to seek a landing spot on the northern shore. But when he arrived there, another band of equally hostile Aborigines emerged from the bush and prevented his landing. Finally, he gave up all attempts to land, and rowed back to the Supply anchored in the bay. By this time, the original group on the southern shore, armed with spears and nulla-nullas (clubs), had more than trebled.

Nearly a week passed before Phillip decided to land, and it would seem from the records that this decision was prompted more by the unexpected appearance of La Boussole and l'Astrolable, under the command of the French Comte de la Perouse, than any dimunition of Aboriginal hostility. Afraid of the rumoured French plans to also settle in Australia, he attempted to convince the assembled warriors, 'with presents of such Trifles they may Value', that his party was not an invading one, and that, by refraining from any use of force, he wanted to establish friendly relations.

For the first week on shore his diplomacy seemed to work. On Sunday, 27th January, 1788, the Rev. Richard Johnson was able to hold a service in the shade of a gum tree without interruptions, and the 717 convicts together with a further 290 gaolers and marines were able to listen to a sermon based on verse twelve of the 116th Psalm: 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards us!!

> "In those first days we were conned by Phillip ... our people were told lies... They didn't know he was planning to take over our country; they thought he was resting, like Cook's mob had done... and, I expect, the elders who had remembered Cook told the people that, and so we let them rest, because that's what Phillip told our people..."[18]

But as one week grew into two, and after watching the erection of cabbage-tree huts, store houses, and, according to Doctor White, the settlement's physician a 'very good hospital', the coastal Aborigines were certainly under no illusion about Phillip's real intentions. Phillip too was in no doubt that they had seen through his pretence of cautious friendship: after a few weeks he was compelled to report that 'the encounters of black and white are neither frequent nor cordial, and the background is one of nasty or violent incidents' (Stanner, 1969, p.8).[19]

Within the first few weeks, then, a number of relations were established which distinguished the pre-contact tentative approach situations from that of the post-contact encroachment situation. Firstly, Phillip had been instructed to establish a colony and, thus, the relations established were intended to be of a permanent kind, supported by colonial law and regulation, which, in turn, made them qualitatively and structurally quite different from pre-contact relations. Secondly, in order to achieve this objective, he needed to acquire sufficient land for the settlement which he managed to do by an encroaching process, the gradual non-negotiated grafting of additional land to the settlement base: this, in turn, led to the establishment of a proprietoral relation, the right to acquire, use, and defend colonial land (Crown Land) which had been claimed by Cook

for the King of England. Thirdly, the defence of land soon became associated with the defence of property, the buildings erected, the plants nurtured, and the settlement's stores and equipment; thus a relation based upon property, its ownership, increase and defence, became an integral part of the encroachment situation. Fourthly, the force used in order to maintain these embryonic relations sprang from a concept of social purpose, the determination to see that the settlement survived which, in turn, symbolised power and, later, the relation on which this was based. As these relations evolved, it was clear that Phillip's original policy of cautious friendship would not work.

By October 1788 his policy was a complete failure. Successful Aboriginal attacks became even more frequent. And internal tension and conflict grew as the marines refused to help construct the settlement, insisting that their main garrison duty was to defend the colony against Aboriginal attack. The Governor's reaction to these difficulties and pressures helped to consolidate the already formative power relation and construct another based on a notion of physical and social distance. He insisted that it was 'absolutely necessary' (his words) to force the Aborigines to keep even further away from the settlement, and, secondly, to send out the first of many firing parties. How many Aborigines and marines were killed or wounded in this campaign is not known: all that is known is that the punitive party proved to be unsuccessful. Keeping their distance during the day, at night the Aborigines surrounded the colony, and, displaying a highly developed knowledge of military strategy, attacked storehouses, water supplies, munition compounds, gardens, and other selected targets.

> "The settlement could not last out for long without reinforcements or a new initiative from Phillip. We'd managed to contain them; they couldn't expand; and we made sure their crops failed. Our continual attacks, and they were well planned, gradually wore them down, until they wished they were all back in England, even the convicts....But then Phillip suddenly decided to reverse his policy..."[20]

He found it 'absolutely necessary' (his words again) to force the Aborigine <u>into</u> the settlement, rather than <u>away</u> from it. He considered that if he could make Aborigines see the advantages of a superior ('civilised') European culture, then resistance would subside, as they would want to avail themselves of the 'advantages'. A further motive behind this reversal of policy was to guarantee the survival of the colony by finding out from the 'tamed' Aborigines what resources the country possessed. To implement both policies, which together formed a kind of cultural encroachment, he needed to recruit a number of influential Aborigines. As the deterioration of relations and the polarisation of attitudes ruled out voluntary recruitment, there was only one course of action open to him - kidnapping.

Four kidnaps were therefore arranged: Arabanoo, Colby, Yemmerrawanie, and the famous Benelong. The story of each shows, not only the stupidity of the plan, but also how the policy backfired. The first Aboriginal victim of smallpox, Arabanoo, died within weeks of being brought to the settlement. Colby escaped after a week's imprisonment, or, as some writers have termed it, 'adjustment phase', and was never to be recaptured. Yemmerrawanie, like Arabanoo, was never to return to pass on his 'knowledge' to fellow tribesmen, as he died in England shortly after his arrival. Only Benelong, whom Phillip had also taken

to London in 1794, remained. Although he 'wore the clothes of polite society, and became a great favourite' he must have gone on rejecting Phillip's civilising mission.[21] For on his return to Sydney, he too escaped from the settlement and became re-united with his tribe.

Thus Phillip's final attempt to win Aboriginal confidence and compliance dismally failed. It can be assumed that both Colby and Benelong related their experience to their respective tribes and warned their people 'that behind any soft-seeming approach there (was) the possibility of sudden force and treachery' (Stanner, 1969, p.9). Organised by Benelong and Colby, Aboriginal attacks became more frequent, and both sides settled down to a period of undeclared war which lasted throughout the nineteenth century. Skirmishes became organised attacks; attacks turned into battles which, like the Battle of Goulborn, lasted for several weeks; many soldiers on both sides lost their lives, and even, Phillip, during an encounter with Benelong and over two hundred Aborigines at Manly Cove, nearly lost his life when he was speared into a state of unconsciousness.

It was not, however, until his personal huntsman, a convict called M'Entire, was speared to death during another battle at Botany Bay that his policies culminated into the form of the punitive expedition, giving a physical expression to the relations which characterised the encroachment situation. According to Stanner:

> "The murder put Phillip in a great passion... He wanted blood - anyone's blood except that of women and children. At first he demanded ten heads, and two live captives whom he would then hang 'in the presence of as many of their countrymen as could be collected after having explained the cause of such a

> punishment', no doubt by signs, for no one yet had a sentence of the language. At the suggestion of a squeamish officer Phillip made it not ten heads, but six persons, to be captured or shot; if captive, two would hang; the rest would be goaled for a time at Norfolk Island, the place set aside for the very worst of the convict desparadoes. So, carrying axes to lop the heads and bags to hold them, the punitive party went out, not once, but twice, ten days apart, but on both occasions the enterprise was fumbled and collapsed in failure."[22]

The importance of this incident is that it ended the chapter of relations that were established during the first of many encroachment situations. All of the early colonies, penal or otherwise, which dotted the continent's coastline - Sydney, Hobart, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, and Darwin - tended to progress through the same sequence of relations. In each case, colonial force and violence was met with Aboriginal resistance.

(iii) Martial Situations

In many areas, the intensity of Aboriginal resistance could not be countered by encroachment policies. Even the punitive expedition was not enough to deter Aborigines from attacking settlements and fighting for the right to live in the way they wished.

For many settlements and townships, like Sydney, the relations formed in initial encroachment situations merely became consolidated as Aboriginal resistance proved ineffective; but in some areas, noticeably Tasmania, Western Australia, Queensland, and the outback areas of New South Wales, Aboriginal resistance increased rather than decreased, and encroachment policies gave way to those of a martial kind.

> "We could never live in peace with the bastards; we couldn't. As soon as they came to my country (Tasmania) they started stealing our land, and killing us off as if we had no right to live. As soon as we retaliated, they brought in the troops, and declared a state of martial law..."[23]

Although Tasmania presents a classic case of the martial situation, where relations can be traced from those which resembled cautious friendship to the final enemy relationship which resulted in mass extermination, it should be remembered, as Rowley points out, that comparable populations on the mainland 'disappeared' in much the same way (Rowley, 1972, vol.1, p.44). The demise of the Tasmanian population stretched over a period of seventy five years, but the major extermination period was concentrated within the first decades of the nineteenth century. In 1802, for example, there were estimated to be more than 20,000 Aborigines in Tasmania. By 1817 the numbers had been reduced to 7,000, but during the next six years the figures had sharply fallen to 340. Thus in the space of twenty five years, the whole population had been reduced to a mere 1½% of its original size. Davies shows that over the next forty years, the population steadily fell from 320 in 1826 to, with the death of Truganini, 0 in 1876 (Davies, 1973, pp.273-274).[24]

> "The story (behind these population statistics) is indicative of the distance between proposed policies and practice, and between the white governors and the Aboriginal governed. Here one may see the beginning of the policy of reserves for the unwanted Aborigines, as places where they could be held out of the way. The wide difference between pious platitudes of government proclaimations and the facts resulted from the dominance of the settler economic interests.... The demands of the whites, immersed in

> the development of a new system of land use, and in no particular need of Aboriginal labour, meant that even the remnants should, as pests, be sent somewhere off the island or be wiped out. All these situations were to be repeated on the mainland: the resort of the government to proclaimation of martial law to deal with the Aborigines who were fighting back; the demand of settlers .... for the removal of the local Aborigines; the undeclared war, never so recognised for any purposes of negotiation and settlement".[25]

Although there is neither space nor a need here to record all the historical details, an outline of what happened will show how and what relations formed, and probably suggest how similar social ingredients produced similar results on other frontiers. According to Plomley, who asserts that 'the resident population of seamen, beachcombers and ex-convicts' followed the maxim 'out of sight out of mind', the runaway convicts and settlers had terrorised the Tasmanian Aborigines right from the outset and had brought disaster to their communities by raping and seizing the women (Plomley, 1966, pp.23-24)[26]. He squarely places the blame on the (ex) convicts and sealers:

> "Whatever the method adopted by the sealers..... the results were disastrous for the natives and were undoubtedly the principal cause of the extinction of the tribes of the north coast, and, to a lesser extent, those of the east coast also"[27]

More analytical in his approach, Rowley, too, is of much the same opinion:

> "There was the wholesale shooting of marsupials, affecting the Aboriginal supply of food and of furs for warmth; the use of poison mixed with flour to get rid of native dogs, adopted by the shepherds to get rid of their owners as well; the cases of convicts who would cover

> up their own breaches of law for which there was serious consequences - killing sheep for a supplement to the ration, for instance - by blaming the Aboriginal..."[28]

Whether or not the convicts were to blame is not as important, at this stage, as the fact that all aggressive actions towards the Aborigines were officially condoned. From the accounts of Plomley, Davies, Turnbull, and Rowley it can be seen that European actions, whether of an individual convict kind or a collective governmental kind, were based, like those in other post-contact situations, on a racist frontier ideology: the belief that the pioneers were 'the chosen people', superior in all ways, and that the indigenous people, wherever they were found, America, Africa, New Zealand, or Australia - were 'wild' and 'savage', to be slaughtered rather than 'civilised, to be driven off their land in order to make way for a far superior culture, based upon Christian and capitalist, as opposed to heathen and communal principles.[29] These expressions of racial and social superiority reached their zenith in Tasmania when forty Aborigines were slaughtered at Risdon. Up until May 1804, the date of the Risdon massacre, the relations established, despite the individual activities of the sealers and convicts, had been similar to those established in the encroachment situations on the mainland. But after this date they rapidly changed.

Spurred on by the massacre of a 'hunting' as opposed to a 'raiding' party, the Aborigines embarked upon an organised campaign of continuous warfare. In the rural areas they chose to kill shepherds, rather than steal or slaughter their flocks, as the shepherd was the most important person in the rural community. By killing shepherds, they were attacking the very heart of the settler economy. Any cautious friendship that existed soon

turned into open hatred, more reprisals, and pressure to 'wipe out' the whole Tasmanian population. In other words, the relationship radically changed from one based on reluctant tolerance to one which sought the irrevocable end to Aboriginal resistance. After twenty years of informal war, Governor George Arthur on 29th November 1826, declared a state of formal war, granting authorisation and military support to anyone prepared to pursue the 'enemy'. Reinforced with garrison troops, posses of settlers, convicts, and bushrangers were formed. The 'Bounty Five', the colloquial name for the bounty catchers who received £5 for each Aborigine caught dead or alive, joined the official army of settlers and soldiers. The rewards were high. Not only could settlers rid the island of the 'nests of pests', but they could also improve their own wealth. A Shanon settler obtained a thousand acres for his exploits, and many other settlers received similar payments from the colonial government, depending upon how many Aborigines they had captured or shot. (Davies, 1973, pp.136-7).

To legitimise the martial relationship now formed, a Demarcation Proclaimation was issued in 1828, which attempted also to order Aborigines out of the settled areas, by persuasion, capture, or by any other form of 'legitimate force'. Aboriginal resistance continued, and the bushcraft displayed by Mosquito, Tom Birch, Black Jack, and their organised bands of warriors proved far superior to that of their pursuers[30]. To prevent growing settler despair, Government order 166 was issued on 27th August, 1830, which stated that the garrison troops should not:

> "... relax the most strenuous exertions to repel and drive from the settled country those natives, who seize every occasion to perpetrate murders, and to plunder and destroy the property of the inhabitants"[31].

By this time the martial relationship had supplanted all other kinds: racist hysteria and paranoia ruled all actions, and fear and economic greed, like chopsticks, picked at as many pockets of resistance that could be found. Davies informs us that:

> "A party of military and constables got a number of natives cornered between two perpendicular rocks, on a sort ot shelf, and in the end killed seventy of them. The women and children had pressed themselves into the crevices of the rocks, but were dragged out and their brains dashed out on the convenient rocks"[32].

And Reverend John West, the Tasmanian historian, wrote in 1852:

> "The wounded were brained; the infants cast into the flames; the musket was driven into the quivering flesh; and the social fire, around which the Natives gathered to slumber, became, before the morning, their funeral pyre"[33].

And with the Aboriginal girl that was left after such an attack, the settler, soldier, or policeman:

> "... kept the poor creature chained up with a bullock chain, like a wild beast, and, when he needed her, he applied a burning stick from the fire, and pressed it into her skin, until she screamed she was ready."[34]

With growing cruelty, sadism, and fanaticism, the martial situation, in which orders, rules, and proclamations defined martial relationships and actions, and where the relationship was rationalised and justified on the basis of racist and economic beliefs, reached its full maturity when the colony's Executive Council in 1830 decided to organise 'The Line'. Influenced by the success of Macquarie's Line in 1816, which slaughtered several hundred New South Wales Aborigines and

drove the remainder beyond the Blue Mountains, away from Sydney, the Tasmanian colonists believed they could 'in one great and engrossing pursuit' round up all the Aborigines in the country of the Stoney Creek, Oyster Bay, and Big River tribes and drive them into the inhospitable Forestiers Peninsula region. The rationalised purpose of The Line, however, was:

> "to capture and raise them (the Aborigines) in the scale of civilisation, by placing them under the immediate control of a competent establishment, from whence they will not have it in their power to escape and therefore to molest the white inhabitants of the country."[35]

So on 25th September, 1830, Governor Arthur implored the community 'to act en masse on October 7th next, for the purpose of capturing those hostile tribes of natives which (were) daily committing renewed atrocities upon the settlers, and the whites generally, wherever found' (Davies, 1973, p.116). In reply, an army of over 5,000 convicts, soldiers, and settlers assembled on the date fixed to search for just over 300 Aborigines, the last of the resisters. Three months later, exhausted and defeated, what remained of The Line returned with 'one old man and a boy ... the sole trophies of an undertaking that had cost the colony more than thirty thousand pounds' (Jose, 1924, pp.85-6)[36].

This example of mass hysteria, which characterised all martial situations in Australia, ended with the work of G.A. Robinson, who with a group of non-armed helpers, including many 'broken' Aborigines, persuaded one band of Aborigines after another to leave their country and seek sanctuary in the first government-financed reservation situated on Gun Carriage Island in the Bass Straits. Illness and physical molestation

weakened the population considerably, and in a desparate attempt to save the remnants of eight resistive tribes, Robinson set up a second reservation on Flinders Island.[37] But according to Rowley:

> "Chaotic initial administration on Flanders Island seemed to have left the Aborigines, especially the women, at the mercy of the guards. But these were only the circumstances making all the more inevitable the effects of the pulmonary tuberculosis which was rapidly reducing the group"[38].

And further:

> "The island had been selected not as a place suitable for safeguarding the lives of the Tasmanians but because it was out of the way. Flinder Island was the prototype of the multi-purposed institution - asylum, hospital, training centre, school, agricultural institution, rationing centre, pensioner's home, prison - which was for so long to be assumed to be suitable for Aborigines."[39]

The martial situation then ended in the Tasmanian case with the total annihilation of the first Tasmanians, and the 'successful' replacement of a communally based economy with that of a frontier capitalist one. In other areas, Western Australia, Queensland and New South Wales, the destruction was not so complete, as Aborigines were able to retreat to the interior, socially and economically regroup, and continue to offer resistance. But in Van Dieman's Land there was nowhere to escape.

(iv) Squatter Situations

Unlike other kinds of situations squatter situations were largely ad hoc, differing from area to another. By colonial definition a squatter was a trespasser on so-called Crown land, if possible, somebody to be caught and brought to trial. But in a country the size of America, and with a population of no more than a milliion in the 1850s, this remained a theoretical intention rather than a practical possibility. In fact the squatter became the frontier man, the man who expanded frontiers and opened up the continent for permanent settlement (Roberts, 1948, op cit. Barrie-Pittock, 1972). Appreciated by the colonial government, this role was one which gave the squatter total jurisdiction over the area he had squatted on until the official frontier caught up. Consequently the relations established on the unofficial frontier reflected more the interests, prejudices, and ideas of the individual squatter or squatter community than those of the colonial government - although, as we shall see, these frontier values and policies were later endorsed by the state administration.

Two types of squatter situations eventually emerged: first those characterised by a Treaty; and second those based on the same racist assumptions as the martial situation in Tasmania. Of course there were many variations, but here we shall confine our discussion to just the two broad types.

(a) Batman Treaty

The name of most of the treaties negotiated was based on the first by John Batman who, shocked by what he had experienced in Tasmania, attempted to acquire land in New South Wales 'upon equitable principles' in the hope that in time his actions 'would lead to the civilisation of a large portion of the Aboriginals' (Younger, 1969, pp.181-83). Instead of taking over the land by force, as was the custom in all the colonies, he presented eight of the tribal elders in the Port Phillip area with a 'treaty'. In return for blankets, knives, hand mirrors, tomahawks, scissors, flour, trinkets, and a yearly tribute of £200 'payable for ever', the Aborigines of the area were to grant him a total of 600,000 acres. In an attempt to establish squatter relations on the basis of equality, the acceptance of the rights and 'dignity of man', white or black, this treaty dated the 6th of June, 1835, raised two other questions concerning the nature of the relationship. The first was whether or not the Aborigines 'owned' the land. The second, if it were accepted that this was the assumption on which Batman worked, concerned the basis of the relations established by the colonists in the encroachment situations. By upholding Batman's Treaty, the colonial government would have had to accept that Aborigines possessed prior land claims, and this in turn would have called for a reassessment of land acquisition methods, and more importantly, a review of settler relations throughout the colony.

Governor Bourke's prompt repudiation of the Treaty showed that he was fully aware of these implications. Clearly, to have allowed the Treaty to stand would not just have undermined the authority of the colonial administration, but also would have prevented it from controlling settlements and the relations

established between settlers and Aborigines. Batman's appeal to the Colonial Office in London brought official reaffirmation of Bourke's decision: the Colonial Secretary, Sir George Grey, dismissed the case as one 'which would not apply with equal force to all the waste lands in every other part of the Colony of New South Wales', and concluded that 'his Lordship must decline to acquiesce in this doctrine' (Barrie-Pittock, 1972, p.12).

This official ruling did not, however, prevent Batman and other squatters from making private and 'unofficial' treaties with Aboriginal tribes. The relations that existed on some parts of the unofficial frontier were thus based 'upon equitable principles'. Later, as the official frontier caught up, the private relationships formed tended to have a beneficial, and even a harmonious effect on official settlement. Aboriginal resistance declined, and in the Port Phillip area (later to become Melbourne in the state of Victoria) and in some parts of South Australia, which up until 1911 included the whole of the Northern Territory, relationships then, as they are today, were largely based upon negotiated mutual contracts.[40]

But on the rest of the unofficial frontier, by far the greater in size, violently enforced 'pretended treaties' or, simply, armed robbery became the dominant pattern of land settlement. In fact, the squatters' illegal occupancy of land gradually became a right; so by 1839 the squatters could claim the protection of the law for themselves, their 'run' or illegal holding, and their boundaries:

> "A man passed into the interior and took possession of a tract of country, established his huts, sheep and shepherds in various directions, and the tract

> of country so occupied by himself and his establishment was said to be in his possession, and he could bring an action against any person who would intrude upon him. He was not bound to show his title".[41]

Barrie-Pittock remarks:

> "The new view, which gradually came to be upheld in Austalian law was that the territory of a country is in reality the property of its occupiers, which the nominees of the Crown administer advantageously only as they facilitate its settlement and culture. This, of course, was the view of the colonists, who did not pause to see how it reflected on the prior rights of the original occupants of the territory in question."[42]

Divorced from the restrictions and regulations which applied to settlers, many squatters tended to make up their own laws and frontier codes of behaviour. The findings and recommendations of the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements) in 1837 were as far removed from them as the 'neat wide streets and large houses' of Sydney (Darwin, 1845, pp.415-16).[43] What they knew and, for many, experienced, was Macquarie's 'line' in 1816 and the war of extermination in Tasmania; so for many 'extermination', rather than the Select Committee's advocacy of 'protection' became both their policy word and view which governed their actions.

