



AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

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7 February 1994

Bill Day
P O Box 892
Nedlands WA 6009

Dear Bill,

Hi! I'm the new Marketing Manager for AIATSIS (I've been here a whole two weeks), and am currently working on a promotional plan for your new book, *Bunji*.

While we don't have a definite release date yet (it looks like early March), I would like to plan a book launch here in Canberra six weeks after the book is printed. This may seem like an excessive delay, but this time frame has been requested by our distributors, Cambridge, and makes sense when the reasons are explained. Basically, the six weeks allow us to execute a full promotional campaign, and ensures all bookshops have stock in store (some chains take 4-5 weeks to bulk order). So, by the time the book is launched, our market has full awareness and the book is available from all bookshops. While I know you are eager to see the book launched as soon as possible, an early launch would be detrimental to sales and the book's shelf life.

I will be looking at venues for the launch this week, and will see if Christabel Chamarette is available once we have a solid date. Please let me know if you have any guests to add to the invitation list.

Bill, I will be in touch once I have more definite details. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Andrea Grazziadelli
Marketing Manager
Tel. (06) 246 1132

Believe it when you see
it.



3 FEBRUARY 1992

MR BILL DAY
PO BOX 892
NEDLANDS WA 6009

Dear Bill,

I am delighted to tell you that the Publications Committee has accepted your manuscript 'Bunji' for publication, subject to your revising the manuscript in accordance with the referees comments (enclosed). The Committee also felt (as I think you do) that the book should be well illustrated, with a mixture of Bunji cartoons and photographs.

When we receive the complete manuscript back from you (including a floppy disk if possible) we will be in a position to give a timetable for publication. Since we are producing the Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia this year it is likely that your book would not be published until the middle of next year, although obviously it will be done as quickly as possible.

I enjoyed your book very much and I am glad that we will be publishing an important book.

Yours sincerely,

David Horton
Publications Director

Report on Bunji by Bill Day.

This is a remarkable work and definitely worthy of publication. As Stewart Harris indicates in the Foreword (which must be included should Day's work be published) only Bill Day could have written it. Bunji was an important contribution to Aboriginal land rights and more generally to the literature of protest. Although Bunji, the black rights newsletter, and Bunji, the book, have general application they are both written about very specific places and people. This was a drawback of Bunji, the black rights newsletter: the reader was often left wondering who particular people were, where places were and what certain references were supposed to lead to. As a reader of an irregularly appearing journal one could be fairly forgiving but if this manuscript is to become a book that can stand alone a certain amount of additional material will be needed.

Much of this extra background can be provided by illustrations. There should be a map of the Northern Territory indicating the missions, settlements, stations and other places mentioned in the text. This map might even be extended to take in northern Australia to pick up references to places like Cherbourg and Oombulgurrie. It will also be necessary to have a fairly detailed map of the Darwin area showing such places as Bagot, Belyuen, the Chinese temple, Frog Hollow, Humpty Doo, Knuckey's Lagoon and One Mile Dam. There are many photographs of places associated with the Kulaluk struggle in the material deposited by Bill Day in the Northern Territory Archives in Darwin. Bill's manuscript goes a long way toward evoking a 'sense of place' but I think readers who are unfamiliar with the Darwin area or Aboriginal living conditions will appreciate an appropriate selection from this photo collection.

The same collection can be used for getting a better idea of the key players. Captions could indicate the affiliation of the Aboriginal people concerned. Otherwise a short sentence may have to be inserted to tell the reader whether the person is Aboriginal or not and how that person connects with the land claim. I will make some specific suggestions in the detailed comments below. But I am anxious that the changes to the existing manuscript be fairly minor. Bill's writing has energy and immediacy and therefore should be retained intact as much as possible. If adding context means that we end up with something bristling with footnotes, then forget it.