> "What happened in (Tasmania) was to happen with monotonous regularity for long afterwards: the initial indifference or even welcome, then the stubborn fight by a few groups for the grasslands,

> with (Aboriginal) attempts to hit the pastoral enterprise at the weakest spot... Reprisal followed, often with the connivance and sometimes the assistance of the Border Police, which tended to become an attempt to wipe out the Aborigines altogether, since men, women, and children were often slaughtered indiscriminately, and the hunting family was the basis of society..."[44]

Official attempts to defend the rights or lives of Aborigines amounted to no more than a partially articulated commitment, for the squatter frontier ran away from the limits of both effective administration and colonial justice. Massacre followed massacre; reprisal followed reprisal; and the relations established reflected, not just the views held by the squatters but also the fierce struggle for land possession on the frontier, and, once acquired, its protection. All the strands of this second type of squatter situation are illustrated in what Aborigines today know as the Myall Creek Massacre.

In this case, twenty eight Aborigines were taken from a hut on a run held by Henry Dangar, tied up with ropes, and slaughtered in the bush. 'In order', declared the Monitor on the 14th December, 1838, 'that their cattle might never more be rushed, it was resolved to exterminate the whole race of blacks in that quarter'. Eleven squatters were eventually charged with murder, but the jury, consisting mainly of squatters with similar pastoral interests, acquitted the eleven men on the grounds that they were engaged in protecting 'their' property. It was not until the papers were sent to the Attorney General for New South Wales, who was conversant with the recent Select Committee's Report, that the principles on which frontier justice rested were seriously

questioned. Much to the annoyance of the squatters the Attorney General decided to charge seven of them on a further count of murdering one of the children in the massacre; the other four could not be tried, as the evidence against them was that of a 'civilised' Aborigines whose ignorance of the 'ordinances of religion' made his evidence non-acceptable! The seven charged, however, were ultimately found guilty and executed.

What happened at Myall Creek and the trials that followed illustrated the total disregard the squatters held for other human beings, who did not share their racial or social and economic interests. Only the second trial, instigated by the Attorney General, suggested that, although land theft was permissable by the agents of colonial authority, the wanton or calculated extermination of a 'whole race of blacks' was not. How influenced the Attorney General and the colonial government he represented was by the physical details of the massacre, or how influenced he was by the political, economic, and social implications involved in allowing squatter settlement to go unchecked, is not known. What is known is that squatter settlement was not controlled by this act and, in fact, continued uncontrolled for the rest of the century.

It should be noted that most Aborigines, however, possess little doubt over the Attorney General's real intentions:

> "He was not concerned with our welfare.... it was a political act in order to try and bring the squatters into line, by showing them they couldn't take the law into their own hands... it was an internal conflict about frontier control and the nature of settlement..."[45]

Some evidence for this view can be found in the formation of the Border Police just three months after the massacre. Under

the Border Police Act of March 1839, the local Commissioner possessed the power to control frontier expansion and to see that the laws of the colony were enforced on all frontiers. In accordance with the Select Committee's recommendation the Border Police were also responsible for the 'protection' of Aborigines, a police function which was not uncommon on most colonial frontiers.[46] At first the squatters were apprehensive, especially as a settler and squatter tax had to be levied in order to pay for the service, but as the Border Police began to pursue their duties with vigour, it was soon realised that only a thin line, if any, could be drawn between squatter 'extermination' and Police 'protection' policies. Under the banner of 'protection' the practice was to round up 'troublesome' Aborigines and 'take them to a quiet place in order to keep reprisal proceedings administratively clean' (Rowley, op cit. pp.38-43). The Inspector-General of police, when questioned by the Select Committee on the Native Police in 1856, stated:

> "The principle I have always endeavoured to carry out has been that <u>the duties of the Native Police ought to be confined to the protection of the white population</u> on the extreme limits of the frontier districts.
>
> "The principle I acted upon with them was to place the fullest and widest discretion in the hands of each officer, and to discourage and discountance referring to me for instructions. I looked to them for the proper management of men.... and for maintaining the peace of their respective districts, <u>holding them responsible for the exercise of a proper discretion</u>."[47]

W. Forster, another member of the Select Committee, expressed

the views of most witnesses and apparently the legislature when he argued that the acquisition of new country would be considerably slowed down and cost more lives without the Native Police: he thus had:

> "... very little hope of ever civilising the Aborigines (but the Police would) prevent collision between the whites and the blacks, such as invariably occur in taking up new country. The Native Police being on the spot... are able, not only to trace the real offenders with more certainty, but to inflict punishment more suddenly, and with greater effect, so as, in the end, to lead to loss of (white) life and fewer collisions..."[48]

This was a clear statement of the Native Police's rationale and actions, supported by the Select Committee, Squatters, and Police alike. As Aboriginal resistance was inevitable on the unoffical frontier, it would continue to be dealt with by military methods. Time spent on getting warrants, identification of so-called offenders, arrests, and the paraphernalia of 'due legal process' was a waste: summary justice and punishment had to be inflicted at once, 'or else the'natives' did not know what the punishment was for' (Rowley, op cit. p.41).

Thus the Native or Border Police not only became an effective military instrument of control but a supportive force for squatter aggression. It helped to legitimise squatter actions, and to make them normal and respectable. It also helped to resolve the conflict between squatter and settler views on frontier matters, for its very presence and actions tended to validate squatter claims that their border was the real frontier,

and all resistance groups of Aborigines should be exterminated. The relations thus established in this second type of squatter situation, like squatter 'rights' and 'beliefs', gradually became accepted as normal, the result of 'practical experience' on the frontier, which Sydney society knew nothing about.

(v) Protection Situations

The Border or Native Police, as we have seen, was the first official protection body, which interpreted its duties in a military way. Besides resorting to murder in an attempt to keep their proceedings administratively clean, they also favoured a policy of dispersal. Experience had led them to the conclusion that large gatherings of Aborigines were probably preparing raids on European property. In fact the common view of settlers, squatters, and colonial administrators was that:

> "... they never commit a depredation without a considerable degree of consultation and preparation among themselves; they have meetings and long talks over it."[49]

This, of course, was the reasoning which not only helped to justify attacks by the Native Police but which also led to the policy of dispersal. Such a policy hit at the very heart of Aboriginal social organisation and of the continuity of tradition in ceremonies, rituals, and corroborees. Later this policy gave way to one of establishing reservations for the dispersed groups similar in function to the prototype established on Gun Carriage and Flinders Island for 'the last Tasmanians'. So between 1838, the date of the first official protectorate at Port Phillip, and 1930, government appointed 'protectors' (The Police) and concerned individuals (mainly missionaries) attempted to protect, in the way they saw fit, Aborigines from the worst forms of physical abuse and deprivation.[50]

Victoria instituted its policy in 1860; South Australia in 1880; Western Australia in 1886, Queensland in 1897, and the Commonwealth for the Northern Territory, on the advice of Spencer and Gillen, in 1911. Throughout this period the Native Police

and other protectors rounded up Aborigines and forced them onto reservations and missions, 'where they could be taught to work in return for rations and clothing... and receive instructions in christianity' (Rowley, op cit.). This whole period, from an Aboriginal point of view, was no different from the preceeding one: massacre followed massacre, and, if anything, Aborigines had to resist more forcefully the concerted efforts of those who wished to 'protect' them. From the Battle of Pinjarra in 1834, to the war in the Centre in 1900 where Aboriginal resistance 'had something of the character of a struggle for life itself' (Rowley, op cit.), or to the last battle in Queensland in 1948 where Aboriginal resisters were neck-chained together and marched off to the reservation, the story of European social aggression and Aboriginal resistance was much the same.

What differed, and therefore distinguished protection situations from others discussed was the now articulated ideology which determined and justified actions, and hence the relations which rapidly became institutionalised in the form and meaning of the reservation, mission, and government settlement. The undeclared war had, at long last, become evangelised: under the joint banners of christian charity and moral responsibility, or what McGuiness, in another context calls 'the mask of racism', all European efforts had become directed towards the physical and social containment of Aborigines on 'inviolable reserves', not for the colonists' benefit, but 'for their own good'. What the Border Police had achieved in the squatter situation, colonial christianity, an indispensable institution for colonial justification, achieved in the protection situation, the social and moral respectability of the racist war.

By 1930 there were over 250 reservations in existence, and

by 1973 this number had increased to approximately 350, covering a total area of 541,300 square kilometres; all of which are to be found in inaccessible and largely barren areas - Palm Island, Bathurst Island, Melville Island, Groote Eyland, Coker Island, and so on - a further indication that protection in practice also meant separation[51]. Treated as convicts, and 'in the name of the Lord', Aborigines were wrenched away from their country and communities, dumped into a social prison from which there was no escape, and, 'protected', left to survive as best they could. The 'nests of pests' had been removed, leaving the country vacant for settlement and economic exploitation, and, for the majority, settler relations were, after more than a century of frontier war, harmonious. But this did not mean the end, as is often supposed, of Aboriginal resistance; it meant that resistance had been removed from the frontier and re-situated in the reservation where it could be more effectively controlled. As Elkin points out, protection policies, manifested in the form of reservations, not only failed to ensure Aboriginal survival or protect them from harsh treatment, but also failed to subdue resistance (Elkin, 1964, p.367). He concludes that:

> "Atrocities, protests, and inquiries were frequent. Every now and then some white man... acted in a high-handed manner, which resulted in resentment and clash. Or the same result was caused by an Aboriginal young man trying to presume on a white newcomer.... Further, the attitude was deeply entrenched amongst most white settlers, townsfolk, (and protectors) that the Aborigines were an inferior race, to be used or abused, and at best to be regarded paternally as amiable adjuncts to one's station".

A further element in the protection situation concerned settler economic and social interests. The idea of reserving Aboriginal land for Aboriginal purposes, where Aborigines could be protected and taught christian principles, thus only became a secondary consideration. Coranderrk reservation, for example, was established in 1863, and by 1866 it had been extended to cover 4,850 acres. After being made a 'permanent' reservation in 1884, the government in 1886 found it necessary to legislate in order to exclude 'part' Aborigines from care and protection, rendering them ineligible to reside on Aboriginal reserves and, thus, having the effect of forcing most of the able-bodied men to leave Coranderrk. In 1893, the Crown Lands Reserve Act exercised 2,400 acres from the 'permanent' reserve for a European settlement. When the reserve was officially closed in 1924 to make way for a further white settlement, all but a handful of aged Aboriginal residents were forcibly transferred to the Lake Tyers reserve in Gippsland. By 1927, another 78 acres had been alienated for a fauna reserve (which today is a well-known tourist attraction), and 622 acres for other purposes. The last resident died in 1941, and the remaining land was revoked in 1948 by the Coranderrk Lands Bill. Today only the cemetary and a memorial plaque remain.

Many other examples of legalised dispossession - the removing of Aborigines from their own country, placing them on so-called Government owned land, and then reclaiming this land back for white settlement - are to be found. At Goulbourn over 50 square miles were designated as 'Aboriginal land' in 1840, but by 1858, the reserve lands were reclaimed in order to make way for European settlement. The Aborigines were forcibly transferred to smaller and more remote reservations, like the one on Rottnest Island, which also doubled up as a penal colony. But, even this island, twenty miles off the

coast of Western Australia, was neither 'protected' nor 'permanent': by the 1930s the Perth European community required a leisure park, so Rottnest Island became the thriving tourist and leisure centre it is today, and the Aborigines were moved on. At the turn of the century Weipa, situated in tropical Queensland, was a mission with more than 500 square miles; today, after the 'uranium rush', it occupies just over one square mile. The same story of legalised dispossession is to be heard at Tennant Creek, Palm Island, Arnhem Land, Gove, Halls Creek, Mapoon, and many other so-called 'permanent and 'inviolable' reserves.

What this signifies, within the protection situation, is the relative unimportance attached to Aboriginal social life, land claims, and the future of Aboriginal society, as compared with the importance of European economic and social expansion. In other words 'protection' lasts as long as there is no 'need' for the limited lands on which Aborigines are being 'protected'. What began as an organised exercise to clear Aborigines off the land required for settlement and economic exploitation, has ended with the domination and oppression of the now numerical black minority. Racist beliefs, which have underpinned each of the five situations discussed, and the actions which differentiated one from another, have, within the social setting of the reservation, become institutionalised; and the struggle for existence has resulted, because of superior military power, in a pattern of dominant European relations.

NOTES

1. Booby McLeod, op cit., p.4.

2. From an interview on the 8th September 1974 with Eddie Maybo, the President of the Townsville Black Community School.

3. A.P. Elkin, Reaction and Interaction: A Food-Gathering People and European Settlement in Australia, American Anthropologist, Vol 53, 1951, pp.164-186.

4. C.W.M. Hart and Arnold R. Pilling, The Tiwi of North Australia, pp. 9-10.

5. The Walbiri peoples, amongst other Aborigines, are well known for their hostility and resistance to other groups, white or black; in fact they see themselves as the only Aboriginal tribe in Central Australia. For further elaboration on this and a sociological portrait of their society see M.J. Meggitt's Desert People. Additionally, complicated rules in all Aboriginal tribes determine the boundaries of 'country', which were established by the ancestral beings during the Dreamtime. To extend beyond the traditional boundary is tantamount to suicide, as it would inevitably mean confrontation with evil and hostile spirits. A high degree of isolation was therefore experienced by most tribes.

6. Elkin sees definite stages or phases in Aboriginal adaptation to European society. First a tentative approach is made, which is followed by either incipient or actual 'clash'. The outcome of this is Aboriginal pauperism, and then through a process of intelligent parasitism, the fourth stage, the Aborigine gradually learns to appreciate intelligently his new situation, and proceeds via

this fifth stage of intelligent appreciation to the final stage of either guarded or intelligent assimilation. Both facts, like the one that nearly 50% of all Aborigines are living, as far as they can on reservations, in a traditional way, and Aboriginal views tend to render Elkin's theory 'tentative', if not meaningless.

7. From an interview on the 12th August, 1974, with an Aborigine living on Hermansburg Mission in Central Australia.

8. See Race and Culture by Robert E. Park, who argues, not unlike Elkin, that contact is followed by competition, which in turn is succeeded by a phase of accommodation before reaching the desired stage of assimilation. As Mason points out, 'it does not seem illuminating to apply such a scheme to South Africa, where the succession was contact - war - domination; still less to Tasmania where it was even simpler - contact followed by extermination' (Mason, 1970, p.55). Part Two, and particularly Chapter IV, pp.54-65, of Mason's book, Patterns of Dominance provide a useful summary of contact literature in race relations. Michael Banton's chapters on Race as a Role Sign, and Contact, Symbiosis, and Acculturation in his book Race Relations is also a useful starting point. Both authors take up the question of whether contact can occur without conflict, which was believed, and still is believed by many Australians, and both suggest that, with the possible exception of symbiotic contacts, it is highly unlikely. For examples, and an exposition of the contact without conflict thesis see Robert Refield, Culture Contact Without Conflict, American Anthropologist, 1939, vol.41, pp 514-17, and John Gillen, Race Relations Without Conflict:

A Guatemalan Town, 1948, American Journal of Sociology 53, pp.337-43. For an analysis and in depth study of the sociology of contact, Rene Maunier's two volumes on The Sociology of Colonies: An Introduction to the Study of Race Contact, should be consulted.

9. Like many other scholars, Maunier too attempts to trace the various stages of contact. He lists three - infiltration, penetration, and association. He then goes on to list the four main methods which the French employed as rulers to engineer or impose social relationships: spontaneous, engineered, imposed, and forbidden contact. He concludes by stating that 'Nowadays, in France and the French Empire, we find a new social scheme emerging and taking shape. This is social contact between equals - egalitarian contact - arising from the partnership established between the two populations' (p.433). Although one cannot help but to agree with E.O. Lorimer, the translator, when he comments that forbidden contact, as a method of imposing social relationships, 'is a refreshing if unintentional Irish Bull', Maunier's work is nevertheless a useful contribution to the sociology of race contact.

10. The Meston Report was published in 1889, which recommended the establishment of reservations and missions, and the abolition of the Native Police; this Report proved the most decisive in the history of Aboriginal Affairs in Queensland, and formed the basis of Queensland legislation from the first act in December, 1897 - An Act to make Provision for the better Protection and Care of the Aboriginal and Half-Caste Inhabitants of the Colony, and to make more effectual Provision for Restricting the Sale and Distribution of Opium - to the current Aborigines Act, 1971, and Torres Strait Islanders Act,

1971.

11. Quoted in Alan Moorehead, op cit., p.105.

12. See The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery, vols. 1 and 11, ed J.C. Beaglehole, Cambridge University Press, 1961.

13. From an interview with Vince Copley on 23rd July, 1974.

14. Quoted in A. Barrie Pittock, Aboriginal Land Rights, p.7.

15. Moorehead gives a very literary account of the impact of European culture on indigenous groups; he argues that it was fatal and unavoidable. Although he treats his subject 'sympathetically', and urges the reader to do the same, he does tend to rationalise and even excuse each major event he describes. For example, he justifies the turtle incident on the grounds that the crew needed fresh meat in order to continue the voyage, but, as turtles, kangaroos, and other forms of meat were plentiful in the region of the Endeavour River, the argument of need is not convincing enough to explain why the crew were not prepared to share the turtle meat with the local Aborigines. Moorehead assumes that the crew's mission, the discovery of new lands for the King of England, should take precedence over the crews' behaviour, and, thus, the 'greatness' of the mission is the thing that matters. Further, he tends to dismiss Aboriginal reaction to the incident as the behaviour of spoilt children. Although he sees the incident as an example of the kind of conflict that was to follow, there is little doubt, ultimately, with whom he expects his readers to identify.

16. From an interview on 28th July with an Aboriginal student of

history and sociology: John Elliot.

17. R.M. Younger, Australia and the Australians: A New Concise History, Robert Hale and Co., 1969. Along with Rowley's books op cit., we have drawn much of the historical material contained in this chapter from Younger, whose concise history of nearly 1000 pages covers the two hundred years since settlement.

18. Elliot, op.cit.

19. Stanner, After the Dreaming, op cit.

20. Elliot, op cit.

21. Quoted in Younger, op cit., p.72

22. Stanner, op cit., p.10.

23. From an interview with a Tasmanian in Canberra on 5th October, 1974 at the National Aboriginal Australian Rules Football Carnival. The descendents of the first Tasmanians organised a team to take part in the Carnival.

24. David Davies, The Last of the Tasmanians, London, 1973. Dr. Davies account is one of the few modern accounts of the Tasmanian 'tragedy' which does not attempt to rationalise events. The object of his book is 'to tell the tale of sorrows..., how the war between the weak and the strong brought all prevailing power to one, but eventual extinction to the other...' (p.10).

25. Rowley, op cit. p.44.

26. See N.J.B. Plomley (ed), Friendly Mission: The Tasmanian journals and Papers of George Augustus Robinson 1829-1834.

27. Plomley, op. cit. p.24

28. Rowley, op cit., p.45, but based upon the entries in Robinson's journal.

29. For a detailed historical account of the Tasmanian tragedy see Clive Turnbull, Black War: The Extermination of the Tasmanian Aborigines. This is by far the best general account available.

30. The most well known of all Tasmanian resisters was not a Tasmanian. Mosquito was a mainland Aborigine from the Broken Bay Tribe, who, with an associate named 'Bulldog', had been convicted and imprisoned for the rape and murder of a pregnant English convict. After serving most of his sentence on Norfolk Island, he was sent to the convict Island of Tasmania in 1813, There he became a police tracker employed to track bushrangers, a task for which 'he was particularly well suited' and 'showed exceptional acuteness of sense' (Davies, p.103). Eventually he met up with the Oyster Bay Tribe who insisted that if he wished to remain with them, he would have to become fully initiated into the tribe. This he did, and it was not until four years later, after he had become accepted, and after he had learnt what the struggle was about, that he rose as a prominent leader. Then, 'he and his people kept the land in a state of terror. An old settler gave many vivid impressions of his activities, one being the horrible death of a woman and her daughter at the Ouse River... they spared neither age nor sex, the old woman and the helpless child alike fell victims to their ferocity... (but) owing to their extremely cunning activities, and their cat-like nature, retaliation was all but impossible...' (Quoted in Davies, p.105).

31. Davies, op cit., p.112.

32. A Robinson diary entry, quoted in Davies, op cit. p.64.

33. Quoted in Davies, op cit., p.66; but also see John West, History of Tasmania, 2 vols., 1852

34. Quoted in Davies, op cit. p.69

35. Quoted in Davies, op cit., p.117

36. Arthur W. Jose, History of Australia, pp.85-6

37. The English names of the Tasmanian tribes were: North Western Tribe, North Eastern Tribe, Ben Lomand Tribe, Stoney Creek Tribe, Western Tribe, Big River Tribe, Southern Tribe, and the Oyster Bay Tribe.

38. Rowley, op cit., p.52.

39. Rowley, op cit., p.52,

40. These 'mutual contracts' often formed the basis of labour relations in the interior and northern parts of the continent, where it was impossible to attract European settlement, because of the desert or tropical climates. Cattle stations could not have existed without Aboriginal stockmen; railway lines across desert country could not have been built without Aboriginal navvies; the land could not have been 'explored' without Aboriginal trackers; and so on. Thus 'contracts' or 'treaties' which, initially, at least, were seen to be based on 'equitable principles' were an essential pre-requisite for the expansion and eventual settlement of outback regions. Even today over 80% of the labour employed on cattle stations, the railway, the cane fields, and 'prospect' mines in these regions is Aboriginal. Only large mining concerns bring in expensive outside white labour...

41. Quoted in S.H. Roberts, op cit., p.168.

42. Barrie-Pittock, op cit., p.13.

43. Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements), 1837, No.425: Report Evidence and Appendix, House of Commons, London. This Committee was set up to examine means of protecting civil rights and imparting civilisation and christianity. For the Australian colonies, it recommended missionaries for the 'natives', protectors for their defense, the reservation of hunting grounds, schooling, and special codes of law to protect Aborigines until they learnt to live within the framework of British Law. It should be noted here that 'protection' meant special legislation, and, consequently, a special separate status defined in law, which, in turn, placed Aborigines at the discretion and mercy of the protecting agencies! For Darwin's reaction to what he found on the mainland and in Tasmania, see The Voyage of the Beagle. He sums his experience up with the words: "Farewell, Australia! you are a rising child, and doubtless some day will reign a great princess in the south: but you are too great and ambitious for affection, yet not great enough for respect. I leave your shores without sorrow or regret" (p.434).

44. Rowley, op cit., p.33

45. Elliot, op cit.

46. The Border Police soon became known as the Native Police, as, firstly, they were concerned with the control of Aboriginal activities, and, secondly, to assist in this work, they tended to recruit a number of Aboriginal trackers and assistants. The parallels here with the colonial police in Africa, India, and the West Indies are quite striking; the strategy employed of divide and rule is also familiar.

47. The evidence of W.C. Mayne, the Inspector-General of Police, to the Select Committee on the Native Police Force is quoted in Rowley, op cit., p.40.

48. See Rowley, op cit., p.41 for a fuller statement of W. Forster's evidence.

49. A further part of Forster's evidence; see Rowley, op cit., p.42.

50. Of course the question which arises here is - Who is or was an Aborigine? For an account of the complicated laws on the definition of Aborigines, which, incidentally, varied not only from state to state, but also within states, see Appendix A and B, Rowley, op cit.

51. See J.P.M. Long's study, Aboriginal Settlements: A survey of Institutional Communities in Eastern Australia for an 'objective account of reservation life; but for an account largely written from an Aboriginal perspective consult John Tomlinson's Institutionalisation: A Way of Life in Aboriginal Australia.

CHAPTER THREE: RESISTANCE

> "We have been fighting for the right to exist ever since Cook invaded our country; today we are still fighting...."[1]

To Aborigines, it is clear that resistance occured in in both the immediate and distant past. Sometimes it was organised, involving whole tribes (Mosquito and Benelong's campaigns); at other times it appeared unorganised, only involving a small number of Aborigines in cattle station raids and grass burning sprees. But, why resistance occured, it is not yet clear. On a simple level it could be said that Aboriginal resistance was just a reaction to colonial invasion and rule; the defence of territory and the assertion of the right to live undisturbed. Superficially valid, it does not explain either why resistance has continued, long after the confiscation of Aboriginal land, or why Aborigines in Tasmania and other parts of the continent fought until death. It would have been reasonable to expect that the 'vanquished enemies' would have arrived at a point where they considered resistance futile (Wagley and Harris, 1964, p.265)[2]. But this point, if one ever really exists, was neither reached during the nineteenth nor the twentieth century for many Aborigines. Not only is this obvious from a survey of current resistance activities - Wattie Creek, Manningrida, the Aboriginal Embassy, Kullaluk, and Yirrkala - but it is also apparent in the views expressed by most Aborigines[3]. For instance, an elder involved in the Kullaluk struggle put it like this:

> "(If) we not fight, we die... my people here, in this country long time, before whiteman come ... we belong here, we fight... (If) we sit on arse, we not Aborigine, we fight, we Aborigine ....."[4].

To understand this view, in depth, we need to recall the story of Eingana, the earth Mother who made the country and populated it with Aborigines. Through this story Aborigines are taught the 'meaning' of life which, more complex than the words indicate, is to care for all that Eingana made. Through this process of 'care' comes group image, respect, and purpose. But once the ways to 'care' become endangered or even destroyed (by European actions), the group-image, respect, and purpose associated with being an Aborigine also become threatened. The Kullaluk elder thus has no choice but to believe that if 'we not fight, we die'. To resist means to exist.

The importance, therefore, of statements of intent - statements which are constructed to convey imperatively a notion of past, present, or future resistive action - as source material for analysis, is quite obvious. Where the difficulty arises is in assessing the truthfulness of these statements, as symbolic or actual expressions of 'doing' and 'being'. How does the researcher know, for example, that the Kullaluk Aborigines will 'die' if they do not 'fight'? As well as relying heavily on actors' views and interpretations as being essentially truthful, a position we adopted in the Introduction, a further check is required - namely, a method to establish the frequency of assertions. The one employed here has been the observational technique of 'other-verification'. If the majority of

Kullaluk Aborigines believed, as they did, that they would die if they did not 'fight', then this view or belief has been recorded here not only as being truthful, but as containing a high degree of projected truth, based upon the knowledge of what has happened to other Aboriginal communities who have failed or unsuccessfully offered effective resistance. For statements of fact the methodological process is much the same. The only difference is that other material can be obtained - newspaper articles, official reports, and so on, which some sociologists consider to be more dependable and 'objective' - to corroborate the truthfulness or not of actors' statements. Our thesis, then, that Aboriginal resistance is socially defined and constructed, therefore relies more heavily on qualitative rather than quantitative methods, and treatment of material. To rely on the latter rather than the former would, we believe, fail to establish the social nature of resistance, as well as having the effect of alienating the actors' world, for the purposes of analysis, from the actors that make up that world.

If employed, such an approach would tend to contradict both commonsense knowledge, derived from intelligent observation and the actor's own conception of the real world. For example, the process of historical re-interpretation, or an Aboriginal view of history since Cook's so-called 'discovery', would be, more likely than not, missed (or mis-read) as an essential part in the defining of self or group image. An over-reliance on the facts, as recorded by Euroaustralian historians and social scientists, would militate against such an explanation: either another explanation would be sought which did not conflict with 'recorded history', or it would

be treated as an interesting piece of psychologism. Its social significance or suggestion that Australian history has not, in fact, been accurately recorded would be no doubt lost. We would suggest that the method used here, not only takes into account these possibilities, but also hints at others.

From Aboriginal statements, as opposed to Euroaustralian historical documents, it would seem that to minimise Aboriginal resistance or to imply that it never existed is much the same as saying: "We never existed'. Evident in the Kullaluk view above is the belief in a history of Aboriginal resistance since white colonisation, a belief which is partly gounded in the resistive incidents cited in the last chapter. It would also seem that this belief is necessary for the protection and generation of self and group respect:

> "We can't just let them take everything; our ancestors fought them hard for what little we still have.... if we let go of that, we have nothing; we would be a truly lost people..."[5]

Most Aborigines, then, see their lives in terms of resistance: their Aboriginality (identity) depends upon it. Although this helps to explain the importance of resistance in everyday life, it does not, however, take us very far with our analysis. Besides a statement of views, a closer look at the nature of European authority, actions, and the meanings they possess for Aborigines is also required.

Authority and Actions

It will be remembered that in the Introduction it was suggested that all resistance is directed against authority. Here, then, we need to elaborate on the nature of that authority and, just as importantly, what it means to the Aborigine. Firstly, it would seem that Weber's three types of authority - charismatic, traditional, and rational/legal - are useful idealisations and analytical concepts which may help to identify different aspects of authority in a homogeneous, even 'ideal', society, but in a colonial society, where the social and racial origins of the colonists and indigenous groups are different, it is difficult to see their relevance[6]. They can only suggest which kind or type of authority predominates in the metropolitan society. For it seems that what Blaney calls the 'tyranny of distance', the physical and social distance between the metropolitan and colonial base, tends to change the nature and, indeed, the symbolic representation of authority in the colonial society[7]. For example, the symbolic badges of authority in metropolitan society - uniforms, flags, crests, and so on - are not sufficient to secure compliance in a colonial situation, as the colonised lack the kind of socialisation needed to understand their symbolic importance. Further, where there is no need either to invoke sanctions or present reasoned cases for demanding compliance in a metropolitan society, this is invariably not the case in colonial situations. Sanctions have to be invoked, and with physical and social distance, the base on which authority rests gradually begins to change. Summary orders and regulations, arising out of <u>in situ</u> experience, rather than colonial principles and law (rational/legal),

practice and convention (traditional), or the extra-ordinary quality of a specific metropolitan leader (charismatic), many thousands of miles away, characterise the nature of colonial authority.

In other words, what Weber terms Herrshaft ('imperative control') can only be exercised and understood by the Herrschaftsverband, or 'imperatively controlled group'[8]. The indigenous group, a different Herrschaftsverband altogether, neither understands nor accepts the legitimacy of colonial authority. It remains outside their experience, until operationalised and directed towards goal achievement. At this point, when, for example, Phillip decided to expand the geographical area and social perimeters of contact with coastal Aborigines, it became real. The colonial intentions of settlement became recognisable; the 'settlers' became 'invaders'; and their actions constituted a threat to Aboriginal future well-being. As soon as authority became externalised, used to gain Aboriginal compliance, all colonial actions became ideologised, and immediately meaningful to the indigenous group. It was not authority itself, then, but the organised actions which conveyed authority that produced reactions.

Immediate and relateable meaning for the resister is consequently located in the action or doing, and it is these actions which produce responses. The question - why do you think whites behave in the way they do? - brings the reply:

> "We don't know what they says, we knows what they do... they takes my peoples land, and makes bad this country for we...."[9].

A more conceptualised answer becomes:

> "They wish to dominate us; they've stolen our land, raped our women, killed off as many of us as they could, and are now in the process, on the reservations and missions, of trying to destroy our culture...."[10]

Both responses are grounded in the results of actions. Even the conceptualised version is made more meaningful by emphasising the doing. Theft, rape, murder, and the actions of missionaries and reservation officials tend to challenge established beliefs and threaten or, even partially, destroy some of the social institutions which make up Aboriginal life. It would appear that it is at this point, on the resistance threshold, that colonial actions become meaningful and evoke resistance.

<u>Meaning</u>

Two factors seem to be at play here. Firstly, the action is only rendered meaningful because it possesses the quality of 'relatedness'. That is, the action impinges upon Aboriginal interpretation of self, which, in turn, is related to the universe, nature, or ultimate reality. European land acquisition therefore becomes a relateable series of actions directed against an Aborigine's concept of self; and the use to which the land is put offends or, even, degrades Aboriginal perception of self. Actions which evolve from a European culturally structured situation become, if they possess relevance, interpreted within the framework of another (Aboriginal) culturally structured situation, and it is this process of relevant interpretation which yields meaning.

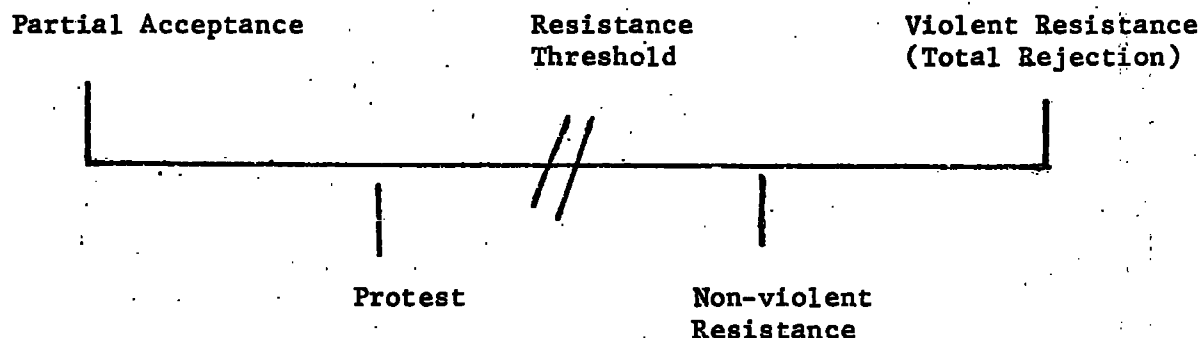
The second factor is that, for most Aborigines, meaning is a collective realisation of the thing to be understood; that is, for an action to possess meaning it must be relateable to the combined and accumulative experience of 'my people'. If it lacks this quality then it is rendered alien and irrelevant. So Tiwi 'us-ness' or Aboriginal 'we-ness' is in fact a social expression of the collective experience which is 'community'. Similarly, our example of land acquisition contains meaning because the consequences of the actions which led up to it affect not the individual, but the community. In fact, all subjective and individual forms of meaning tend to be non-existent, only occurring amongst those Aborigines who 'mingle with a different crowd'; who have become rootless, disengaged from the cultural world of tradition based Aborigines. 'We knows... they take my peoples' land, and make bad this country for we', or '(If) we not fight, we die... we belong here, we fight...' are thus statements made meaningful by their 'we-ness' and 'relatedness'.

Response

Once European actions become meaningful, Aboriginal reactions or responses will, as we have seen, range from partial acceptance (the reactions to Dampier and Cook's actions in the tentative approach contact situations) to the violent rejection of colonial authority (Mosquito's reactions in the martial contact situation). These could be plotted at each end of a continuum of responses, and somewhere in between would fall partial acceptance with protest and non-violent resistance (see Figure 1). The resistance threshold would, in all

probability, arise at that point when European actions possess internal consequences for the well-being of community; that is, when actions symbolise a covert or overt challenge to the social institutions of 'my country', 'dreamtime', and 'community'.

Figure 1: Responses to Authority



The major problem with the above continuum is that it tends to reduce a range of actions, which possess varied forms, to one dimension. According to Carl Friedrich, 'continuous resistance occurs in two primary forms, partial and total.... (and it) may be organised or spontaneous, continuous or sporadic ...' (Carl Friedrich, 1963, pp.635-36)[11]. From examples of resistance already discussed, our findings not only support Friedrich's general conclusion, but also show that, although the overall goal is to resist colonial authority, the specific goals are internally and socially defined - the defence or rediscovery of 'my country', 'dreamtime', and 'community'. The means employed to achieve these goals may be of a non-violent nature, as in the case of Aborigines refusing to work or cooperate with the reservation management, or they may be violent. We have also seen that the mode of occurrence can be spontaneous (the turtle incident), or organised (the Black War in Tasmania); and that the

resisters may be few or many. Resistance behaviour, then, can be so varied that a one-dimensional illustration of responses to authority cannot adequately take into account all these attributes. A more sophisticated analytical device is required, and so towards the end of this chapter we shall attempt to present a typology of resistance, but, before we proceed with its construction, we need to establish more precisely what Aborigines mean by resistance.

Resistance

In our Introduction we attempted to delineate between the two concepts - protest and resistance. In a general way we stated that:

> "... resistance shall be viewed ... as culturally grounded social and political behaviour directed against European authority, which either seeks its limitation or eventual destruction. Further, where protest behaviour is essentially considered to be a normal part of political activity, resistance behaviour is largely not; where protest is based upon and located within a shared cultural framework, resistance springs from a different cultural base from that of those in authority; and where protest behaviour is generally directed towards policy change, resistance behaviour is designed and organised against the authority of policy makers."[12]

This clarifies the differences between the two concepts, but it does not clearly define what is meant by resistance. Before our concept can possess any sociological relevance beyond that already stated, we need to see what Aborigines mean when they say they are resisting, or engaging in acts of resistance.

From the material we have used so far, and, more clearly from the material on which the following three chapters - 'My Country', 'Dreamtime', and 'Community' - are based, we can isolate several social components. The first is what we have already called the social relevance of colonial actions, expressed in statements like:

> "We know they mean we no good ... they put big airport on Kangaroo meeting place... that place my peoples' spirit place... we don't like..."[13]

> "They take our doggies away for big house... we fight all them bad things..."[14]

> "They climb Ullurho... that's my peoples' big spirit place; we keep eye now all day and night..."[15]

All three statements amount to expressions of the social relevance of colonial actions. The Kangaroo meeting place, which is now Alice Springs Airport, was, a few years ago, the meeting and corroboree place of the Aranda people; the rocks and boulders (the doggies) which were quarried for the foundations of the Gap Road estate physically represent the Dog Dreaming; and Ullurho, known to Europeans as Ayers Rock, named after its so-called discoverer, is the central spiritual home for many Aborigines. Aboriginal reactions are today organised through the Central Australian Aborigines Congress which, as a body of tradition and urban-based Aborigines, is attempting to resist further misuse of the Kangaroo meeting place, the quarrying of foundation stones from the Dog Dreaming rocks, and the climbing of Ullurho[16]. With some success, Congress, in conjunction with local Aboriginal communities, have organised traditionally armed (spears, boomerangs, and nulla-nullas) vigilante groups at each of the places mentioned. The social relevance of both colonial actions and Aboriginal resistance has

been summed up by Congress's General Secretary as follows:

> "What the whites don't understand is that every action they commit or policy they pursue is directed at the heart of Aboriginal culture; they don't understand this because they don't want to know anything about Aboriginal society and culture... And when we resist, stand up and fight for what we believe, and for what's important to us, their lack of understanding becomes total - they reply, 'they're only rocks', 'it's just a tourist attraction', or 'it's only a dry, large open plain, suitable for an airport site but nothing else!'... You see what I mean?"[17]

The social relevance factor alone, however, is not sufficient to invoke resistive action: it only constitutes a vital pre-condition. Embedded in the above statement, and expressed in the words - 'what we believe' - is a second component, namely that of the ideological significance of actions. If actions possess social relevance, in as much that they can be understood within the cultural structure of Aboriginal society, but lack ideological significance then resistance will not occurr. Further, the ideological component of colonial actions must be seen to be directed against Aboriginal beliefs; that is Aborigines must believe that one or more of their beliefs is either being undermined, as in the above illustrations, or consciously threatened. The most obvious examples of this can be found on nearly any mission, where many missionaries are attempting to supplant Aboriginal spiritual beliefs (religion) with what they consider to be more superior and truthful ones (Christianity). Aware of this ideological intention, three years ago, many Aborigines on the Hermannsberg Lutheran Mission in Central Australia refused to attend church and participate in Mission functions. The missionaries reacted by withholding

food rations and other welfare benefits. As the Aborigines still continued to resist Mission authority, the missionaries stepped up their campaign to secure Aboriginal compliance until eventually non-violent resistance gave way to violent rioting, looting, and assaults. Today, the Superintendant, Pastor Paul Albrecht admits that:

> "In the past we did many evil things, but nowadays we're trying to compensate for some of these misdeeds. For example, for nearly a century, we didn't understand, or even attempt to understand Aboriginal beliefs. Three years ago none of us, apart from myself, could speak any of the languages, but today all our Pastors are learning languages, the sociology of Aboriginal social organisation, and the beliefs and principles of Aboriginal religious life... the very things we've been attempting to destroy over the last century... Certainly, in the past we were not being good Christians - in fact, we were possessed by the Devil - but I'm convinced that things are much better today, although I'm no longer certain that we have the right to deny legitimacy to their religious beliefs..."[18]

As well as many current examples (see Mullard, 1974: and Chapters 4, 5 and 6 here), the reactions of Colby and Benelong, after their kidnaps in the 1780s and 90s, were based upon the ideological significance Phillip's actions possessed.[19] It can be assumed with some accuracy, as Stanner points out, that they instinctively and consciously (violently) rejected the attempt to 'civilise' and 'Christianise' them, as they could feel and see the implications this held for their people (Stanner, 1969, pp.8-9)[20].

The distinction between the socially relevant and ideologically significant component in colonial actions is an important one. In the former case, colonial actions may be understood by Aborigines as

being neutral, or even beneficial - that is, they neither conflict with the social and moral principles which govern Aboriginal social life, nor do they encroach upon the way Aborigines act out their social life. A common example of this kind of action can be seen in the Bore Water Campaign in the desert country, which, ostensibly, is aimed at increasing the water supply. Aborigines see and understand this kind of action as being both relevant to and beneficial for the way in which they organise their social affairs. However, if it is accompanied with the colonial intention of displacement, as is the case at Weipa and Mapoon, its status changes. The ideological component is recognised, or, more accurately, the intention to mine 'spiritual sites', exploit 'sacred' land, and substitute a capitalist system of production for the former communal system are the things which are recognised, and, also, are the things which, at Weipa and Mapoon, influenced Aboriginal actions. At Weipa they decided not to avail themselves of the new services, whereas at Mapoon they modified their former practice. Instead of all going to the mission for provisions and water, they devised a rota system which allowed for the collection of essential provisions without forfeiting their residential rights or vacating their land. Although the strategies employed are interesting in themselves, and worthy of further study, the point we wish to make here is that in both cases Aborigines recognised the ideological significance of colonial actions and oriented their behaviour accordingly. The qualitative difference between actions which are only socially relevant and those which contain both components - social relevance and ideological significance - is thus of analytical and practical importance. It leads us tentatively to the conclusion that if actions possess both components, there is a high probability, once activated, that the response will be resistive.

A third component, the thing that activates or triggers off a response, makes all the difference between acts which could be termed resistive and those which are not. No matter how socially relevant or ideologically significant colonial actions may be, the response will not be resistive unless it is seen that they contain threat potential. By this is meant the ability to destroy partially or completely an integral aspect of Aboriginal social life; the beliefs or the institutions which house them that are central to the maintenance of group identity or Aboriginality. Once such threat potential exists in conjunction with the other two factors, resistance will occur. If, for instance, those in charge of the Bore Water Campaign insisted, with the threat or use of force, that the Weipa and Mapoon Aborigines had to remain around the bore holes, so that their land could be mined, this would have seriously affected traditional life, and triggered off resistance. The importance of this trigger factor can be seen also in the following extracts:

> "We don't mind what they do, as long as they don't interfere with the way we do things, like they're doing on some of the missions..."[21]
>
> "When they comes and stops initiation, we make big noise...we now does it in bush..."[22]
>
> "We fight because they don't leave us alone; they take our kids to school, and tell them our ways wrong ways; they try to make us work, but we go bush on our business; they stop some of our things so we fight whiteman; we not go in house, because we no camp fire there..."[23]

To sum up, then, we can see that, as well as the general points on resistance made in the Introduction and at the beginning of this section, resistive actions (which, more often than not, are reactions)

will only occur when colonial actions are seen to be socially relevant, ideologically significant, and potentially threatening: in other words, Aboriginal resistance can be defined as culturally grounded responses to the authority contained in colonial actions which possess social relevance, ideological significance, and threat potential. (Although it is not our intention here to offer a universally applicable definition of resistance, comparisons, we feel, could be made with the African anti-colonial movements in the 1950s and 1960s, the Ghetto-based political wing of the Negro-American movement, and the various 'grass-root' black movements in Britain).

A Typology of Resistance

Inherent in our definition, and all that has been said about resistance so far, is the idea that resistive acts are goal-directed. Several scholars have questioned this assumption, and it seems that the three main criticisms concerning the goal-directedness of resistance should be discussed before attempting to construct a typology which, hopefully, will help us make further sense of both resistance examples already discussed, and those we shall be discussing in the next three chapters.