Another important source of illustrations is from the original issues of Bunji. Long after forgetting the specific written details of some of these issues I can remember cartoons quite vividly. These illustrations were intended to pack a punch and apparently did. Sometimes crudely drawn, they have a kind of naive and beguiling charm which is an integral part of the newsletter. While such illustrations may have a flavour of naivete this is not to say that Bill Day was naive - far from it. As Stewart Harris points out "Bill fused his idealism with a rare sense of *realpolitik*". To capture this I think reproductions from the pages of Bunji would make a

substantial contribution to the book as a whole. These reproductions should include not only some of the cartoons but inflammatory headlines, the map of the Darwin area giving Larrakia place names (an early example of attempts to foster cultural continuity) and pages showing the difficulties of technical production of the newsletter (something alluded to in Bill's text and a reflection of the struggle just to keep the publication going).

For the most part the content should stay as it is. Bill Day brings to his description an intimate knowledge of the events. While others may interpret these events differently the author makes no bones about presenting a personal view. In the detailed comments I have some suggestions for a few additions and perhaps one deletion. Otherwise it must be pointed out that some people who read this book might be rather annoyed but it has always been part of Bill's style to be provocative.

I reiterate that I like the style of this manuscript. In the detailed comments I will draw attention to some passages that a bit too "purple" for my taste but for the most part the text is engaging, uses extracts from Bunji well and is very readable.

Overall I strongly recommend publication with the proviso that it be liberally illustrated and that there be some amendments. I know of no competing publication. I would see this book as having a wide readership for general readers as well as those specifically interested in Aboriginal studies. It gives a strong evocation of the land rights struggle in the 1970s and is a significant contribution to the literature of protest. It is also something of a testament to one person's courageous encounter with the system.

Detailed comments

p.4 para 3 change ---> chance

who is "Parap"? A question of this kind seeks a few details: approximate age, background and group affiliation. I realise that sometimes the information might not be readily available (if at all) but it would be a great help to the reader to know where some of these people fit in.

who is Fred Waters? In this case the question is especially important because there are two men from this general area who were prominent and called Fred Waters: this one who was Larrakia and another one who was ?Maranungku.

p.5 middle Haast Bluff ---> Haast's Bluff

p.6 second line "munching monstrous termites" ?purple prose

line 7 Papalis ---> Paspalis

p.10 who is Roy Mudpul?



ABORIGINAL STUDIES PRESS

BUNJI

A Story of the Gwalwa Daraniki Movement by Bill Day

In February 1991, the Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Olney, regretfully found that under the narrow definition of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976, no traditional owners of the Larrakia estates now lived to claim their ancestral country. Although many of the native possessors of the land's timeless past had died during thirteen years of legal wrangling, the surviving claimants were stunned.

So begins this provocative account of the land rights battle of the Larrakia people for Kulaluk, near Darwin, in the 1970s, as seen through the eyes of Bill Day, founder and editor of *Bunji*, a local black rights newsletter of the time. Day draws on articles and cartoons from *Bunji* to illustrate his story and to help him bring to vivid life the characters involved.

Sometimes irreverent and often moving, this book makes plain the kinds of losses suffered by the dispossessed peoples of this country in the last 200 years, and asks for one remedy: Justice!

About the Author

Born in Perth, Western Australia, in 1940, Bill Day taught in a rural school before travelling overland to London in 1964. Returning via the same route in 1966, he worked his way around Australia as a fettler, taxi-driver and chainman, before settling in Darwin. There he identified with landless Aborigines and founded a black rights newsletter, which he published and edited from 1971 to 1983. After two years in New Zealand with his wife Polly and their two children, Bill returned to Perth in 1989 where he is now a full-time university student.

RRP \$19.95

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BOOK REVIEWS

Lutheran and also, as one of the Devil's own flock stated, a rarity amongst the Lutherans at Hermannsburg mission in that he could mix with anyone and had a sense of humour (pers. comm., the late Bryan Bowman; also pp 119-20). Bryan considered that it was Albrecht's war service that had given him a strong sense of the strengths and weaknesses of human nature, and contributed to his tolerance and sense of humour.