Posed by Bell, the first criticism is based on the notion that as resister intentionality is often assumed, then could not this assumption violate common-sense knowledge (Bell, 1973, p.61)? Or, to put it more plainly, could not there exist the possibility that resistance is really irrational? In other words, resistance is no more than a response to emotions such as hatred or fear. On a superficial level this may often seem to be the case, but the more searching question which this criticism begs is why fear or

hatred? As emotions do not just float around outside individual actions, they must be related to experience, albeit subjective; and consequently, to the individual, all emotions, in a limited sense, are rational. Short of becoming involved in a lengthy socio-philosophical discussion on the nature of rationality and its ideological implications, it would seem that what one distinct cultural group (the colonists) view as rational behaviour could be quite different from another (the Aborigines), and vice versa, as both groups possess entirely different social rules which define rationality and hence normal behaviour. Further the criticism, which is essentially telelogical, could be confusing cause with effect, or strategy with reasons. Another indication of its invalidity would be Aboriginal statements themselves: although hatred for the colonists forms a part of them, it would invariably appear that the reasons given are real, experiential, and rational - land theft, rape, social and legal controls, and so on.

Secondly, it is also argued that resistance is a manifestation of inarticulate and barely conscious discontent. This view, which underlies Hobsbaum's conception of 'primitive rebellion', includes the notion that resistance lacks developed ideological justification (Hobsbaum, 1959)[25]. What we have already shown, and part of the purpose of the following chapters is to show that, in the Aboriginal context, this is hardly the case, for sufficiently developed ideological grounds for resistance are to be found not only in traditional beliefs, but also in Aboriginal world views; views which have been forged out of experience since colonisation.

The third and final criticism is that resistance cannot be directed against authority, as such a thing is non-existent; or, if it exists, it is so fragmented and ambiguous that it becomes unidentifiable. Authority *per se*, indeed, may be

abstract, but this is not the same as saying that it does not exist; in fact we see it as concrete, organised, and immediately identifiable in a single or set of interrelated actions. For example, the chain of command and the actions associated with each link that eventually led up to the Demarcation Proclaimation in Tasmania was an authority system, and the real purpose of the Proclaimation was to squash resistance and to establish what the colonists considered to be legitimate control (authority) or what Weber terms Herrschaft throughout the island, so that capitalism could be efficiently organised. A more topical example can be seen in the actions of the Hermansberg missionaries who attempted to compel Aborigines to attend church and adopt Christian beliefs. Here the action to withhold food and other welfare benefits constituted an authority statement; the expression of superior power and ability to demand, with force, Aboriginal compliance.

What emerges from these criticisms is that they too are based upon an assumption. They assume that resistance occurs within an 'integrated system', that all participants are members of one society, and the resisters are those who wish to bring about partial or complete social change (revolution). But, as we have seen, in a colonial situation this is not the case. At least two distinct societies exist, with different and often conflicting value systems, and with different and often non-equivalent social institutions.

Although the alternative or sub-culture thesis may claim that more than one society exists in any so-called composite society, we would suggest that this is hardly the same thing as the relationship which exists between colonial and indigenous groups. What makes the colonial situation distinctive is that the members of both societies, to a greater or lesser extent, are engaged in resistance. Steadfastly, each actor attempts to protect what he believes to be so,

and only after the more powerful group successfully emerges from the struggle does it discontinue resistance, and set about establishing a new social order. Even then, as in Australia today, indigenous resistance still goes on. The new reality, that the colonists now control the country, does not alter the fact that Aboriginal actions continue to be grounded in beliefs which stretch back to the time of Altgeringa, when the Old Man and his Six Sons (namatoona) roamed their country. But for resisters in the so-called composite society, no such continuity exists: their actions are essentially expressions of alienation, directed against the dominant social order, its values and beliefs. It is this qualitative and socio-historic difference which makes Aboriginal resistance distinctive.

With these important considerations over, we can now present a possible typology of Aboriginal resistance (see Figure 2). It will be noticed that the variables selected include organisation, means, goals, and participation. This does not exclude other possibilities: it is just that the four chosen happen to figure prominently in Aboriginal views concerning resistance. Two other factors have also helped to shape the construction of this typology - the first is that all resistive actions are goal-directed, and second, the typology is 'subjective', in the sense that it is deductively formed and the perspective throughout is that of the Aboriginal resister.

From this typology it is clear that there are eight different kinds of resistance which could be listed as follows (see Figure 3). Naturally, if more variables had been selected, the number of possible permutations would have increased accordingly. But for our purposes - as we are not engaged in developing an elaborate coding system - this simple, and in many ways, rough device (as

Figure 2

Goals	The maintenance or rediscovery of: i) My Country ii) Dreamtime iii) Community			
Means	Non-violent		Violent	
Participation	Limited (Elders only)	Widespread (one or more tribes)	Limited (Elders only)	Widespread (one or more tribes)
Organisation	Unorganised	Organised	Unorganised	Organised

Figure 3

	Type	Abbreviation
1	Non-violent unorganised limited participation	NULP
2	Non-violent organised limited participation	NOLP
3	Non-violent unorganised widespread participation	NUWP
4	Non-violent organised widespread participation	NOWP
5	Violent unorganised limited participation	VULP
6	Violent organised limited particpation	VOLP
7	Violent unorganised widespread participation	VUWP
8	Violent organised widespread participation	VOWP

most typologies inevitably are) is sufficient to help us make limited sense of all the resistance examples used in this thesis.

It is only included here for this reason, and no other claims are made for it. Further, by definition it is ideal-typical, and, consequently, many examples of resistance quoted in this thesis may not always appear as delineated as the typology suggests. Additional goals, for instance, or questions concerning the means employed - how is violence defined? Were not both means employed? - severely limit its classificatory usefulness. To succumb to a sociological cliche: it is purely a 'heuristic device', and in the chapters that follow, it will be used as such.

In the next chapter, for example, we shall outline several illustrations of resistance which arise from and are centred around the concept of 'My Country.' We shall also attempt to show how and explain why resistance is directed towards the maintenance or rediscovery of 'My Country', and against colonial authority.

NOTES

1. From an interview with Garey Foley, the Public Relations Officer of the N.S.W. Aboriginal Legal Aid Services, on 20th September 1974.

2. See Wagley and Harris, Minorities in the New World.

3. These examples of current resistance will be discussed fully in the next three chapters.

4. From a group interview with Kullaluk Aborigines in Darwin on 29th August 1974.

5. From an interview with Bob Randall, a field officer with the Darwin-based Aboriginal Legal Services scheme, on 28th August 1974.

6. See Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation, pp. 324-86.

7. See Blaney, Tyranny of Distance, in which he argues that the geographical distance between London and Sydney, not only presented many problems of a practical kind, but also determined the kind of society Australia has become. Colonists were forced to make up their own rules and regulations as they went along, and he notes, very little attention was often paid to instructions received from the Colonial Office in London, as by the time they arrived, up to six months after being issued, they were either out of date, or the situation had, in one way or another, become resolved!

8. See Weber, op cit, pp.152-153.

9. From an interview with Bill Parry, a Daly River Aborigine, on the 20th August 1974.

10. From an interview with Neville Parkins on 10th August in Alice Springs.

11. See Carl Friedrich, Man and His Government.

12. See Introduction, p28

13. From a group interview with Aborigines living at the Mount Nancy fringe-dwelling camp, Alice Springs, on 12th August, 1974.

14. Same source as Note 13.

15. From a group interview with Docker River based Aborigines on 12th October, 1974.

16. The Central Australian Aboriginal Congress is based in Alice Springs, and its main objectives are i) to preserve the heritage, customs, languages, and institutions of the Aboriginal people of Central Australia; ii) to promote the interests of the Aboriginal people of Central Australia; iii) to work towards the ultimate achievement of Land Rights acceptable to and desirable for the Aboriginal people of Central Australia; iv) to establish, acquire, maintain and control social and cultural development centres, and other projects as will further the social, educational, cultural and artistic welfare of Aboriginal people. These aims have been taken from the Congress Constitution, which was adopted at Alice Springs in the Northern Territory of Australia, on Saturday, 9th June, 1973. The whole purpose of Congress is summed up in a

preface statement on page one of the Constitution. It reads:

> "We believe that Aboriginal Australians should be recognised as a distinct and viable cultural group, guaranteed the right to retain, as they wish, their own heritage, customs, languages and institutions. We stand for Self-determination and Autonomy. We depend largely on our own efforts, on the united stance of our people. We believe in greater mutual respect and understanding between Aboriginal and other Australians".

17. From the same source as note 10

18. From an interview with Pastor Paul Albrecht on the 9th August, 1974.

19. See Mullard, Aborigines in Australia Today.

20. See Stanner, After the Dreaming, op cit.

21. From a group interview with Walbiri Aborigines at Yuendumu on the 2nd August, 1974.

22. Source as in note 21.

23. Source as in note 21.

24. See Bell, Resistance and Revolution, op cit.

25. See Hobsbaum, Primitive Rebellion.

CHAPTER FOUR: MY COUNTRY

My boy, said the old Yirrkala man
I've a very sad tale to relate
The balanda[a] says we lost our land
In seventeen eighty eight.

It seems that in that year of grace
Once Captain Phillip landed
At a place in the east called Sydney Cove
But he didn't come empty handed.

For he put up a flag
And said this land
Now belongs to George the Third
And if anybody wants to challenge this
Then let his voice be heard.

The only thing that's wrong my boy
Is that we were never told
That this applied to the tribal land
Which we are pledged to hold.

If Governor Phillip had landed here
And tried to take Yirrkala
It wouldn't have taken us very long
To fix that English fella

But there was no fight
And when the whiteman came
We welcomed as a friend
But we never told him he could have our land
For that would be the end

For haven't I told you often my boy
That the land was all created
By Wuyal and by Djangkawu[b]
And Then it was populated

By the Yiritjar and the Dua[c]
Of the Yolngu[d] at Yirrkala[c]
The Riratjingu[c], Gunatj[c], Dhalwangu[c]
And the other rata and mala

But after what has happened my boy
I wonder just what you'll say
For if we don't own the tribal land
I've taught you things the wrong way

The Madayln [e] system can only work
If we own the land today
As we did for the many thousands of years
Before Phillip came this way.

We're supposed to keep the tribal laws
And sing of the Janbuwal[f]
Of Baram[f] and the Wawilaks[f]
And the sugar-bag man Wayal.

But the Bunggul has no meaning boy
If we don't control the land
The older people can't pass things on
To the Djamarkuli's[g] hand

Perhaps we should have known better boy
Instead of the songs we sing
We should have pledged allegiance to
A mad blind English King.[1]

From 'Tribal Land', the Yirrkala land rights song, several things can be discerned about Aborigines and their relationship with their land. After the account of Captain Phillip's arrival and the historic theft, we learn, in the fourth verse, that Aborigines 'are pledged to hold' all tribal land, to protect and care for it as commanded by the ancestral beings during the Dreamtime. To depart from such a pledge,

or even to equivocate, would be tantamount to the renunciation of all that is Aboriginal. This pledge and its defense is further illustrated in Galkarrway Yungingu's assertion that 'if Governor Phillip had landed here, and tried to take Yirrkala, it wouldn't have taken us very long, to fix that English fella'. Although this assertion casts some doubt on the southern Aborigines' capacity to resist, it, more significantly, establishes Yirrkala determination to continue resisting colonial authority. Acquiescence or acceptance of colonial demands 'would be the end', for the Yirrkala people have not only pledged to hold the land, but also to resist any 'English Fella's' attempt to acquire it.

From the middle verses of the song, both justification and legitimacy for the resistance campaign are explained. 'The land was created by Wuyal and by Djangkawu, and then it was populated' (by we, the chosen people). Ownership is established through descent and the Madayln system of traditional association. Ownership is therefore not in dispute, as 'if we don't own the tribal land, not only (have I) taught you things the wrong way', but also that 'would be the end'. What is in dispute, then, is the question of occupation, aptly expressed in the Aboriginal view - 'they're tenants in my country'. Based on the knowledge that 'the Bunggul has no meaning boy, if we don't control the land', and the fact that 'the older people can't pass things on, to the Djamarkuli's hand', the Yirrkala Aborigines would have long since disappeared if they had believed they did not own the land. Further, as the Aborigines still continue to sing 'of the Janbuwal, of Baram and the Wawilaks, and the sugar-bag

man Wayal', and as the knowledge that is Bunggul is still being passed on, it can be accurately assumed that their concept of 'my country' means, on one level, exactly what it says.

It is not until the last verse, however, that we begin to realise that 'Tribal Land' is a resistance rather than a protest song:

> "Perhaps we should have known better boy
> Instead of the songs we sing
> We should have pledged allegiance to
> A mad blind English King".

Although, ironically, a doubt is expressed in the first line, its dramatic effect soon becomes clear when we are forced to conclude that the decision to resist was a conscious one: the tongue is removed from the cheek and through a clever juxtaposition of implied Aboriginal wisdom with European madness it shapes the sound NO; then proceeds to sing the songs that matter. Songs which express the Aborigine's relationship with his land; songs which convey knowledge, mark the difference between man and child, male and female, cousin and brother; and songs which express the essence of Aboriginality, what it means to be or not to be an Aborigine. Through the act of singing, and all that it involves, they are engaged in a continual process of binding and sanctifying their relationships with their land, and to the ancestral beings to whom they owe their real existance. So in 'Tribal Land', behind the names of Yiritjar and Dua, 'the Riratjingu, Gunatj, Dhalwangu, and the other rata and mala', we can see that land is traditionally

inalienable.

Less lyrically, Professor R.M. Berndt explains that:

> "Throughout most of Aboriginal Australia, there are basically two kinds of small social group, each related to the land in a different way: one through descent, directly or otherwise, the other through occupancy and use. The first is an exogamous unit, such as a clan, associated with a site or combination of sites... This is a land-owning group: its focus is on these sites, and the areas immediately adjacent to them. Their ownership is not a personal or individual affair, and territorial claims are not transferable: the land is held in trust, collectively, in a time perspective which extends indefinitely back into the past and forward into the future. The other type of unit is what has usually been called a horde.....This is a land occupying and utilizing group, concerned predominantly with hunting and food-collecting.
>
> These two kinds of unit reflect the two basic issues in social life - the religious and economic, viewed as interdependent... All Aborigines, male and female, are simultaneously members of both kinds of unit; but adult males have two distinct roles: in one, as land owners, they are land-renewing or land-sustaining, in the sense of keeping the basic 'machinery' going; in the other, with their womenfolk, they are land-exploiting. To appreciate the question of land tenure in Aboriginal Australia (and what land means to the Aborigine) these two facets must be taken into account".[2]

Further, the land unites the body and spirit in Aboriginal life. Each body has one or more spirits which enter the embryo at the time of conception; they existed before the individual's conception and, after death, they will continue to live. Aborigines also believe that they come from particular places

which are the source of man's life-force, and because of this Aboriginal man is inseparably connected with these sites. Ownership of land therefore does not have to be 'legally' proved; it was and still is recognised without question: for the Aborigine it can neither be taken away, given away, lost, nor abandoned (Harris, 1972, p.48)[3].

Ningla a-na![4]

It is this attachment to 'my country', and 'my country's' attachment to all Aborigines which forms the social base of the Aboriginal Land Rights resistance movement. Although it in effect began in 1788, when Captain Arthur Phillip hoisted the Union Jack and Rev. Richard Johnson preached his historic sermon, it was not until the early 1960s that the colonists, firstly, recognised it as active resistance, and, secondly, responded rationally to its claims. In fact we can even be more precise than this: it was not until August, 1963, when about 500 Aborigines from Yirrkala, a reservation some twenty miles from Gove, sent a petition written on'bark' in the Gaubapuyngu language to the Euroaustralian Parliament in Canberra, that the colonists admitted the extent of Aboriginal resistance. Before that date, as we have seen, and especially between 1880 and 1960, the decades of 'protection', Aboriginal resistance had been largely unorganised (NULP, NUWP, VULP and VUWP), and the European response had been mostly quick, decisive, and severe.

What made the Yirrkala resistance campaign different is complex. In the first place its mode of expression was significant: the 'bark' notice, sent at a time when international interest had been shown in Aboriginal bark paintings, symbolised a cultural tie

to the land since the time of 'the Beginning', and, symbolically, projected the cultural base of resistance. Secondly, Australia, responsible for the administration, under a United Nations Mandate, of Papua New Guinea, under an hour's plane journey from Gove, was busily trying to establish itself as a liberal and enlightened colonial country. The fear of international repercussions formed a third factor, as the Yirrkala claim, during its history, involved both Nabalco and Swiss Aluminium, two of the western world's largest mining consortiums. So with 500 signatures objecting to the proposed excision of land from Yirrkala for an international mining venture, Euroaustralia had little choice but to take notice.

This initial declaration of possible resistance was soon translated into resistive action when the Yirrkala people realised Swiss Aluminum's intention to build a hotel (pub) on their land. (Harris, 1972, p.3):

> "When they realised that white men could not have a town without a place to drink, they opposed the building of the hotel in the Licensing Court in Darwin because they feared the effect of drink on their people. Their case failed in the Court and ... they refused to provide bricks from their new brickworks for the building of the hotel".[5]

A widespread campaign was then launched calling for the support of all tradition and urban oriented Aborigines (NOWP). The response was catalytic.

Urban based Aborigines from Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, and Brisbane provided funds for the court case, forums for speakers, and the essential political skills and assistance

needed to fight the first of many land rights cases. Tradition oriented Aborigines from all over Australia gave moral and socal assistance, and expressed their solidarity and support for their 'brothers' by establishing similar land claims, and, like the Gurindji people at Wattie Creek, similar forms of action (Hardy, 1972, ppxiii-xx)[6]. This abundance of support for the first modern resistance movement and its land rights case, which continued for seven long years, appeared to be a real expression of unity and solidarity. As one elder put it:

> "We give Yirrkala mob big support... they like us, we like them... they fight for all Aborigines in my country... they had big court case and they speak well for all us Aborignes; but whitefeller no listen... he twist all things round, and we look (like) emu..."[7]

The Yirrkala Land Rights case was finally brought to court in April 1971. Mathaman and Mugurrawuy, the head men of their respective clans, claimed, on behalf of their clans, to have owned the land leased by the Australian government to Swiss Aluminum. The third claimant, on behalf of the nine remaining clans, purported they had a proprietary interest in the same land, having been given permission by the clans Mathman and Mungurrawuy represented to share its use and benefits. Professor R.M. Berndt, a witness for the Aborigines, described in an affidavit to the Supreme Court the two claimant clans - Rirratjingu and Gumatj - as being 'Mada', a land-owning group bound to its area by spiritual, emotional, and ritual ties. He stated that:

> "Land is held in trust, collectively in terms of a time perspective which extends backwards to the mythical creative past and forward into the future as in

> inviolable heritage of Aboriginal man (specifically, man of the Mada concerned), as part of the concept of Wongar (Dreaming) linking man with the land and the great Spirit Beings. This concept remains unimpaired at the present time. My study of their culture reveals that the Rirratjingu and the Gumatj have, in their own right, held the land represented as theirs on the map exhibited with this affidavit from time immemorial."[8]

Continuing his evidence, he then sketched a short history of the area since white colonisation, pointing out that the Aborigines around Gove, right from the beginning, had actively resisted attempts to take over their land. According to the official report of the Northern Territory in 1885, he showed that J.A. Macartney, who had taken up pastoral leases covering four or five thousand square miles of north-eastern Arnhem Land, had been attacked in numbers by the Aborigines who were 'numerous and dangerous'. By 1889, the report was able to record, however, that 'the blacks are beginning to understand the conditions under which the whiteman holds the country of which they consider they have been robbed'. This latter view was supported by an elder who, at that time, had told a station manager:

> "I say, boss, whitefeller stop here too long with him bullocky. Now time whitefeller take him bullocky and clear out. This fellow country him blackfeller country."[9]

In essence, Berndt argued, that the Yirrkala Aborigines had always considered the land as theirs, and, also, had always resisted the 'tenants' claims to ownership. He

concluded:

> "Their land is the most obvious, the most enduring and most consistently visible and tangible form, not only of their own wealth (wealth in our terms as well as theirs) but, even more importantly, it is a symbol of their own traditional as well as present-day way of life. There is no question at all but that the blocking-off of their land in the way which is occurring today, and is planned to take place in the near future, will destroy the structure of their society".[10]

In spite of this evidence, the production of sacred relics as title deeds, and the evidence of ten Aboriginal leaders who represented communities throughout Aboriginal Australia, Mr. Justice Blackburn, on the 27th April 1971, in a 262-page judgement, found that the Aborigines had no legal basis for the claims to their land.

Contrary to anthropological evidence, he found, briefly, that the relation between land and clan, or the institution of'Mada' did not amount to proprietorship as understood in white Australian law; that the clans had not sustained the burden of proof that they were socially, economically, and culturally linked with the same land in 1788 as now; that no doctrine of Common Law ever required or now requires a British Government to recognise land rights under Aboriginal law; that land rights were never recognised by the colonists; and that, anyway, if the clans had possessed any rights they would have been effectually terminated by the Mining Ordinance in 1968. Justice Blackburn summed up the central question being decided upon as one of whether the doctrine of 'communal native title' existed in Common Law, and applied when New South

Wales was founded in 1788. 'Whitefeller twist(ing) all things round', or side-stepping the real legal issues involved - the equation of the concepts of prior occupation, cultural association, and usage with that of ownership - he concluded that the doctrine of 'communal native title does not form, and never has formed, part of the law of any part of Australia'.

Aboriginal reaction was immediate and militant. On the 6th of May, 1971, Roy Marika, the elected chairman of the Yirrkala Aboriginal Council, together with two other Aboriginal representatives flew to Canberra and personally presented the Prime Minister with their second 'bark' statement written in the Gabapuyngu language. It stated that:

> "We cannot be satisfied with anything less than the ownership of the land. We have the right to say to anybody not to come to our country. The law must be changed. The place does not belong to whiteman. They only want it for the money they can make. They will destroy plants, animal life, and the culture of the people"[11].

Asserting their separateness, cultural background, and identity as Aborigines - bark painting notices, travelling together, and only conversing and communicating in their own language - they further based their objection to the judgement on the international view that: "The rights of ownership, collective or individual, of the members of the populations concerned over the lands which these populations traditionally occupy shall be recognised" (I.L.O. Convention 107, United Nations, 1955).

Characteristically, the Australian government chose to ignore the United Nations' recommendation, along with all the arguments offered by the Yirrkala Aborigines. There was, in fact, only one thing it could no longer ignore: the reality of Aboriginal resistance. According to Rowley, the Yirrkala resistance movement which culminated in the very first land rights case in Australia brought out the fact so long overlooked by those trying to train and 'assimilate' Aborigines, that: "Even where they have been most disorganised their refusal to play the roles thought proper by the whites, has been motived by a <u>continuous tradition of resistance</u>.

> Peace between two groups fighting for the same assets cannot be established by conquest alone... To place assets in Aboriginal hands involves obtaining them from other hands, or from government assets, or frustrating someone's economic hopes or ambition. Where the common attitude is one of prejudice against the claimant, governments play safe and refuse to change. A statesman might realise that the longer compensatory action is delayed, the bigger the problem. Aborigines are increasing and they will inevitably become more intransigent..."[12]

<u>The Gurindji at Daguragu</u>

Many lessons were learnt from the Yirrkala land rights case. First:

> "White Australian law, as it now stands, is designed to protect whites rather than us, and, as long as it remains racially and culturally biased, no satisfaction or justice for us can be achieved through it."[13]

Second:

> "Organised resistance, although not entirely successful for our brothers at Yirrkala, does, nevertheless, harbour the possibility of success."

Third:

> "Non-violent appeals to a violent system can only result in failure, or a patronising sympathy: in other words what white social conscience there may be is not worth the arse it's painted on."

Fourth:

> "We cannot depend upon European concepts and ways of doing things (a reference to the Court Case): our strength and motivation to resist must come from within our culture. We mustn't be conned into channelling our resistance into protest, or else our movement will collapse altogether - and we'll only get half, if anything at all, of what we want."

Fifth:

> "If we don't violently resist, stand up for what we've always believed in, we'll never see the end of oppression. We'll always remain connected through racist laws to the colonial system; we'll always be dependent upon the prejudices and whims of the whites, treated like dogs, if we're good, and slaves, if we're bad..."

These lessons tended to alter radically the nature and direction of most Aboriginal resistance activity, including that of the well-known Gurindji resistance movement, which began in 1966, when nearly all the Aborigines on the Vestey owned station at Wave Hill walked off. Although it started as a non-violent resistance campaign (NULP), it gradually developed

into an organised one in March 1967 when the resisters, collectively, decided to move from Wave Hill and return to Wattie Creek, or the spiritual home known as Daguragu. According to Rangiari, one of the Gurindji leaders, all they knew at this stage was that they wanted to be on their land, rather than living in servitude - in broken down huts, with hardly any wages, or leisure time for ceremonial life. But by 1968, influenced and inspired by the apparent success of the Yirrkala movement, they knew exactly what they wanted: they wanted all their land leased to the Vestey's by the Euroaustralian government, and the total freedom to pursue a traditional way of life. These demands were subsequently rejected by the Governor General on the basis that the land in question was Crown Land, and furthermore, let on a long-term lease to the Vestey organisation. He also warned them that they must take care not to break the law.

Inspite of further Government threats and carrot promises - new houses, a little land of their own, and a grant of $500,000 for improvements in the township at Wave Hill - they have remained at Daguragu, living on their own land, determined to resist any attempts to remove them.

> "... the Gurindji... will never give up trying to win their land claim while one tribal member remains alive. They not only believe that Wattie Creek and its surrounds belong to them: more than that, they believe that they belong to Wattie Creek, where the dead watch over the living".[14]

This cultural association with 'my country' underpinned the whole of the Gurindji struggle. They could see their whole way of life destroyed if Vestey, through the government,

continued to 'own' and exploit their country. It was this fear, the realisation that if they did not act they would lose all that 'my country' symbolises, which led them to intensify and spread their struggle (NOWP). Gurindji spokesmen from Daguragu travelled to south-eastern cities, thousands of miles away, in order to secure inter-state publicity and support for their stand; a 'Save the Gurindji' committee was formed in Sydney; 'bark' and other letters of support were received; and money was immediately raised from other Aboriginal associations, including a donation of $10,CCO from the Waterside Workers' Federation, the only white trade union which actively and consistently supported the Gurindji movement. By the end of the year, the resisters had fenced (illegally) over 500 square miles of land, which they claimed as their tribal land, built a permanent village settlement, consisting of huts, toilest, and a store-house (not, unlike Phillip's first settlement at Botany Bay), and, with the aid of urban-based Aborigines, launched a nationwide publicity campaign. Elders restated their demands as the movement fast escalated into one of violent-resistance (VOWP), and Identity, the Aboriginal magazine, printed the demands in full:

> "They (Vestey's) won't pay award wages to Aboriginal stockmen. Our people live in old tin huts with dirt floors and no place to wash. We want equal wages and houses the same as white stockmen have. The old tin huts are unhealthy and that is why children get sick and die. Most places haven't got water, so they have to cart it up from the bore in old drums. Most of the stations make rubbish out of the law for award wages. They pay the Aboriginal a 'Slow Worker' wage. They are not supposed to do this, but the law lets them

do it anyway.....

At Wattie Creek we have very bad housing - just huts with dirt floors (but its our own). ABSCHOL (the student organisation for Aboriginal education) helped us make our own bricks from anthill nest mud and they sent up timber from Melbourne, but it is still at Katherine. We can't move it. We have an old Bedford truck but it has broken down and can't be used. The police say that it is not road-worthy. We think they don't want us to have a truck so that we can't get food and supplies...

(What is sure is that) we will never give up fighting until we get our own land back. We will fight against the government which robs us! We will fight against Vesteys! We will fight against Hooker! We won't wait another five years! The water at Wattie Creek is not sweet water. The government has put down a bore about two miles from Wattie Creek. They promised us that they would pipe it to us, but they have not done so. They say these things to make it look good, but we know that they will wait and leave us without water until we stop trying to get our land back...

The government or Vesteys might come along and pull our fence down. They say we break the law and try and steal the land. We are not thieves. We just want our sacred land back. It was stolen from us, now we want it back. Perhaps the government will be too frightened to pull our fence down. The Gurindji will wait and see."[15]

The fence still remains, both as a barricade, and as a symbol of Gurindji resistance and demands for independence.

Violent Resistance

In the early months of the Gurindji campaign, resistance seemed to be localised, unorganised, and only partially articulated by a small number of resisters; but, as consciousness developed, the desire and need for greater organisation, widespread participation, and a definitive programme,based on traditional beliefs and experience,also evolved. Thus the movement tended to progress from an unorganised, limited participation base (NULP) to a base which reflected widespread participation and a high degree of organisation (NOWP). The decision to employ violent as opposed to non-violent means seemed to occur immediately after the Yirrkala case judgement, an indication of the resisters' realisation that little could be achieved through peaceful resistance, that violence cannot successfully be met with non-violence, and that the struggle had now become viewed as one of life or death.

The employment of violent means appeared to be justified from both within and outside their culture. That is, most Aborigines feel they have a right and duty to defend, violently or otherwise, the social institutions established during the Dreamtime; and, further, the right to protect themselves from the violence of others. In fact, their reactions to charges of violence illustrate just this:

> "Now, after reading this (and learning about our resistance), lots of people got upset. They said that the Gwalwa Daraniki (a Darwin resistance group) wanted violence. Violence, they say! These same people, who for years and years, have continued to keep their feet

on the backs of black people, these same people who let our babies die at a rate faster than any other country in the world, these people who tell us what we should do, where we should live, who give us wages that make sure that we starve, that our bellies are pinching, these people who make us live in houses not fit for pigs let alone people, who treat us like dogs, who are nice to us if we wear the right clothes and talk proper English, and stab us in the back when we aren't looking, who keep most of our people locked up in prisons for many years for crimes caused because of frustration with the whiteman. These people who rape our culture, take photos of us throwing boomerangs, doing corroborees, singing, smiling, then take them to their nice cosy homes and laugh at us. These are the same people who have the hide to scream - Violence - who say, 'We do so much for those natives, they just don't want to learn', and wonder why we hate them.

Let me say this, brothers and sisters. When an Aboriginal man or woman cannot walk into a hotel or a shop or anywhere without getting stared at, without getting called, 'Black bastards, coons, heathens, savages, lazy, shiftless, stupid, dirty, filthy, niggers' - this is Violence. When every day of our lives black people are made to feel that we are 'inferior' to white men and women, when every day some black person is thinking 'When are we going to get some food for our children!, 'Why don't they give us jobs', 'Why do they call us names', this is Violence. When black children have to go to school and learn that Captain Cook discovered Australia - this is Violence. When black people of my country are put onto Reserves and told what to do and how to do it by the big white boss, when black people have to drink in

> separate bars - this is Violence. When black people go to jail and get a sentence of three years, five years or whatever for doing little more than trying to survive - this is Violence. As soon as they see that black face you can be sure that those magistrates will send you to jail, 'to teach you a lesson'. No matter what they say, they are the ones that are using the violence."[16]

This explanation of colonial violence, and, indeed, justification for Aboriginal violence is supported again and again by other Aboriginal views like:

> "We're the victims of violence..... we don't want violence, but the whiteman doesn't understand any other language.... the whiteman is violence... we can only answer him with violence; that's all he knows and will listen to. He tells us not to use violence, so he can violently dominate us; it's alright for him to use it, but not anybody else. He's afraid of it, because he knows what it can do, so he tells us to write a letter, not use a gun, to wait and be patient, and not rebellious and angry; to die quietly, rather than live fighting...."[17]

Such external experience, resulting from interactive social contact with the colonists, is supported by internal cultural requirements. For the tradition oriented Aborigines they become:

> "(Eingana) made we all; she make trees, possums, kangaroo, and all we blackfellers; she tell us what do, not (white) bossman....Long, long time we here doing her things; we go on doing things all she wants; we got do things she wants, that's why we Aborigines... not do, and we no more black-feller... this my country her country ... (<u>which we are pledged to hold</u>)..." [18]

For urban-based Aborigines, the re-seeking and rediscovering of Eingana provides the internal aspect. From their experience and knowledge of the colonists' destruction of what was once their way of life, they work backwards towards their past:

> "They came and destroyed all that we had; now we are trying to put the pieces back together again; we're returning to rediscover our lost dreamtime, to find out what has happened to us, and if this means violence, then we have the right to use it, because they used it to take away what we had....we've got to take our land back, as that is our starting point...."[19]

Gwalwa Darniki

This starting point, the concept of 'my country', has been significantly expanded over the last few years. Partly, it would seem, to accommodate Aboriginal views on the nature of the real world, and partly, to project Aboriginal ideas about their own 'progress' and survival. The social building of the concept into something more than it was originally, or, at least, the re-emphasising of the economic as opposed to the religio-legal aspect, can be observed in the resistance activities of the Gwalwa Daraniki.

Right from the outset the Darwin based association of tradition and urban-oriented Aborigines, unlike the Yirrkala or Gurindji resistance campaigns, realised the importance of organisation and widespread participation, and the necessity

to interlock and relate past with present struggles. Cherly Buchanan, in her history of 'the Kullaluk story' (Gwalwa Daraniki) informs us that:

> "..... they went out to Nine Mile, the big camp, as well as another camp at Clifftop, just behind the Koala Hotel, always emphasising that our ancestors fought for the land - and that they hadn't died for nothing, surely... (Soon) the Brinkin, Wagaits, Muluk Muluk, and Knuckey Lagoon mob, besides people from many other tribes, had joined in the fight."[20]

Viewed as more than a struggle, or a campaign of intransigent activity, the Gwalwa Daraniki saw the fight in terms of life or death. For, 'around this time, Justice Blackburn had made his big decision that Aborigines had no right to land, so it looked like a declaration of war (that's how we saw it), and to accept his decision all would be lost' (Cherly Buchanan, 1974). At first it might be supposed that what 'would be lost' would be the Aboriginal sense of self, purpose, and relationship with 'my country', but for the Gwalwa Daraniki it would appear to be more than this. From the views already expressed, it would seem that material rather than spiritual wealth formed an increasingly significant part of the Aboriginal reformulation of 'my country'. Thus, not only are we 'aliens in our own country', but:

> "The big companies are moving into the Reserve Lands and digging it up. They are looking for minerals that will make them rich, so that they can get more power. What do we get? 'Bugger all', we say"[21].

This material interest becomes more apparent in the Larrakia Treaty, the movement's list of demands, which, amongst other things, asks for '$15 million for one hundred years of destruction'. Produced in 1971, this document contains the first resistance movement attempt to demand compensation for 'cultural destruction', and to correlate social and economic deprivation with past and present racism. Since then claims from other urban and tradition oriented organisations, totalling an estimated $5000 million, have been demanded. For instance, the Melbourne based Victorian Aboriginal Advancement League last year lodged a claim for several major city centre sites (Dreaming places) and/or adequate financial compensation ($500 million) 'for that part of our country and culture destroyed or built on by colonial white capitalists' (McGuiness, 1974)[22]. The Palm Island Aborigines have demanded their island together with $100 million as 'cultural compensation' (Smoke Signal, vol. 3, 1974, p.3). The Aborigines of Central Australia, through the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, have, like many communities throughout Aboriginal Australia, made similar demands. This evidence would suggest that the concept of 'my country', or, rather the current Aboriginal interpretation of the concept, is fast acquiring a new material base, one which holds the prospects of cultural security and economic prosperity. Land Rights would appear to form the medium through which this concept, in both its original and revised form, can be converted into meaningful resistive action. As Kolig points out (Kolig, 1973, pp5-6):

"Modern land rights imply economic advantages.

> Land tenure in the European sense, as Aborigines believe, means economic exploitation, and this view is seemingly substantiated by the pastoral industry's operation. Seen in these terms it is quite logical to assume modern wealth, individually and collectively, to be an immediate outcome of land tenure.... Effective land rights are thought to enable them to occupy the same economic, material and financial position, and enjoy the same standard of life as Europeans do at present, and from which Aborigines feel themselves excluded.
>
> Aborigines see land rights as a guarantee for social and cultural security. Land rights reduce European encroachment liberate them from injustice and caprice of European employers, and protect them from maltreatment .....Aborigines are aware, however, that establishment and sustenance of a tradition based separate cultural identity can only be achieved through a certain degree of segregation from the dominant society. Land rights are expected to provide this opportunity."[23]

It is the complete realisation of this, and the consequent reformulation of 'my country' to combine both traditional beliefs and present day economic realities, which helps to strengthen Aboriginal resolve to resist. Realising the practical and social impossibility of returning wholly to a food-gathering economy, Aborigines now can see, if they possess the mineral wealth of their country, how they can survive, preserve their traditions, strengthen them, and rediscover much that has been temporarily lost.

Like 'my country', the nature of resistance has also been adapted to meet changing situations and stages of awareness. The appreciation of this has led, not just to new methods and tactics, but also to further ideological support for resistance. In a symbolic attempt to recapture

their land, for example, the Gwalwa Daraniki designed a national Aboriginal flag and raised it to the top of the pole outside the Supreme Court in Darwin, stating that:

> "(If) It was good enough for Captain Cook to put up a flag to claim all of Australia for the Crown, then it is good enough for us to claim back Darwin."[24]

This symbolic, but also ideologised act has been made even more explicit in the design of the national flag:

> "It is red at one end for the blood of the old people who died for their land, and red at the other end for the blood that may be shed. In the centre is a green tipped representation of the Kulaluk tree, over a jungle fowl's nesting mound, because we understand our beautiful land and nature."[25]

This symbol of war has been carried to the front line of resistance. On the 22nd November for example, a sit-in was organised on Bagot Road; on the 18th December the Postmaster General was informed by telegram that:

> "Almost all of the tribes that held country within 50 miles of the Overland Telegraph Line were wiped out within 60 years after the line was built.
> At Barrow Creek, every man of our people were soon shot after linesmen were speared. Unless the government seriously considers all our land claims and pays compensation for past injustices, and unless we are treated with proper respect, we warn that we have the courage, the ability, the people, and the will to cut the telephone line between Larrakia country and Jauan country. This means between Darwin and Katherine".[26]

A week later Brinkin tribesmen held up a Larrimah bound goods train, stretched themselves across the tracks, and remainedthere until they were physically moved and cautioned by the police. The first issue of Bunji, the Gwalwa Daraniki newspaper launched in 1972, carried a sketch of a bomb with its fuse lit. It was called the Black Revolution Bomb, and in its twists of smoke were printed Yirrkala, Wattie Creek (Gurindji), Kulaluk (Gwalwa Daraniki), Twis, Papunya, V.R.D. By the bomb was a box of matches - Colonial Match Company brand - and scribbled all over the box were the names of people noted for their racist views. Below the sketch was the caption: 'The fuse is getting short'.[27]

The need to explain, internationalise, and relate one resistance campaign to another in order to raise consciousness and institutionalise the struggle, was taken one step further when Aborigines throughout Australia pronounced July 14th as National Aborigines Day which:

> "... saw one of the biggest protest marches in Aboriginal history. Aborigines in every state and the Northern Territory were encouraged to march... and those on cattle stations, mission settlements, and reserves, and in towns, all tribes throughout Australia would go out on strike for the day. In Darwin members of the Gwalwa Daraniki and supporters marched to the administration block in Mitchell Street, and then to the top of Frances Creek Ore Stack at Fort Hill... the site of the first meeting between Aborigines and Europeans in 1869. Crosses were put up to call attention to the death of Larrakia people since the coming of white-man. A similar protest was held at the Iron Ore Warf on August 30. They tried to stop the loading

of a ship. Kudangar stood right in front of a bulldozer. Gordpeel, Mudpul, and others stopped the stackker reclaimer. Five police cars came racing down the Wharf. 'We are only fighting for our land', Koolamurinee told them. Then the people went out to the ship and told the Japanese seamen, 'This is our land (the ore) in your ship. We have bugger all' ."[28]

In 1973, the realisation that Aboriginal resisters could never achieve their objectives within the framework of white society, that their country belonged to them, and that they could survive economically on it manifested itself in explicit calls for segregation. For instance, the Gwalwa Daraniki started issuing the following passport form to Euroaustralians wishing to enter their country (the Northern Territory):

Figure Four

APPLICATION FOR ENTRY TO NORTHERN TERRITORY - GWALWA DARANIKI

Form to be completed by Non-Aborigines only.

FULL NAME...

PLACE OF ENTRY TO N.T.....................................

PURPOSE OF ENTRY: MARK APPROPRIATE SQUARE

TOURIST.........

RESIDENT, HOW MANY YEARS RESIDENCE......................

TRANSIT: DEPARTURE DATE.................................

DESIRING EMPLOYMENT: UNION AFFILIATION..................

BUSINESS OR INVESTMENT: GIVE DETAILS....................

....

Do you employ Aborigines?..... How many?................

Area of interest, e.g. Darwin, Arnhem Land..............

LENGTH OF INTENDED STAY IN THE N.T...... days.....months....years

REFERENCES FROM THREE ABORIGINES IN N.T. OR THE 6 STATES

names addresses

....

....

....

DO YOU RECOGNISE ABORIGINAL LAND CLAIMS?...................

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT....................................

DATE..

THE GWALWA DARANIKI REGRET ANY INCONVENIENCE THIS FORM MAY CAUSE. THE DETAILS ARE NECESSARY TO PROTECT OUR LAND AND OUR PEOPLE FROM COLONIAL EXPANSION AND EXPLOITATION.

OFFICE USE ONLY:

TOURIST/TRANSIT	24 hours	one week	three months	
WORK PERMIT	refused	3 months	6 months	2 years
RESIDENT	Housing available?.......			
BUSINESS/INVESTMENT		Rejected.......	Approved......	
		Refer to Tribal Council.......		

EXTENSIONS:

Notes on Figure Four

(i) Passport offices were set up at most points of entry into the Northern Territory: airports, railway stations, bus stations.

(ii) The purpose of entry was an important veto system: e.g. certain 'capitalist' unions were not recognised, whereas 'socialist' or 'communist' ones, like the Waterside Workers' Federation were. Discrimination could be exercised in terms of the type of business or investment desired - i.e. projects which proposed to acquire only Aboriginal labour, and pay royalties (an Aboriginal tax) to the Gwalwa Daraniki.

(iii) The economic and material base for Aborigine-land could thus be established and controlled.

(iv) References could be obtained from any Aborigine living in Australia: the acceptance, which cuts across European constructed caste, class, tradition, and urban divisions or categories, that all Aborigines who acknowledge that they are Aboriginal are members of Aboriginal society, indeed, the 'Aboriginal Nation'.

(v) The reference system also indicated that Aborigines are the 'owners' of their land, that Europeans were outsiders, and that the dominant/subservient or colonial/subject roles were now reversed.

(vi) This role reversal procedure was further supported by whether or not 'aliens' recognised Aboriginal land claims. Those who did thus had a greater chance of entry, as they had already started to accept the equation of prior occupation plus use equals ownership, and the new role that this would mean for them.

(vii) The articulated purpose - 'to protect our land and our people from colonial expansion and exploitation' - suggested, not only that Aborigines wished to oppose racist oppression but also that they could best expand and exploit, with the assistance of 'desirable' businessmen and investors, their own country.

(viii) Consisting of tradition oriented elders and urban based Aboriginal leaders, the Tribal Council was the supreme body of the national Aboriginal resistance movement, responsible for co-ordination, policy, publicity, and assistance for locally organised resistance campaigns throughout Aboriginal Australia.

Although, by the end of 1974, the passport campaign had been seriously affected by police and government counter-action - several leaders were arrested, one was imprisoned, and security officials at airports, railway stations, and bus centres re-routed passengers to avoid 'embarrassment' - the point had been made: This is our country!

In fact, the same point appears to underline most resistance activity centred around and expressed through land rights. The land rights song, 'Tribal Land', embodies it; the Yirrkala movement unsuccessfully attempted to prove it in the Australian Supreme Court; the Gurindji people have fenced off 500 square miles on the basis that it is so; urban-based groups are now seeking financial compensation for 'stolen' land; and the Gwalwa Daraniki, along with many other groups, are still resisting colonial expansion and exploitation. It is a point which entails more than just the legal ownership of country: the meaning, as we have seen, of 'my country', is located in the past, present, and future Aboriginal social experience; it is part of 'community', which in turn, is part of the 'Dreamtime'.

Likewise,resistance, whether violent or non-violent, is more than a political expression of disagreement or a statement of war. For tradition-oriented Aborigines it provides the political means through which, now in part, but ultimately in whole, traditional life can be pursued. For urban Aborigines, it offers a way to the rediscovery of much that has been 'stolen' or destroyed, and helps forge a link with rural Aborigines who maintain a distinct tradition orientation. Resistance thus enables both groups to take pride in their cultural uniqueness, and make deliberate efforts to maintain or rediscover, cultivate

or foster, the nalienable link with the past and future, our land, and 'my country'.