Pastor Albrecht and his wife, Minna, whom he had married—to some extent against both families' wishes—in 1925, arrived in Central Australia in 1926. Seven previous calls by the mission board for a missionary had gone unheeded. Albrecht must have comprehended why there had been no volunteers the moment he arrived. Not only did appointment mean as wide a separation from family as was possible on earth; not only had his predecessor died a terrible pain-racked death after the mission he had served for nearly thirty years had been reported a failure; but a drought was on the land. And then, at the height of the drought, with hundreds of starving people migrating from the desert areas to the west to seek succour at the mission, came the world depression. Albrecht prayed to God, rolled up his sleeves, and worked and learnt. He grasped the language, he was innovative in job creation, he learnt from the Aborigines and all others who offered useful advice, he taught the Gospel and, by getting everybody working together, gradually Hermannsburg emerged from its major problems. At all times his wife, and later their children, stood by him. As Bryan Bowman said, 'It was always a place of singing when Old Albrecht was there' (pers. comm.).

Barbara Henson well tells the story of this remarkable man among, and always with and for, the Western Aranda and other Aborigines who came to reside at Hermannsburg. We learn of the long missionary patrols on camels, the significance of the pipeline that brought permanent water to the community, associations with the Lasseter-guided expedition in search of a mythical gold reef, the work of Aboriginal evangelists, Albrecht's encouragement of the artist Albert Namatjira, the great struggles to secure inviolate reserves and community settlements for Aborigines, and much, much more. Chaucer himself would have delighted in the wonderful cast of characters.

As Pastor Albrecht would have appreciated, the author also acknowledges those who assisted in the

many endeavours. Not least of all there is much interesting commentary about and by Aborigines. for Pastor Albrecht's story is their story too. They honestly assess him. While they did not always agree with him, clearly his integrity, genuine assistance and concern for their well-being outweighed any flaws. In fact, in reading this biography, one is struck by how thoughtful a person he was, often well ahead of his times.

Much as any researcher who had access to the information would give some different selections to those given by the author, this is not a problem. Judicious use has been made of the records, and the notes, select bibliography and index are comprehensive. I had but one minor problem, and that was in locating the authors of the interesting and significant quotations by the Aborigines. Although not acknowledged in the text, and therefore not in the index, the contributors' names are to be found in the notes.

In addition to the book being a tribute to a missionary, his family and Aboriginal friends, it is a tribute to both the author and the publisher. Numerous fine historic photographs complement the easily read text, and maps allow a comprehension of the geographical region and the Hermannsburg mission. I thoroughly recommend it to anyone at all interested, in the broadest sense, in the history of Central Australia.

I conclude the review with one of several quotations that are particularly apt (p 96):

When we saw that one, the water, we said, old man your word is really true. I'll get it, he said. He did. Pastor Albrecht's word was true altogether.

BUNJI: A STORY OF THE GWALWA DARANIKI MOVEMENT

B. Day

Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 1994, pp xii + 157.

Reviewed by Michael Walsh

The main title, *Bunji*, refers not just to the black right newsletter founded by Bill Day, but also recalls the term used especially by Aborigines for a mat.

BOOK REVIEWS

Although mateship may have taken on something of a taint by now, this is in part a story of mateship in which one man shows that he can make a difference. This is a personal account of the struggle for Aboriginal land rights in Darwin in the 1970s and into the 80s.

Bill Day arrived in Darwin in 1969, 100 years after Darwin had first been surveyed. The city of Darwin had grown up in traditional Larrakia territory, gradually enveloping traditional hunting and living areas. A men's ceremonial ground had been displaced by the army barracks, itself adjoined by suburban homes only a short distance from the city centre. By the early 1970s, when Bill Day began to take up the cause on behalf of local Aborigines, the situation had become serious. For a long time, the non-Aboriginal population of Darwin had remained small enough to allow Aborigines to hunt and forage in what have since become suburbs. One of the traditional Larrakia owners, Bobby Secretary, had become disenchanted by the continuous encroachment of European development. He set up a small settlement—surrounded by Darwin suburbs—called Kulaluk, which became a town camp, not just for the Larrakia but also for Aboriginal visitors from many locations. In time, Kulaluk became a focus of Aboriginal protest in Darwin. For a few years from mid-1979, it became the home of Bill Day. Much of the detail of *Bunji* recounts events around Kulaluk and the Aboriginal organisation most closely associated with it: the Gwalwa Daraniki Association.