NOTES

1. 'Tribal Land', the Yirrkala Land Rights song, composed and recorded by Galarrwuy Yunpingu: reprinted in Stewart Harris, This our Land, pp.5-6

   Approximate translations for Aboriginal words are as follows: (a) whiteman, (b) ancestral spirits, (c) names of particular sub-tribes, which form the basic 'community' unit - for an explanation of this see Chapter 5 of this thesis, (d) Aboriginal people, (e) traditional, (f) ceremonial life, and (g) children's.

2. See R.M. Berndt, The Gove Dispute, in Anthropological Forum, vol. 1, no.2, pp.258-295; and also Barrie-Pittock, Aboriginal Land Rights, op cit for an historical discussion on the (European) legal complexities, and strategies employed to discount Aboriginal ownership of land. For summaries of anthropological research on the religio-legal, social and economic institution of 'country', Elkins, op cit., 1964 and Berndt, op cit., 1964 are useful texts, but, it should be noted, that both under emphasise the political aspect of the institution in everyday life.

3. Stewart Harris, op cit., 1972. As a journalistic account of the Aboriginal land rights movement, this book's main value lies in the way Harris treats his subject from the Aborigines' point of view, relating the detail of a situation to Aboriginal rather than Euroaustralian views. We have thus relied quite heavily on Harris' historical accounts for much background material to the examples of resistance contained in this chapter.

4. 'Ningla a-Na! ' is the Aranda expression for 'We are hungry for our land'. After the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders had discussed the land rights issue with Aranda elders, it was adopted in April 1972, at a conference in Alice Springs, as the official 'slogan' for the National Land Rights Campaign.

5. Stewart Harris, op cit.

6. See Frank Hardy's The Unlucky Australians, and particularly the introduction where he summarises Gurindji political actions between 1968-1972.

7. From an interview with 'Major' at Japanese Beach, Darwin, on August 25th, 1974.

8. Quoted in Stewart Harris, op cit., p.50.

9. Quoted in Stewart Harris, op cit., p.51.

10. Quoted in Stewart Harris, op.cit., p.52.

11. Quoted in Stewart Harris, op cit., p.53

12. See C.D. Rowley, The Yirrkala Land Rights Case, in Identity July, 1971, and pp. 147-167 in his book The Remote Aborigines for an historical account of the resistance campaign. The emphasis in the extract quoted is ours.

13. The five 'lessons' listed here formed the general conclusions of a general discussion with Aboriginal leaders held in Sydney, on September, 26th, 1974.

14. See Frank Hardy, op cit., p.xiii.

15. See anonymous article, Gurindji Claim, Identity, vol.1, no.3 January 1972, in which Mick Rangiari, a Gurindji leader, is interviewed.

16. See Cheryl Buchanan, We Have Bugger All 1974; (unfortunately, the pages of this short book have not been numbered). As an account of an Aboriginal resistance movement, written by an Aborigine, it is unique: with Reven Gilbert's Because a White Man'll Never Do It, and Charles Perkin's forthcoming book, A Bastard Like Me, it is a significant contribution to what we have called the third stage of rememberance, in which Aborigines are beginning to document and tell their own story.

17. From an interview with Bobby McLeod at Wreck Bay, on September, 27th, 1974.

18. From an interview with an Aborigine living on Jay Creek reserve on 12th August, 1974.

19. From an interview with Evelyn Scott, the general Secretary of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, on 10th September, 1974.

20. See Cheryl Buchanan, op cit.

21. See Cheryl Buchanan, op cit.

22. From an unpublished speech by Bruce McGuiness.

23. See E. Kolig, Progress and Preservation: the Aboriginal Perspective, an unpublished paper, presented to Section 25, of the 45th Australian and New Zealand Association of Anthropology and Sociology (ANZAAS) Congress, in Perth, August, 1973.

24. Cheryl Buchanan, op cit.

25. Cheryl Buchanan, op cit.

26. Cheryl Buchanan, op cit.

27. See Bunji, vol. 1, no.1, 1972, cover page.

28. Cheryl Buchanan, op cit.

CHAPTER FIVE: COMMUNITY

The concepts of 'my country' and 'community' are interdependent: 'community' means little without 'my country', and, conversely, 'my country', in the sense already outlined, would mean little, if 'community' lost its relevance for Aboriginal collective life. The physical manifestations of 'community' are country-based. For instance, the corroboree, which is as much of community life as kinship relationships or the rituals which accompany conception dreaming, would, for most Aborigines, result as a meaningless set of activities if performed in the Sydney Opera House. Its relevance, and hence meaning, for Aboriginal community life is to be found at the place where it happens; where all 'real' corroborees take place, where the ancestral beings ordained; and where Aboriginal relationships with 'my country', and its possession of Aborigines, can be ritually and dramatically re-enacted, in the same way, by the same tree, under the same stars which provided the same stage-setting as the first corroborree, when performed by the first beings during the Dreamtime.

This allegiance, to 'my country' can also be seen in one of the central institutions of 'community' - the family.. Here the traditional family is primarily an economic unit, connected to the land it occupies through sectional ties (the rata and mala), blood ties (the skin group), and totemic ties (the kangaroo, emu, dugong, etc.) Through a relationship which could be described as a kind of social parrallelism, (the observance of rules which prohibit visual and bodily contact with other members from different countries with different

totemic and skin group membership,it is also connected with other family groups, and the eternal Dreamtime of the past, present, and future. Although on one level, 'communuty' is a distinct descriptive formulation of social 'being' and 'doing' , it is, on another, quite inseparable from the concepts of 'Dreamtime' and 'my country'.

Community

As well as deriving renewal and spiritual satisfaction from their presence with their country, Aborigines also obtain the same pleasure, or same degree of purpose from being with their relatives, performing community-based duties, and taking part in what Durkheim has called the 'collective life' of the community (Bain, 1971, p.6).[1] As one Aborigine from Yuendumu put it:

> "We live together... eat together, sleep together, hunt kangaroo together, spear goanna together, sing together, play together, dance together... and do everything together. We're Aborigines when we're together; apart we're nobody..."[2]

It would seem that this community-directed approach to social life provides a certain strength and determination to project an ethnocentric and culturally unique conception of themselves as Aborigines. Together they are strong and sure about who they are; apart or as individuals they loose this social and cultural focus and become 'nobody'. Survival as a community is then dependent upon maintaining this social

and cultural focus, the preservation and protection of those institutions which make up collective life. Expressed in the form of both being an Aborigine, and doing what an Aborigine has to do, a Brinkin man from the Daly River Mission explained the meaning of 'community' for his people as:

> "the things we do, because we blackfellers... we lives for us all we blackfellers... we share things; we do all things together the way we told long time (ago) .... whitefeller try stop us, but no good, we do things same like always..."[3]

This being and doing is more than just an essential characteristic of 'community': in many ways it is 'community'. Reflected in Aboriginal social organisation, it, like 'my country', and 'Dreamtime', provides the rationale within the social structure of collective life. As a physical entity, 'community' possesses certain characteristics which also reflect the inextricable nature of being and doing together ('community') from that of 'my country' and 'dreamtime'. In his celebrated study of Walbiri communities, Meggit lists these attributes as follows (Meggit, 1962, p.51).[4]

> "(i) Membership is relatively stable within more or less permanent territorial boundaries;
>
> (ii) Male members are generally born into the community whereas many female members are recruited by marriage from other 'countries'.
>
> (iii) It has a legitimate title to its domain or country, the resources of which it exploits (often co-operatively).
>
> (iv) It has custody of totemic sites within its country.
>
> (v) It cares for aged and weak members as a form of social insurance.

(vi) It displays an ingroup ethnocentrism and discovers the scapegoates in outgroups.

(vii) It protects its members from external attack.

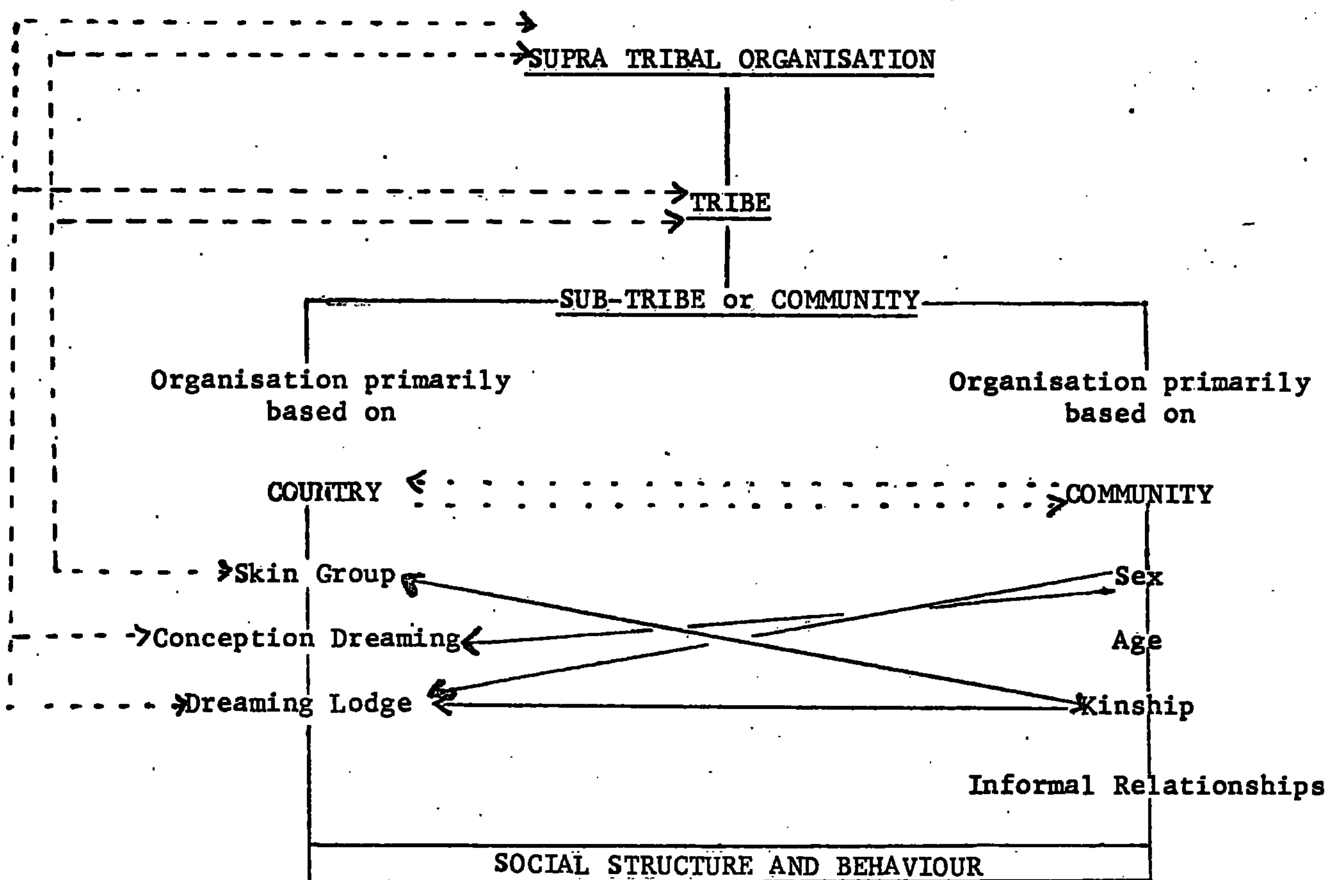
(viii) It is in many respects the maximal political entity."

From Meggit's list of characteristics, the interdependence of the three major concepts is quite apparent, especially in those numbered (i) to (vi); and,that the community, a social unit, is responsible for group protection (vii) and the political aspect of collective life (viii) is also apparent from the resistance examples already discussed. In the case of the Yirrkala peoples' land rights claims, it will be recalled that the suit was filed under the names of Mathaman and Mungurrawuy who represented the clans which constituted the Yirrkala community. This collective act, which embodied the principle of collective ownership, symbolised both the protective and political role of the community: it actualised and epitomised the full meaning of being and doing together within, but opposed to, a European setting.

Meggit's characteristics, in fact, result from a study of the purpose of action within social relationships. Briefly, he sees the traditional community as a functional unit, operating on the basis of consensus rather than conflict, guided by traditional and inherently conservative beliefs. Although he accepts the presence of conflict, largely brought about by white actions, he sees this as a temporary dysfunctional factor soon to be accommodated as Aboriginal communities adapt through what Elkin terms a phase of 'intelligent parasitism' to a new social reality: the existence and dominant

presence of Euroaustralia. This contention, as we have seen, poses more questions than answers, and on the basis of Aboriginal experiential evidence it would seem that functional models, designed within a consensus framework, are quite insufficient to accommodate Aboriginal views on the nature of what is socially real to them. But before we take this point up further, and see how Aborigines interpret 'community' in terms of resistance we need to see (in the diagram below) how social relationships within the physical community are organised.

Figure Five[5]



NOTES:

(i) Arrowed single lines indicate relationships within the community; the dash lines indicate the organisational structures which extend beyond the community; and the two dotted lines represent the interdependence of 'my country' and 'community'.

(ii) Skin Group: This is part of the sub-section system which is probably 'the most pervasive and significant of the classificatory systems in Aboriginal society' (McConnochie, 1973, p.106). There are between four or eight skin groups in most Aboriginal tribes; membership is determined by mother or father's skin, depending upon the tribe. One of the areas of social interaction in which the skin group is of vital importance is that of marriage: all members must marry within their own skin group.

(iii) Conception Dreaming: "Every Walbiri (and most other Aborigines) has a conception dreaming. This means that the foetus from which the person developed was animated by the entry of a guruwari (ancestral totemic spirit) into the mother's womb. The identity of the guruwari depends on where the mother was when that happened. If she discovered her pregnancy while camped near a kangaroo dreaming place, the child was 'found' there and henceforth has the kangaroo dreaming" (Meggit, 1962, p.66). The social effects of conception dreaming bears directly on our thesis, in as much as that it physically relates 'my country' with 'community'. For instance, an Aborigine often describes another with the same conception dreaming as being 'my countryman' or from 'my country'. Thus all those with the same conception dreaming see themselves as being 'from the same place'. This manifests itself in expressions of strong affection for each other, comradeship, respect, and strong allegiance to their country in which reside the spiritual roots and guardians of their 'community'.

(iv) Dreaming Lodges: These are drawn from within skin groups, including closely related family groups, and all young initiates. The men (elders) are the 'bosses' of their particular dreamings, and are thus responsible for the maintenance of dreaming sites, religious services necessary

for renewal, and the passing on of 'sacred' knowledge to new members during the initiation period.

Besides portraying the interdependency of 'my country' and 'community', the diagram also shows some of the important social relationships within the Aboriginal community. Once outside the community, however, these relationships and the roles which they entail become threatened. That is:

> "We know who we are, where we are, and what we are, when we're together; but when we're with them (the white colonists) we're not sure..... they have different ways of doing things: we work and live together as a community, they as selfish people..."[6]

Such an expression of role conflict, which contains a high degree of value-rejection, has tended to be resolved by emphasising the uniqueness of Aboriginal culture, and, more recently, by calling for total or partial segregation. It would again seem that declarations of cultural uniqueness imply 'value' and a traditionally structured belief that the Aboriginal concept of 'community' is a viable entity. Demands for segregation, on the other hand, appear to project the belief that, once segregated, all will be well; the concept and institution of 'community' can, at last, be maintained properly or rediscovered quickly.

From 'community' to Resistive Action

Whether or not segregation will realise Aboriginal aspirations is beyond the scope of this thesis. What is important is that these aspirations exist, and that many Aborigines believe that

'community' can be preserved or rediscovered if segregation were accomplished. In an interview with the then President of the Palm Island Aboriginal Council this view was more than evident in his exclamation:

> "We want them off! They've been dominating and controlling us for the last century; now we want them to go.... and as soon as we've got rid of them, we can live the way we want to live..." [7]

Fred Clay also felt that:

> "On this island, we've got what we need - food, good land, plenty of water, and our families. Now they think they can shift us off, rather than the other way round, so tourists can come and see the (Great Barrier) Reef... you can't break up communities like that: we'll fight them for every inch of our island!"[8]

The events which led up to this resistive expression provide an illustration of how, within a reserve situation, the concept of 'community' formed a predominant social root of resistance.

At the turn of the century Palm Island was established as a penal settlement for blacks, and, like so many other reservations, as a dumping ground for dispossessed Queensland Aborigines. No one single tribe forms a majority on the island; in fact more than 60 tribes are represented in the reserve's population of 1500 Aborigines. The largest tribe is what the islanders call the 'white tribe', consisting of over 250 administrators and officials, many of whom had graduated through the British Colonial Service in pre-1948 India, Africa, and the West Indies, before emigrating to Australia. The average black wage on the island is $35 per week, just under a quarter of the average white

wage. Those families fortunate or unfortunate enough to have jobs have to supplement their income from 'reefing'; those who are unemployed depend upon the principle of sharing - when there is food to share[9]. Houses are built on concrete floors, with little if any furniture, no hot water, and are designed with inadequate drainage and sewerage systems. The rent amounts to $6 per week, plus $3 per week for power, just over 25% of the average Aboriginal wage. Prices, in many cases, as much as 20% more than city prices are charged in the island's shopping compound, where whites are permitted to jump the queues, as they have 'urgent business to attend to'.

Alcoholic refreshments, a total of six small cans per family, can only be bought at the canteen between 5.30 and 6.30 p.m., and then must be drunk in the shed which passes as the island's canteen and social centre. Whereas whites are allowed to drink at any time and in any place - their homes, on the beach, in their gardens, etc. - these privileges do not apply to blacks. Inadequate schooling exists, and all children of secondary school age are sent to the mainland, forty miles away, to receive further education. Some are sent to Charters Towers, 150 miles away, whilst others are enrolled as borders at schools in and around Mt. Isa, some 500 miles away. According to the Headmaster of Palm Island School, fifty per cent drop out and return to the island.

The only hospital on the island is poorly staffed with only one qualified nursing sister and a host of unqualified white nursing aides. One doctor, from Townsville, visits the island once in every six weeks. Ana Soares informs us (and this was supported by the Palm Aborigines we interviewed in September, 1974) that notices last January were posted on

the hospital doors stating that treatment would be denied until missing cutlery and nappies were returned. All the notices were signed by the matron. No action was taken until several women were turned away, then, armed with this evidence, the President of the Palm Island Aboriginal Community Council, Fred Clay, brought sufficient pressure to bear on the mainland authorities which, after some hesitation, instructed the matron to reopen the hospital (Soares, 1974)[10]. Mainland police are frequently flown in to stop 'disturbances' and 'riots' (resistance?); the island gaol is always full; and, during 1974, on three separate occasions the whites were warned, by the police, to arm themselves.

The last occasion was over a change in reserve housing policy. As an experiment three black families were allowed to move into houses along Mango Avenue, within the white compound. Island officials and administrators protested, and circulated a petition calling for the removal of the blacks from the street. The Aboriginal Community Council countered white protest with a noisy demonstration. Four squads of riot police (25 to a squad) were immediately flown in and the whites were advised to arm themselves. On this occasion the demonstration turned out to be no more than singing, 'We shall not be moved', on Mango Street verandas and displaying the Aboriginal National Flag.

Thus for many years Palm Island community life, under the Queensland legislation, has been severely restricted[11]. On the one hand, under the laws, and because they are Aborigine, islanders are prevented from attaining 'white status' and the style of life which it embodies; but, yet on the other, they are disallowed, under the laws and regulations again, to pursue

traditional community activities. All 'barbaric' practices are defined as illegal under the 1971 Aborigines Act, and it would seem after a study of Sections 7-14 (Administration) 15-35 (Reserves), and 48-57 (General Provisions) that the Queensland Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, appointed under Section 7 (i) and (ii), possesses wide powers to outlaw any activity which 'is not in accordance with the provisions of the Act'[12]. It is this formalised attack on 'community' and its expressions which has given rise to the resistive stance and activities of the Palm Island Aboriginal Community Council:

> "Under the racist laws we have no rights... our traditional community has been nearly totally destroyed, and we (the Community Council) are trying to save what we've still got, and from this build a stronger community, one that will soon force the whites off our island... Our community is us, and this is why we're fighting to save it..."[13]

The administration has tended to meet this 'fighting' or resistive action with force (police from the mainland), or with counter-political activity. This latter strategy, a more subtle and devastating tactic altogether, appeared to be employed after the Aboriginal Community Council had politically challenged the Townsville municipal administration's authority to annexe Palm Island as a tourist centre, on and with easy access to the more colourful parts of the Great Barrier Reef. Whilst the reserve administration favoured annexation on financial grounds (tourist money to help defray the cost of the Government-owned and controlled reserve), the Island Aborigines were against it for community reasons. In

should select the majority of members on any proposed elective body (for the control and administration of the island). Fourthly, the island is the home of an Aboriginal community.. and, finally, we are most disturbed at the prospect of a future in which the needs and feelings of our people have second place to commercial development ... by outsiders"[14].

An expression of community centredness and value, this statement was forwarded to councillors and others (particularly, the senior staff of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs) on the 27th August, 1974. The next day, the 28th August, 1974, the Queensland Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs, Mr. N.T.E. Hewitt, under Section 41 of 'The Aborigines Regulations of 1972', dissolved the Palm Island Aboriginal Community Council[15]. Alledgedly, he took this decision after receiving a petition 'signed by at least two-thirds of Council electors' (Townsville Daily Bulletin, 28th August 1974). Despite convincing evidence from a graphologist and others that 90% of the signatures were forged, and all the signatures were in the handwriting of only five individuals, the Community Council's appeal and the injunction was disallowed by the Cairns Supreme Court on Thursday 12th September, the eve of the new Community Council elections. Almost voluptuously, the Townsville Daily Bulletin, renowned throughout the Palm community for its anti-Aboriginal editorials, carried the following story on polling day:

<u>'Explosive Situation exists at Settlement'</u>

"The elections will be held against a background of growing tension and fears that violence could erupt if the old council members - who were frequently opposed to State Government policies - are not re-

a statement to the Townsville Municipal Council, the Aborigines collectively voiced their objections and fears for the future of their community on Palm Island. The statement continued:

> "The City Council has approved the extension of its boundaries in this manner (the legal annexation of Palm Island), but the Aboriginal Community Council has been most disappointed in the lack of interest which the City Council has shown for the views and feelings of the Aboriginal community.
>
> A newspaper report of the Townsville City Council meeting held on August 1st, 1974, showed that its approval of the opposed takeover of the Palms Group followed a long debate which appeared to be concerned only with the financial aspects of such a takeover. Little consideration was given to the clearly expressed views of our Aboriginal community... Copies of our objections were not circulated to individual councillors, nor was our objection considered at the council meeting.
>
> A reader of the report of the debate... would have been left with the impression that there was little or no resistance to the proposals amongst the Aboriginal community ... We would have thought that the existence of a formal objection to the proposal signed by 330 adult inhabitants of the island would have assumed particular relevance at this stage of the debate.....
>
> Firstly, it is clear that the Townsville City Council will not be contributing any of the funds required for development works, and they will even be requiring reimbursement for any technical advisers who take part in the works programme.
>
> We accordingly feel that they have no legitimate claim to control the future development of our country..... Secondly.... we feel that our community should have responsibility for its future development, or else we shall only be swapping one paternalistic authority for another... Thirdly, we feel that our own members

elected.

One senior Aboriginal authority said yesterday, there had been unconfirmed reports of attempts to get firearms onto the State Government-controlled island. He said Aboriginal activists had also been known to have held several meetings with island residents at Townsville during the last two weeks. Fourteen people will seek election to the Council - including the former (five) councillors.

One senior Aboriginal authority said a potentially explosive situation existed on the island: 'The island is at a flash point and feelings are running very high over this issue .... It will be no surprise if there is trouble and violence on the island no matter what happens in the elections'..."[16]

On the island, where in fact, we were during this struggle, white officials were canvassing (or, perhaps, 'bribing' is a better word to describe the pre-electoral strategy of 'If you vote for X, I'll see that you and your family will get...') for selected 'mature, sensible, respected and stable' candidates. Their attitude towards the old Council appeared to be more irrational than rational, and more concerned with their own future than that of the Islanders:

"They're too radical and militant, we can't have Black Power and communists running Palm..."

"They bring in 'stirrers' (from the south) like Dennis Walker and Bobbi Sykes to stir up the people..."

"They don't do much for the people, anyway. Have you seen 'Smoke Signal', it spreads bitterness and hatred for whites...

"The people don't want him and his (Fred Clay) radicals, they're happy as they were...."

"He's got this idea about community, nobody wants it here; you know, bringing things up that happened in

history, and wanting to return to the past - that's racist, ain't it?"[17]

Under the supervision of white officials, and with the 'aid' of two squads of mainland police, electors, on Friday morning, the 13th September, were lined up outside the polling booth, prevented from smoking or talking, marched into the station, and with officials hovering around 'instructed' to place their marks on hastily drawn up ballot papers. During the two hours we were observing this spectacle, we counted, not only a number of procedural and organisational irregularities, but twenty-two ballot papers which had been filled in by 'official helpers'. At the end of the day the 'official' results were given as follows:

Figure Six[18]

Candidate	Votes Obtained
*John Watson	192
*Mick Seaton	184
*Bernard Casters	143
*Jacob Baira	142
**Mrs Twaddle	118
Robert Ketchup	99
Ethell Conway	83
Neville Morton	78
**Edith Lenoy	64
**Fred Clay	50
**Emily Prior	48
**Bill Congoo	41
Rosemary Congoo	40
Vassa Hunter	55

*New Community Council Members

**Former Community Members

N.B. Mrs. Twaddle was the only former member to be re-elected.

Although this result is open to many interpretations - for example, as a white officials' victory; a 'silent' black majority victory; a victory for conservatism - the end of resistance; a victory for Queensland and the Townsville Council; a corrupt victory; or a vote for the continuation of racist oppression - several things were, indeed, clear. First, after the elections most Aborigines were surprised with the result; second, the Community Council as a resistive political organisation was no longer to function as such; third, resistance, for the time being, had been squashed; and fourth, the modified socio-political and economic concept of 'community', which had formed the base of the Council's political and resistive actions, had been impaired, some might say destroyed, by the staged elections.

To speculate on the long-term effects of the elections is not within our province, so we conclude with the remarks of the former President of the Palm Island Aboriginal Community Council:

> "They've (the white officials) won today, but that is all.... our community will go on growing, increasing its political and cultural awareness, and resisting all attempts to destroy it. Townsville may get its tourist island in the sun after all; the Queensland racists and their Acts will rejoice at our temporary defeat... but tomorrow is coming soon, and one day tomorrow we shall win..."[19]

This illustration has been recorded in some detail here, because, although other aspects of action can be seen to exist - the economic, the reaction to racist oppression and poor living conditions, action arising out of Federal/State conflict on race policy, actions resulting out of competing ideologies (racism, communalism, capitalism), actions which

portrayed the corporate controlling function of the (racist) state, and so on - for Palm Island Aborigines at the time, as reflected in the Community Council's statement quoted above, it was, essentially, the protection of 'community' with which they were concerned. For them the concept of 'community' had been modified to act as a kind of social catalyst for resistance. Whereas the Yirrkala or Gurindji people found more of a base for their resistive struggle in the concept of 'my country', rather than exclusively in 'community', it would seem that in situations where either Aborigines have been forcibly separated from their country or urbanised, a modified notion of 'community' forms the predominant social root of resistance:

> "We must accept that we have a slightly different vision of our country than our traditional brothers and sisters have. That is not to say we do not want our land back; we do; but it is to say that our organisation is more 'community' than 'country' based. That is we all see ourselves belonging to a community, quite distinct from white communities... Ours stretches back to our Dreamtime, and, although many of us, over the decades, have been brainwashed and conditioned by the whites, we still know what it means to belong to an Aboriginal or Islander community... all our political campaigns, and we've been engaged in the struggle for longer than any other organisation, are a living testament of this...."[20]

Other urban-based organisations appear to share the same views as the General Secretary of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI). For example, the Victorian Aboriginal Housing Association has campaigned consistently for accommodation which reflects the needs of community-based Aborigines; the Institute for

Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs has even gone one stage further; they have campaigned for modern housing units to be built around the traditional camp layout in order to cater for extended family and totemic groupings (Downing, 1974)[21]; and the Murawina Aboriginal Project in Sydney operates on, first, the assumption that the Aboriginal community is quite different from any other, and, second, that a modified version of the traditional concept is as applicable in Redfern as on Palm Island (Articles of Association, 2 (i) to (xxxxii), July, 1974)[22].

All these organisations, and many others too numerous to list there, have resisted either State, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, or Federal Government intentions and schemes challenging their community-base. The VAHA has refused to accept 'scattered' State housing; Aborigines in and around Alice Springs have refused to occupy European housing units on the basis that their community life would be disrupted if they did so; and the Murawina Project have continued to resist efforts to multi-racialise their projects for similar reasons. What emerges from these often small localised resistance campaigns (NOLP and VOLP), in largely urban areas, is not only a feeling of 'togetherness' but also a feeling of rediscovery - the movement towards a more tradition-oriented concept of community. For, each successful encounter pushes the white world further away, and in so doing, decreases the cultural gap between what Europeans' term the 'full-blood' and 'half-caste' populations. In other words the urban-based Aborigine often views himself as 'in between two worlds' and only through resisting can he disengage himself from the tentacles of one in order to embrace the other.

In the resistive actions of this 'other world' he sees hope, an image of what his forefathers stood for, what they were, and how they conducted their affairs. For the urban based Aborigines, resistance thus provides meaning, a sense of purpose, a way in which he can reconcile his living in a white urban setting with that of being an Aborigine. And being an Aborigine entails, however modified, the acceptance of beliefs and codes of behaviour set out and laid down during the creative period.

> "You can't say just because I'm black that I'm an Aborigine. My colour may make me different from whites, but it doesn't make me an Aborigine... I'm an Aborigine because I say I'm an Aborigine, because I believe in what all Aborigines believe in - our country, our Dreamtime, and our community"[23].

Common to all Aborigines, and now accepted,(since the 1967 Referendum, which in Euraustralian history paved the way for political enfranchisement of Aborigines) by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and an increasing number of European officials working in Aboriginal Affairs, this definition, based on 'uniqueness', raises significant policy issues.

Before 1967, for instance, the Euroaustralian government considered that all Aborigines could be easily assimilated into European society; that is, the government, in theory, did not accept Aboriginal 'uuiqueness' as being a significant political factor in race relations today. Today, the position is quite different: how can the Labour government deny Aboriginal demands or counteract resistance based in part on the principle of 'uniqueness'? Or, conversely, if the Referendum is interpreted as an expression of the general society's approval, how can Aborigines not continue to resist, now that a form of

external legitimation has been sanctioned? That the government is continuing to deny Aboriginal demands is quite evident on any reserve and in any city; and that Aboriginal resistance is becoming more frequent, and demonstrative is also evident (Mullard, 1974, Duncan, 1973; Rowley, 1971).

What, possibly, is not so evident is that the community root of resistance over the last five years has become increasingly predominant. It would seem that 'community', however interpreted, is a unifying concept for all Aborigines, and is also one which can be more easily understood by Europeans. Whereas the concept of 'my country' raises ideological and moral issues as well as challenging the economic and social base of Euroaustralian society, and the concept of 'Dreamtime' is little understood - 'mumbo-jumbo' - a quite inappropriate belief system for the twentieth century, the concept of 'community', on the other hand, is one which is not only intelligible, but is also one with which urbanised and industrialised European society, almost romantically, identify. Seen on one level as an expression of social fellowship, on another as the structural equivalent of the pre-urbanised extended family, and yet on another as a politically neutral expression of togetherness, Europeans are able to emphasise this aspect of Aboriginal life as 'desirable'. Capitalising on this, Aborigines, in turn, are able not only to project it as a social base for their resistance but also relate it to the other social bases of resistance. So, through a process of association - the pointing out that "community" cannot be understood in a vacuum, that it is inseparably related to 'my country' and 'dreamtime' - the concept loses its neutrality and becomes ideologised and politicised.

In a traditional setting, where this process can be seen more clearly, Aborigines during the last three years have been able both to reincorporate once disallowed traditional practices as part of their collective life, and forceably resist any attempts either to dismantle or revise their practice and understanding of 'community'. Initiation ceremonies which involve sub-incision operations have been restarted on Mornington Island; despite the principle of double punishment, the Tiwi have re-instituted the tribal court; clan groups have forsaken the 'security' and 'welfarism' of the Lutheran mission at Hermansburg and the catholic mission at Daly River in favour of 'going bush'; groups at Papunya have followed suit; and over 500 Aborigines have left the Bathurst Island mission and returned to their country at Snake Bay and Garden Point, where away from Catholic doctrinal domination, they can live as a 'community'.

If we were to look at one of these tradition oriented resistance examples in more detail - for instance, the Garden Point case - we would also see that the Aboriginal concept of 'community' is an integral rationalising constituent of resistive action. In the first place, as a physical community, with clearly defined functions similar to those listed by Meggit, the Garden Point people, a Tiwi sub-tribe, found that within the social confines of the Bathurst Island mission they could not live in the way they had been accustomed to for nearly 40,000 years.

During the 1930s, the catholic missionaries, after several unsuccessful attempts, managed to placate 'Tiwi hostility' and establish a permanent settlement on the island (Hart and Pilling,

1960, op cit.). The steps involved in this pacification included enforced conversion to Christianity, the calculated destruction of many tribal practices (initiation, the tribal court, polygamous relationships, and so on), and compulsory religious and general education which emphasised what a Tiwi man described to us as 'the three sins' - reading, writing, and arithmetic in English. All these strategies, designed to achieve and institute the unquestioned rightness of catholicism, intended or not, amounted to a devastating attack on Tiwi community life. This was reinforced when the missionaries decided to round up forcibly Tiwi clans on both islands and insist that they remained within the mission, situated at the southern end of Bathurst Island.

In this social prison setting, not unlike that which exists today on Palm Island, the Tiwi clans were unable, overtly, to continue community life. But, unlike Palm Island Aborigines, they all belonged to the same Tribe, and were, more or less, within a week's walk from their respective countries. Basically, this meant that secret-ively, and usually at night, whole clans could return to their countries, attend important ceremonies, and engage, for as long as it took for the armed missionaries to track them down, in community life. All the structural aspects of community - country, skin group, the dreaming lodge, and kinship relationships - could be revitalised and, if need be, renewed during this period of 'escape'.

So by the late 1960s and early 1970s, not only was there a whole generation on the island who had experienced full traditional life, but nearly all the Tiwi people had experienced during the 'escapes', at least, some aspects of 'community'.

And from the statements below it would appear that it was this which, after the Yirrkala case, converted sporadic resistance (the 'escapes') into a permanent symbol of Tiwi resistance - the establishment of independent traditional communities at both Snake Bay and Garden Point.

> "We tried to live like we want to at the mission, but they say no to us. We were told by them all, all our ideas and things were no good. They stopped our 'courts', our hunting, and many sacred things... all they want us to do was to work and be catholics.....
>
> "The get our kids and teach them bible, whitefeller's ways of doing things; they make us go to Mass, and tell us we not proper human beings without going to church and confession.... Some of us go, but we not believe... our Gods live long time before Jesus Christ, and they tell us what to do and behave... that's what the mission don't understand....
>
> "Anyway, we go on (long time) not believing mission, and go on with own ways... We hunt when they go to bed; we have escapes, go to our country and do all things mission says wrong... (because) we knows they right things...
>
> "When they catch us, we made to go confession... some of we go because they want tucker tomorrow; we go and please mission, but it we don't like... it's wrong ways...
>
> "What he says is right, we have our own things, and when Yirrkala mob and Gurindji mob stands up and says to whitefellers, 'Go Away!", we says to mission: 'We don't want your ways, we wants our ways; we don't want church marriage, we want our marriage; we don't want mission law, we want our law'; and we says all these things like that. We tell them we together, and we want live together

> like we did... and they says to us,
> 'Eh, blackfeller, you need we; we give
> you tucker and things.... you don't go to
> Mass, you go to Hell... you die in bush'.
> We say to mission, 'Whitefeller no good, we
> die in mission'. And then like Gurindji mob,
> we say we walk off. Big mobs walk off mission
> in dark, and we goes to our country, and we
> stops here some time. Mission not come here;
> they afraid we make big fight...
>
> "We stay here as big mob (community) again, like
> we did before... no way back... all families keep
> coming here... this we our home, not mission..."[24]

Community and Communication

From the above it is clear that the Tiwi clans were inspired to resist in a permanent way by the example of the Gurindji people. The question that naturally arises, and one which has implications for the organisation of resistance on local and national levels, is how did the Tiwi people first get to know?

From a recent piece of research undertaken by Duncan it would seem that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that resistance news is relayed through community based 'grapevines' (Duncan, 1973, pp.5-9). He points out that:

> "It is apparent that there exists throughout the
> remote areas of Australia 'grapevines' whereby
> Aborigines on missions, settlements, and stations,
> pass information about kinsfolk, events and general
> gossip as well as matters of ritual importance. It
> is becoming clear that information about protests
> (resistance) or issues are transmitted... along

> 'grapevines' similar to the more traditional links. Similarly gatherings for 'Inmas' (renewal and increase ceremonies), 'Outback Olympics' (e.g. the Yuendumu Sports Weekend), Show Days or other large ceremonies will provide opportunity for the exchange of information and ideas. Thus strategies which may have proved effective for one community will be passed on to others, plans co-ordinated, and support requested or offered."[25]

This general conclusion is supported by von Sturmer who found that 'infrastructural developments (on reserves and missions) took the forms of a gradual identification by Aborigines with a wider group', and that' strong affiliations within a narrow group were replaced with tenuous links in the composition of broader groups' (von Sturmer, 1973, p.24)[26]. Elaborated on by Beckett in his study of kinship relations amongst Aborigines in New South Wales, these 'infrastructural developments' appear to include a communication, and indeed, resistance network formed by cross-cutting 'beats' - a path taken by an Aborigine which joins various communities in which there are kin to welcome him (Beckett, 1965 and 1974).[27] There is little doubt that these 'beats' or community paths which interlock one traditional community with another are used for the communication of resistance information.

> "We talk about things at corroborees and ceremonies (usually held at intersections on the community path), and we gets to know what is happening all over.... this is how we know about Gurindji mob long time before whitefeller..."[28]

For the urban based Aborigines a similar network, based on community, exists. Many of them maintain contact with kinsfolk and others from their original area, and, as we saw in chapter one those who are unable to trace tradition oriented kin tend to

establish adoptive relations with other groups. Invariably this kind of community is dispersed, covering, in many cases, several states. But in spite of this distance difficulty as Eckermann points out, contact occurs quite frequently (Eckermann, 1973)[29]. Two other kinds of network also exist through which resistance information is conveyed. The first is the prison in which there is not only a high turnover of Aboriginal inmates, with both traditional and urban backgrounds, but in which there is also a disproportionately high black population (Schapper, 1970, Robinson, 1969, Rowley, 1970)[30]. Here, as in many American prisons, communication networks are articulated and developed, and political and resistive news is channelled through it the same way as any other kind of news. The second network, a more recent development, is to be found in the state and interstate conferences and seminars on Aboriginal Affairs. Since the Labour Party came into power in December, 1972, increased funds have been allocated for Aboriginal conferences, and from the conferences we attended it was quite obvious that they provided a venue for the communication and organisation of resistance. Further, it was also apparent that they attracted black radicals, conservatives, urbanised Aborigines, and those oriented towards traditional cutlture.

Although our research cannot show in detail how this communication system is linked or operated - as more specific work needs to be undertaken in the field - it does, however, tentatively suggest that it is through 'community' that resistance news, strategy, and assessment is conducted.

What we can be more sure about is that the social institution of 'community' is not only an important aspect of Aboriginal social life, but that, because of its importance, it is also one of the

three main social roots of resistance. Closely related to 'my country', it is for tradition-oriented Aborigines a living-out together of the ways established during the 'Dreamtime'. For more urban-based groups, or those living on non-traditional reservations, like Palm Island, it is always evolving, moving through the means of resistance away from Euroaustralian conceptions and towards its Aboriginal beginnings - the 'Dreamtime'.

NOTES

1. See Margaret Bain, Aboriginal Concept - 'Being' rather than Doing' in Seminars, 1971, (ed) by Lorna Lippmann, and published by the Centre for Research into Aboriginal Affairs, Monash University, 1972.

2. From a group interview with Walbiri Aborigines on the 3rd August, 1974.

3. From an interview with Bill Parry, Daly River Mission, 23rd August, 1974.

4. See Meggit, The Desert People, op cit.

5. Figure Five is largely based upon McConnochie's diagram which attempts to show the approximate order of some of the determinants of community organisation, and some of the important relationships which exist between them. See Keith R. McConnochie, Realities of Race, 1973, p.105.

6. From an interview with Kevin Saylor, an Aboriginal representative to the National Aboriginal Congress, on 10th September, 1974.

7. From an interview with Fred Clay on 12th September, 1974.

8. Source as in Note 7 above.

9. The term 'reefing' refers to the part-time occupation of collecting specimens of coral off the Great Barrier Reef. They are then sold directly to tourists.

10. See Ana Soares, Palm Island: Queensland's own Devil Island, in the Nation Review, 24-30th May, 1974, p.1031.

11. See the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Act of 1965 (No. 27, 1965); The Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Act of 1967 (No. 32,1967); and The Aborigines Act of 1971 (No. 59, 1971) together with The Torres Strait Islanders' Act of 1971 (No. 60, 1971), and The Aborigines Regulations of 1972 for details concerning the legal status of Queensland's Aboriginal population.

12. See The Aborigines Act. 1971 op cit.

13. From an interview with Fred Clay and two other Community Council members, op cit. Some of the resistive actions the Council has initiated include: the organisation of land rights seminars and demonstrations; physical attacks (termed as 'rioting' by the white police); the launching of Smoke Signal, the Island's community and political weekly; work and pupil strikes; the kidnapping of whiteofficials; and the taking over and the running of the canteen.

14. Reported in the Townsville Daily Bulletin on the 28th August, 1974, although, the statement, in fact, was made on the 27th August.

15. Section 41, para (1) of The Aborigines Regulations of 1972 reads as follows:

> "The Minister may upon the petition of at least two-thirds of the electors of a Reserve or Community, in respect of which an Aboriginal Council is established, if in his opinion it is necessary to do so, by notice in writing dissolve such Council whereupon:-
>
> (a) The Chairman and Councillors shall forthwith vacate their respective offices.
> (b) A fresh election of three Councillors shall be held at such time as the manager appoints.
> (c) The Director (white official) shall appoint two Councillors.
>
> Nothing in dissolution of such Council as such shall preclude any or all Councillors from being re-elected or re-appointed, if otherwise qualified".

16.. From a report in the Townsville Bulletin on Friday, 13th September 1974.

17. The views listed here were recorded after an afternoon's discussion, on Thursday, 12th September, with senior white officials on the Island.

18. The results were eventually declared at 8.30 p.m. on Friday, 13th September, 1974. It is interesting to note that many of the new Community Council members had shown little interest in the political and community life of the Island - in fact, they were considered by many to be non-Aboriginal. When interviewed three of them declared

that they had been 'instructed' to stand for election!

19. From an interview with Fred Clay on Friday, 13th September, 1974.

20. From an interview with Evelyn Scott on the 15th September, 1974.

21. See Downing, Traditional Community Lay-Out in Destiny, vol. 1, July, 1974, an Aboriginal journal, published by Aboriginal students from Torrens College, Adelaide. As the only Euroaustralian paper in that issue, the editors considered it important to explain in a footnote why they had decided to reprint the paper:

> "We have decided to reprint this article to make whites aware that traditional Aboriginal concepts can be related to town planning, and in so doing make the point that white European planning concepts are no longer acceptable to Aboriginal communities."

22. See the Memorandum and Articles of Association of Murawina Limited Legal Copying Co. Pty, Sydney, July, 1974 for further information concerning the community base of the Murawina project.

23. From an interview with Fred Clay, op cit., on the 13th September 1974.

24. From a group interview with Tiwi Aborigines at Garden Point, Melville Island, on 29th August, 1974.

25. See Duncan, Aborigines and Protest: One Movement or Many? an unpublished paper delivered to Section 25 of the Australian and New Zealand Associatinn of Anthropology and Sociology, Perth, 1973.