The book begins with a foreword by Stewart Harris, a journalist who had encountered Bill Day in the early days and knew some of the central characters in the Gwalwa Daraniki Association. An introduction gives a brief background sketch to the history of Darwin, the Larrakia and their land rights struggles up to 1992. There are two maps, one showing the places in northern Australia mentioned in the text and the other providing details of Darwin and its suburbs. The careful reader (or someone who is already familiar with the layout of Darwin) might be able to work out that the book's front cover has an aerial photograph which includes the Kulaluk lease; it might have been helpful to tell the less observant reader what the cover is supposed to represent. The main text of ten chapters takes us from Bill Day's arrival in Darwin in 1969 up to his departure from Kulaluk in 1985. After the references and a section on further reading, there is a very useful chronology of

events and a directory of the contents of *Bunji* from 1971 to 1983.

Bunji was an important contribution to Aboriginal land rights and, more generally, to the literature of protest. The first edition of this newsletter appeared in August 1971 with the assistance of the local wharfies' union. It opened with these words:

This is your paper. *Bunji* is written in easy English for all the Tribes to understand. But English is not the language our mothers taught us. We are proud of our language! Read *Bunji* and shout, We are proud of our colour!

This reflects Bill's desire to make the material accessible to Aboriginal people and to raise their consciousness. It urged people to become involved in the land rights struggle and to stand up for their rights. After a humble beginning of one foolscap sheet, later editions would run to as much as a dozen pages, sometimes with photos and very often with cartoons. Another sixty-three issues were to come out over the next twelve years, in a variety of locations and always under difficult conditions.

Much of the content was written by Bill Day and most of the cartoons were drawn by him. As someone who can recall him distributing *Bunji* around Darwin, I can remember these cartoons quite vividly, long after forgetting the specific written details of some of the issues. These illustrations were intended to pack a punch and apparently did. Sometimes crudely drawn, they have a kind of naive and beguiling charm that is an integral part of the newsletter. While such illustrations may have a flavour of *naïveté*, this is not to say that Bill Day was naive—far from it. As Stewart Harris points out in the preface, 'Bill fused his idealism with a rare sense of *realpolitik*'. This is captured by reproductions from the pages of *Bunji*, which make a substantial contribution to the book as a whole. Let me give one example (from p 97) of an illustration and its impact:

Illustrating the run-over-by-a-truck feeling amongst blacks, the *Bunji* (September 1979) cover used a Cobb cartoon titled, 'The Road to Narbalek' (sic), showing a black man and a kangaroo lying dead beside a country highway. It was a topical issue when roads were news at Kulaluk and at Oenpelli in the uranium province. The cover so offended talk-back host Warren Paine that he tore his copy to shreds on air. The *NT News* (6 October 1979) only remarked, 'This is so sick'.

The reproductions include not only some of the cartoons but inflammatory headlines, the map of the

BOOK REVIEWS

← Darwin area giving Larrakia place names (an early example of attempts to foster cultural continuity), and pages showing the difficulties of technical production of the newsletter (something alluded to in the text and a reflection of the struggle just to keep the publication going).

It is difficult to assess precisely how much influence *Bunji* had in the land rights struggle. It was certainly a central part of the Gwalwa Daraniki movement and provided much-needed publicity at a time when publications sponsored by Aboriginal organisations were far less prevalent. Some of the publicity was not altogether favourable towards Bill Day. In 1974, he was described as a 'stirrer' in southern newspapers like the *Sydney Morning Herald* and he became an election issue in that year's federal elections for local member, Sam Calder. Some of the publicity brought Kulaluk into a wider arena. The Darwin land rights struggle was displayed at the Aboriginal tent embassy in Canberra in 1973. Queensland Aboriginal activists like Cheryl Buchanan came to Darwin and stayed on to contribute. A member of Melbourne University's law faculty, Gareth Evans, came to Darwin and prepared a detailed report on the Larrakia land rights aspirations for the then Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Gordon Bryant. It is surely no accident that the Larrakia and the Darwin area received so much attention over the years. Bill Day was a persistent presence, keeping the issues before people until a special-purpose lease was granted for the Kulaluk area in 1979. In my view, his efforts made a significant contribution to land rights in the Darwin area.