26. See von Sturmer, J., Changing Aboriginal Identity in Cape York in D. Tugby (ed) Aboriginal Identity in Contemporary Australian Society, 1973

27. See Beckett, J., Kinship, Mobility, and Community among Part-Aborigines in Rural Australia International Journal of Comparative Sociology, vol. 6, no. 1, 1965, pp. 7-23.

28. From an interview with Bobby Secretary, a Kullaluk Aborigine, on the 5th September 1974.

29. See Eckermann, A. Group Identity and Urban Aborigines in D. Tugby (ed), 1973, op cit.

30. For statistical evidence see Henry Schapper, Aboriginal Advance ment to Integration, 1970, pp. 188-190; Michael Robinson, Imprisonment of Aborigines and Part-Aborigines in Western Australia, in R.M. Berndt (ed), Thinking About Australian Welfare, 1969; and Rowley, C.D., Outcasts in White Australia, 1970, p.357

CHAPTER SIX: DREAMTIME

Inherent in nearly all Aboriginal statements, is the concept of 'Dreamtime' - sometimes explicitly stated, at other times not, but always present. One of the clearest academic descriptions we have encountered is that offered by Berndt (Berndt, 1964, pp 187-188):

> "(The Dreamtime) was the past; but it was not the past in the sense of something that is over and done with. The creative beings who lived on the earth at that time did perform certain actions then, and will not repeat them: but their influence is still present, and can be drawn on by people who repeat those actions in the appropriate way, or perform others about which they left instructions. This attitude is summarised in the expression, 'the Eternal Dreamtime', which underlines the belief that the mythological past is vital and relevant in the present, and in the future. In one sense the past is still here, in the present, and is part of the future as well. In another but relevant context, the spirits of deceased human beings are still alive and indestructible. The mythical characters themselves are not dead. They continue to live, although in different forms, and in different places.... they continue to exist as long as men obey their instructions, and act in the ways laid down for them at the beginning. The 'life' of these beings, and the life of the Aborigines as a group or constellation of groups distinct from others, are linked together, the one depending upon the other. In other words there is a close relationship between the 'Dreamtime' and the rest of social life in general".[1]

The story of Eingana was thus more than a story about 'the Beginning', it was, as we saw in an earlier chapter, an illustration of the cyclical nature of life, a story which set out the relationships

which should exist between man and animal, plant and man, man and country, and man and man. Within its form, it propounded a set of rules by which man could conduct his social, economic, and spiritual life. Through the repitition of actions it promised continuity, survival, and a realisation of both 'self', and 'doing' and 'being' together (community). The raison d'etre for Aboriginal existence is then to be found in the 'Dreamtime', the performing of similar actions, and adhering to similar beliefs, held by the ancestral beings.

> "The Dreamtime is we.... we follow all ancestors do, and doing this we knows we live right, like blackfellers have to... Don't do things like they (the ancestral beings) do, we blackfellers nobody..."[2]

> "Following the ways of the past, makes it possible for us to live today. Our lives only mean something to us, because we do the same things... think the same things, as my people did long time ago, as my lubra (children) will do tomorrow..."[3]

> "Our Dreamtime is all time... all my people do, all we blackfellers have. It's all of we ... when we hunt, how we live, how we see whitefeller, how we go about Aboriginal business... all this, and everything, is our Dreamtime..."[4]

It is this relationship 'between the 'Dreamtime' and the rest of social life in general', rather than a philosophical analysis of the concept, which interests us here. More precisely, this chapter attempts to discuss a number of inter-related questions - questions which arise out of and are grounded within Aboriginal conceptions of their 'Dreamtime' past, present, and future.

The first concerns the relationship between 'Dreamtime' and 'My Country'.

Dreamtime and Country

What does the 'Dreamtime' mean in terms of 'My Country'? In part this question has already been answered. During the Yirrkala Land Rights case, Professor Berndt made it quite clear that land is collectively held in trust, and has been so in a time perspective ' which extends backwards to the mythical creative past and forward into the future as in inviolable heritage of Aboriginal man, as part of the concept of Wongar linking-man with the land and the Great Spirit Beings' (Berndt, op cit[5])

Thus the Yirrkala Aborigines were forced to act in the way they did. Their social futures depended upon it, and their own definition of 'self', as Aborigines responsible for the protection and 'renewal' of their country, militated against any other kind of collective decision. For, in the process of taking and acting out their decision, they were re-affirming their knowledge of themselves as Aborigines, and as a community 'pledged to hold the land'. They were, after all, only doing what the Dreamtime beings had (and were) instructing. To have failed to have acted resistively would have amounted to failure as Aborigines.

From the Gurindji experience we learn that Daguragu (Wattie Creek) was not only made and marked out by the ancestral beings, but that it was, in fact, their spiritual home; and that closeness to it was equated with their capacity to survive, free from Vestey's exploitative employment contracts, and the Government's racist policies. To put it another way, the Gurindji believed that, if they returned to their dreaming place (country), they could reunite themselves with their dreaming spirits, and, from this reunion, extract sufficient social and spiritual strength to continue their resistance.

From the Gwalwa Daraniki resistance movement, we saw that the concept of 'my country' had been interpreted in an economic way; the ownership of mineral wealth, the right to control business enterprises on Aboriginal land, and, to denote physical ownership, the right to exercise control of 'immigration' and 'tourism'. Segregationist policies, such as these, appeared not only to be expressions of economic and social self-determination, as Kolig asserts, but also declarations of 'Dreamtime' beliefs (Kolig, 1973, op cit)[6].

> "All our country was given to us to look after by our ancestors; we, if you like, were the chosen people... to protect it, renew it, and love it... This is what we're doing today when we demand immediate land rights, when the Gurindji take over Wattie Creek, when we issue passports for the Northern Territory... This is what was laid down during the 'Dreamtime', and the 'Dreamtime' never stops because we're still here.... The only way the Gubahs (whites) can stop us is by murder - and they've already tried that, but we're still here..."[7]

Ideological support, is consequently sought from the never-ending 'Dreamtime'. Resistance, like all other actions, can be justified in this way. Furthermore, all beliefs which rule the kind of interactions which make up Aboriginal social life can, directly (tradition-oriented) or indirectly (urban-based), be traced backwards and forwards in the time perspective of the 'Dreaming'. Without such a system of beliefs, which contact has politicised, Aboriginal actions would become meaningless, and colonial conquest total. By keeping the 'Dreamtime' intact, that is, by protecting and maintaining the essential institutions of social life, total colonial conquest has been abated, actions remain meaningful, and all socially and economically dispossessed Aborigines can now, if they so wish, abandon the nightmare of contact

and walk backwards through time and experience to the beginning that does not end. The 'Dreamtime' defines 'my country', and justifies all actions, designed for its protection and survival.

Dreamtime and Community

In much the same way, the 'Dreamtime' also defines 'community'. For, as 'community' is largely based on, and springs from, 'my country', it too is made possible and sanctioned by ancestral beliefs and the action they reflected. In other words what tradition-oriented Aborigines term 'community' is the organised summation of all those actions which constituted collective life during the time of Eingana, or the time of the Old Man and His Six Sons. Skin group membership, dreaming lodges, kinship relations, initiation procedures, and the rules which govern totemic life were all constructed and sanctified during this period. So the Tiwi's re-institution of their 'tribal court', or the Mornington Islanders' re-commencement of initiation ceremonies, against mission policy, and the authority contained within, were not just acts of resistance, but also acts designed to gain the approbation of their spiritual ancestors. By resisting mission authority, they were conforming to the demands of a more pertinent and higher (for them) authority, established during the 'Dreamtime'. If they wished to remain Aborigines, they had no choice but to resist mission authority and obey that of their ancestors. As a Mornington Islander expressed it more explicitly and succinctly than we could ever do:

> "(With) no initiation we only little Aborigine; initiation make we men... no initiation we in big trouble with them spirits..."[8]

Undergoing initiation ceremonies appeared to possess more than the obvious significance it has for community life: the act of under-

going guaranteed both eventual manhood and the preservation and renewal of the 'living' 'Dreamtime'. The fear of the spirits, coupled with the greater fear of becoming 'nobody' or a 'little Aborigine', gave an added dimension to their resistance campaign: they saw, like the Gurindji and others, the success of resistance as life, and its failure as death.

From this brief discussion it is not difficult to see the relationship that exists between the 'Dreamtime' and 'Community' amongst tradition-oriented Aborigines. What is more difficult is to see the relationship amongst those Aborigines living in an urban setting, or on reservations, such as Palm Island, where traditional influence appears to be either non-existent or too various to have much effect on group actions. What occurs in these situations, is a process of cultural identification, expressed not so much in terms of a traditional vocabulary, but in the political language of the colonists. Although resistive actions are based on alternative concepts - such as communalism - their mode of expression tends to be more akin to what Duncan and others see as 'legitimate protest' (Duncan, 1973, op cit)[9]. It is this similarity of expression which leads to confusion, and, the misconstruing of the political nature of Aboriginal actions.

In the case of the Palm Island resistance campaign, which was based on a modified understanding of 'community', the Palm Island Aboriginal Community Council, possessed some notion concerning the rightness of their actions. Although in many ways they appealed to the social conscience of the 'liberal Euroaustralian' it would seem that beneath this rested a further claim - one based on the assumption that the island, and, indeed, the country known as Australia belonged to Aborigines.

> " We want them off! They've been dominating and controlling us for the last century; now we want them to go... and as soon as we've got rid of them, we can live the way we want to live..."[10]

Within the assumptive boundaries of this view three important factors are evident. The first is that white domination and control has tended to restrict Aboriginal collective expression and realisation of traditional 'community'. The second, not unlike the ethnocentrism of the Tiwi and all other traditional groups, refers to the Dreamtime belief that alien presence and exploitation of 'country' affronts the dignity of 'country' and its inhabitants. And the third, contained in the words 'we can live the way we want to live' suggests not only that Palm Islanders know the way in which they want to live, but also that this way is quite different from and incompatible with a Euroaustralian way of life. So, through a process of cultural identification with more explicit formulations of Aboriginality, Palm Islanders and many other reservation or urban Aborigines tend to base their arguments and resistance goals on theoretically similar, though experiencially modified, concepts of 'my Country', 'Community', and 'Dreamtime'.

Dreamtime and Contact

Through the various kinds of contact situations outlined in Chapter Two, urban based Aborigines tended to loose, not the whole meaning, but the practical everyday aspects of the 'Dreamtime'. Initially, they were prevented from living a traditional way of life, and, after decades of deculturisation, they found themselves alienated from traditional Aboriginal and Euroaustralian society. Conseqnently, today, the structures and forms of tradition-oriented resistance are denied to them. Unlike the Gurindji, the Melbourne Aboriginal population of some 5000, for example, cannot fence off Fitzroy, claim

it as their spiritual home, and resist the anger and attack of nearly 2½ million whites. Or, again, the 10,000 strong Sydney Aboriginal population cannot very well claim Botany Bay, Manley Cove, or the Circular Quay as their 'tribal lands', for, if for no other reason, many no longer know the whereabouts of their 'country' or names of the ancestral beings who once lived there. The story of their 'Dreamtime' has long since been lost. All that remains, in a traditional sense, is its general meaning as a set of beliefs Aborigines should follow.

> "Although we've lost a lot.... (for example), I don't know what tribe I come from... we still have some idea about our past... We're finding out more all the time, and, from what we know, and what our Brothers in the outback tell us, we're building up a new Dreamtime".[11]

For Palm Islanders this remodelling process has taken the form of rediscovering through Aboriginal history all that was destroyed, and the gradual re-construction, from various traditional sources, of a new 'community' based upon traditional beleifs (Smoke Signal 1974)[12]. For the Sydney Aborigines of Redfern it has provided a similar base for re-discovery; and in Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, and Perth it has led to the adoption and reinterpretation of local 'Dreamings' in order to meet urban situations (McGuinness, 1974)[13]. Thus the general meaning of 'Dreamtime', which is common to all Aboriginal groups, is just becoming re-articulated and re-fashioned as a base for resistance in urban settings.

Dreamtime and Ideology

Since white contact, the 'Dreamtime' has become explicitly ideologised. Besides its manifestation in social life for tradition-oriented Aborigines - rituals, ceremonies, systems of social organisation, and so on - it now forms an integral part of Aboriginal political views,

usually referred to as 'communalism'. In other words, the beliefs, which underline social life (the 'Dreamtime'), possess two inter-related sets of meaning for traditional Aborigines. The first, as we have seen, concerns the spiritual fabric of social life. The second is more concerned with the political preservation of that social life.

> "We believe what we're doing is right; we know we have to defend our country: we're told to do this by our great spirits... our views are theirs, and when you ask us what we're fighting for, we say because we have to... We want to live together like we've always done; we want to go on with our community; we don't want the whites hder spoiling everything for us; we don't want to be made to do whitefellers' work: we've got our own work, black-fellers' business, to do like we've always done.. This is what our spirits say, this is what our ancestors done, and this is why we fight here..."[14]

Like most traditional views, entailing reasons and justifications for resistance, this too is the product of both historical and social experience. Contact has been viewed as disasterous for Aboriginal life, and, when compared with Aboriginal values, colonial values, particularly those relating to material and religious life, are viewed as objectionable. What emerges from the above is thus a subjective evaluation of two competing ideologies: that of Aboriginal 'communalism' with that of Euroaustralian 'capitalism'.

Communalism, as an ideology, appears to embrace and be part of all Aboriginal views. As well as expressing the 'Dreamtime' in a political way, it is sufficiently broad to stretch across the effects of contact, unite all Aborigines, and offer a future happiness largely based upon past experience and supported by traditional authority. 'My Country', once segregated from Euroaustralia, will provide the necessary economic and social base for a modified Aboriginal

society. 'Community' will provide the base for the structure and organisation of relationships within the re-modelled society; and the 'Dreamtime' will become its ideological anchor, shaping and determining actions within its boundaries.

This conception of a future Aboriginal society, a way of maintaining traditional values in a setting, which, in itself, has been forced upon Aborigines by past and present colonists' actions, is by no means a totally accepted solution. For instance, a number of groups, attached economically and socially to Euroaustralian society, see their future in terms of an Aboriginal minority group within a white dominated and controlled environment. For them the 'Dreamtime' is an urban expression, the beliefs which, as one participant put it, underline 'our socialist commune here in Sydney'[15].

This conception is quite different from that of those who use the political language of the colonists in resistance struggles. A possible reason for this is that the Palm Islanders and others accept, in essence, the traditional conceptions of 'My Country', 'Community' and 'Dreamtime', whereas those who seek non-Aboriginal answers to ostensibly Aboriginal issues do not. For them, the 'Dreamtime' is a political weapon in their battle for equal opportunities, constituting neither a demand nor an ideological root of their 'protest'. It is a guilt-producing weapon designed to bring about a significant change in policy, rather than one which challenges the authority of policy makers.

Quickly, it should be said that our intention is not to denigrate this approach, but to show that the person who referred to 'our socialist commune here in Sydney', and others, who see, equal

opportunities in Euroaustralia are, by and large, engaged in actions considered by a majority of Aborigines to be non-Aboriginal. The criticism seems to be that they have decided to base their actions on European rather than Aboriginal beliefs, and have sought justification for doing so, not within the 'Dreamtime' (like us) but outside..."They're the blacks... what I mean, they're black rather than Aboriginal. Their concerns and problems - getting jobs, houses, being accepted by whites, and getting what they call 'equality' - are not the same as ours. We know who we are, they don't; and we're fighting for who we are, whereas they're fighting for what they want to be... Their so-called Dreamtime is incidental, made up in Redfern, whereas ours goes back to the creative period: it is part of our total experience - it makes us rather than we it..."[16]

The importance most Aborigines attach to the 'Dreamtime' as a validating system of beliefs for actions is therefore vital. It would seem from the examples of resistance discussed in this thesis that, whether modified or not, the 'Dreamtime' still appears to be something of immense value, and something to be protected or rediscovered. From the three views below, it would also seem that those who do not know their 'Dreamtime' are engaged in an active effort to find out, and those who do have no intention of compromising their beliefs for anything or anybody.

> "I'm what white call urbanised...I live in the city... but really I've been put here by them, and that's what they don't understand. I still believe in our 'Dreamtime' though, but I admit I've lost a lot.... that's why sometimes I go back to my country (near Alice Springs) to find out more... I try and live the way my tribe does, and one day I'll go back for good."[17]

"We live in 'Dreamtime' always... Walkabout is for 'Dreamtime'... and when they keeps we blackfellers here on station, looking after them stock, we says 'No! ' - we goes walkabout, we tells them "[18]

"We, all we, know we keep 'Dreamtime'... When whitefeller boss come in camp, and tell us work, we tell him fuck off whitefeller boss, we 'Dreaming' now. They try again whitefeller boss... All we around camp fire throw spears at them, and then fucking whitefeller boss go to whitefeller policeman. They comes all back and says Aboes for work... We spears them good, and kangaroo man makes whitefeller all blood ... Big fight starts, and we all put to chains and goes to whitefèller police station... We stays long time 'Dreaming' and having whitefeller tucker. Then after long time (two weeks in the police cells) we comes to camp and gets well on blackfeller tucker... We mends we heads, arms, and all we self by medicine man... and whitefeller no work gets ... we 'Dreaming' now..."[19]

From this last statement, it is clear again that the Dreamtime is a sanctioning institution: it provides the necessary justificatinn for the 'doing', or acting as Aborigines. Colonial actions, such as those of the 'whitefeller boss', directed against any aspect of Aboriginal life, tend to threaten not just the area of immediate concern - the family, community, hunting, or land relationships - but, also, the institution of the Dreamtime, and, more importantly, the authority on which it is based. The kind of relationship that exists between it and the rest of social life is one of authority.

Thus, the interdependent concepts of 'my country' and 'community', which derive their meaning from the actions of those beings who lived during the past Dreamtime, <u>have to be</u> maintained in the present Dreamtime - for they are both actual and symbolic expressions of the past, a former all pervasive authority, the line which makes the present and future Dreamtime meaningful. If abandoned or destroyed,

the Dreamtime would end, and, in the sense used in Chapter three, Aborigines would 'die'.

Seen from this (Aboriginal) perspective, the kind of struggle which started in 1770, when Cook weighed anchor in Botany Bay, is one centred on and around respective expressions of authority. To simplify it in terms of black versus white, or Aboriginal versus Euraustralian; or to explain and account for it as black 'protest' against white 'prejudice' is to deny this.

What we have attempted to do in this thesis is, therefore, to show how Aborigines see and respond to colonial authority, rather than white prejudice. Following Aboriginal views and interpretations of how they perceive the real world, and how this world affects their conduct, we have tentatively suggested that the concept of resistance is a more useful one to employ than that of protest. Although far more research needs to be undertaken before making any definite conclusions, it would seem, from the little we have done, that Aboriginal resistance, as a response to colonial authority, is socially defined and constructed. Cultural and ideological support for it is to be found in the Dreamtime; colonial actions, which embody social relevance, ideological significance and threat potential, appear to produce it; and its specified goals are social - the maintenance or rediscovery of 'my Country', 'Community' and 'Dreamtime'.

Apart from this general conclusion, others, more specific, and related to the various substantive issues discussed, form an important part of the text. To repeat them here would be to remove them from the context in which they were formulated and adorn them with an air

of finality - something we are most reluctant to do, as neither our six months of field research, nor the material we possess could possibly support or validate such a pretension.

All we feel we can say is that it would appear that resistance is an everyday part of Aboriginal social life. Through it, and by doing it, Aborigines are able to continue to assert their 'uniqueness' and 'we-ness'; re-establish (urban-oriented) and consolidate (tradition-oriented) their identity as Aborigines; and to stave off any further attempts to integrate or assimilate them into Euroaustralian society. In other words everyday resistance has appeared to become the Aborigines' modus vivendi - for to resist is to exist.

NOTES

1. See R.M. and C.H. Berndt, The World of the First Australians, pp. 187-88, op cit.

2. From a group interview with Aborigines at Port Keats on 23rd August, 1974.

3. Source as in note 2.

4. Source as in note 2.

5. See Chapter Four, "My Country", p161 It is interesting to note that the Aboriginal conception of 'ownership' is still not recognised. As well as being a reflection on Euro-australian economic and political interests, it also suggests that Euroaustralians still have not attempted to understand the different ideas and assumptions on which Aboriginal society is based. Although we have refrained from making comparisons, it does, however, remind us of a B.B.C. television programme, made some years ago on Melanesian 'cargo cults'. After several practitioners had offered an explanation of their 'cult' and Tom Thrumb, who was going to bring the 'cargo', David Attenborough concluded that the principle interviewee was either a 'rogue or a madman'. Peter Worsley, in an Open University session on 14th August, B.B.C. 2, used Attenborough's narration to show precisely the same point we have just made.

6. See E. Kolig, Progress and Preservation: The Aboriginal Perspective, op cit.

7. From an interview with Dennis Walker on 24th September 1974.

8. From an interview with a Mornington Islander on 25th September 1974.

9. See L. Duncan, Protest and Aborigines: an Initial View, 1974, and Aborigines and Protest: One Movement or Many, 1973, op cit., Also see A.G.L. Shaw, Popular Protest in Australian History, a paper presented to the Australian and New Zealand Association of Anthropology and Sociology, 1972; and R.M. Berndt, The Concept of Protest within an Australian Aboriginal Context in R.M. Berndt, (ed), A Question of Choice, 1971.

10. See Chapter Five, "Community", p196 and note 7 for the source.

11. From an interview with a Port Adelaide Aborigine on 26th July, 1974.

12. See past issues of Smoke Signal, the Palm Island Community Council's weekly newspaper, for detailed evidence. We say any issue, because each issue, as a matter of editorial policy, contains articles on Aboriginal history and the kind of community the Islanders wish to reconstruct.

13. See B.B. McGuinness, The New Dreamtime, an unpublished paper, which can be obtained from the author, October, 1974.

14. From an interview with a group of Aborigines, mainly Brinken tribesmen, who had set up camp at Casey's Corner, Darwin on 26th August, 1974. This group had come up from Daly River in order to start establishing their rights to their land in and around Darwin.

15. This comment arose out of a conversation, rather than formal interview, with a leader of one of the many communes (for blacks) in Sydney. (Date not recorded).

16. From an interview with Gary Williams, an ex-Aboriginal law student, on 29th September 1974.

17. From an interview with an Aborigine living in Adelaide on 26th July, 1974.

18. From a group interview with Aborigines camped at Japanese Beach, Darwin on the 26th August, 1974.

19. Source as in note 18.

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