Bill's writing has energy and immediacy. He brings to his description an intimate knowledge of the events. For those who know these people, places and events, his writing is strongly evocative. He describes (p 69) the topsy-turvy situation immediately after Cyclone Tracy in 1974:

For blacks who stayed...life had never been so good. Abandoned buildings made luxurious homes, food was distributed freely and a spirit of generosity and equality reigned. People who had lived, in the best of times, under leaking scraps of tin without power had little to lose. Just as in wartime, blacks briefly tasted equality in whites' disasters.

He gives a vignette (pp 13-14) of a Darwin town camp:

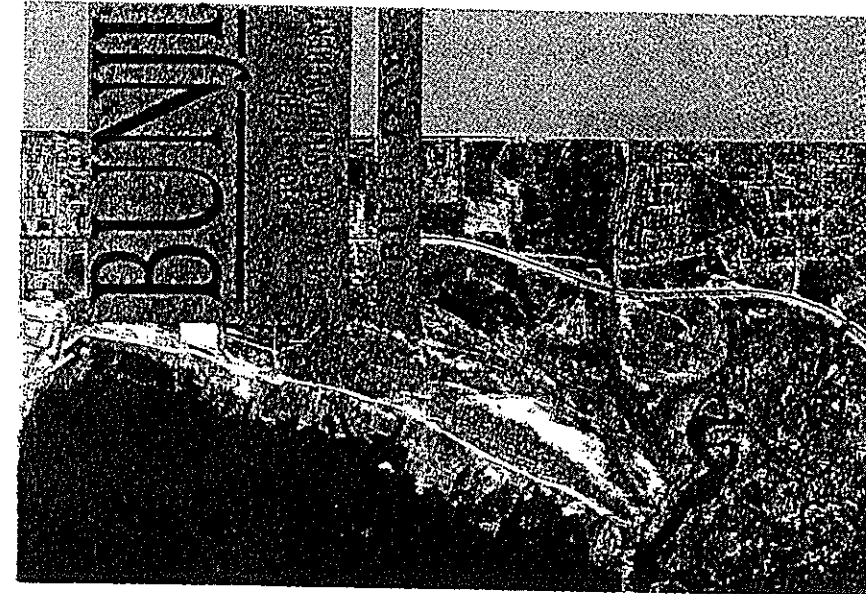
Our conversation was broken by the sudden startling appearance of Bessie Murine charging down the track from the mangroves with a star picket held high like a samurai sword. She screamed abuse at Bob, who darted behind me shouting for mercy as though he was about to lose his head...Bessie was intent on revenge for imagined unfaithfulness and her lover cowered in terror. Parap reassured me and added that it was common for Bessie to burn all Bobby's clothes or drive a stake through all the pots and pans. Not surprisingly they had few possessions.

Perhaps because I have been closer than many others to the people and events portrayed, this book has a special poignancy. The more so because Bill Day bares his soul as he goes from itinerant to activist to someone rejected by the Gwalwa Daraniki Association. During the early 1980s, Bill Day was issued with eviction notices, and he eventually left Kulaluk in mid-1985. We get an inkling of how hurtful this rejection must have been and a sense that the writing of this book may have been cathartic: 'I wished and prayed that somehow, someday, all that had gone before might seem worthwhile' (p 135). At the time of the writing of this review, applications to the Native Titles Tribunal have been submitted by Aboriginal people for areas of land in the Darwin area. I would like to think that the spirit of protest and struggle so ably presented by Bill Day lives on.

This book should have appeal to general readers as well as to those specifically interested in Aboriginal studies. While others may interpret these events differently, the author makes no bones about presenting a personal view. It gives a strong evocation of the land rights struggle in the 1970s and is a significant contribution to the literature of protest. It is also something of a testament to one person's courageous and persistent encounter with the system.

p. 78

Books



The Larrakias still seeking justice

Bunji is the story of the land rights battle of the Larrakia people for Kulaluk, near Darwin, as seen through the eyes of Bill Day, founder and editor of *Bunji*, a local black rights newsletter of the time.

Day draws on articles and cartoons from *Bunji* to illustrate his story and to help him bring to vivid life the characters involved.

Sometimes irreverent and often moving, this book makes plain the kinds of losses suffered by the dispossessed peoples of this country in the last 200 years, and asks for one remedy: justice.

The book is set in an extraordinary time in the life of Aboriginal Australia, two years into the short life of the Whitlam Labor government, which still promised so much.

In the Northern Territory there was great activity, immense progress and immense resistance to that progress.

In Darwin there was an office of the new Department of Aboriginal Affairs, representing a strong federal authority which the NT government resented.

Aboriginal reserves, like Bagot in Darwin, were becoming Aboriginal land, with white superintendents turning into advisors.

But people like the Larrakia, the few oppressed remnants of tribes driven from their land and choosing not to live on reserves, saw little or no prospect of owning their land.

The injustice was highlighted when, in February 1991 the Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Olney, regrettably found that under the narrow definition of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, no traditional owners of the Larrakia estates now lived to claim their ancestral country.

Although many of the native possessors of the land's timeless past had died during the 13 years of legal wrangling, the surviving claimants were stunned.

Unanimously, they agreed with the Commissioner on 'the very inadequate provision which the Land Rights Act makes for people such as the Larrakia', people who suffered in the front lines of the invasion of Darwin, the remote but prospering north Australian city-port, had grown over the bones of their dead.

Bill Day had set himself to work with these people, and his book is an extraordinary account of that work.

Published by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, P.O. Box 553, Canberra, ACT, 2601. For further information: (06) 246 1181. RRP \$19.95.

"BUNJI"
BOOK LAUNCH
 Story of the Larrakia Land's Rights Struggle
 by Bill Day
ALL INTERESTED PERSONS WELCOME
 All Larrakia People are urged to attend
Guests of Honor
Prince of Wales and Topsy
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 Inquiries Ph 41 1363

Northern Territory News, Thursday, April 21,

Book bash to honor author

The new-look Darwin Music Development Centre will host a Book Launch Dance Party tonight to honor Larrakia author Bill Day.

Day, now based in Perth, has written a book, titled *Bunji*, which captures the Larrakia people's struggle to regain their land during the 1970s.

It was launched at the centre, the Old Darwin Workers Club in McMinn St, yesterday.

The Book Launch Dance Party will feature performances by Territory university bands Wild Water, Suzan and Drum Drum.

Other Territory musicians will also entertain including Tiwi Islander Gordon Pupangamirri and the Sunrise Band's Horace Wala Wala.

Tickets cost \$5 full price or \$3 concession and children are free. Doors open at 9 pm.

NT NEWS 23 APRIL 1994

Bunji is a book to take Australia into the twenty-first century. As part of the painful process of reconciliation between black and white, *Bunji* has a message of recovery and healing, leading to a truly national identity for a new millennium.

In 1969 Bill Day hitch-hiked north to live with the hippies but met the Aborigines instead. In Darwin, Bill founded and edited a newsletter to publicise the land claims of the Larrakia people, threatened by rapidly spreading housing estates. In the process of the land rights campaign, over thirteen years, Bill discovered himself. He is now a third-year student at The University of Western Australia.

'a remarkable book'

Dr Michael Walsh (AIATSIS)

'an extraordinary account'

Stewart Harris

'an important work'

Dr David Horton (AIATSIS)

'a heroic story, lively, often irreverent'

Veronica Brady (UWA)

Northern Territory News, Saturday, April 23, 1994

Bunji book on sale

A book which details the struggle of the Larrakia people for land and justice during the 1970s goes on sale at most Territory book stores today.

Bunji Collective, a look at Territory land rights in the eyes of author Bill Day, retails for \$19.95.

"It is the first real history written about Darwin for decades and is essential reading for schools and institutions," a spokesman for the book said yesterday.

"This important, historical book is about an amazing struggle and recognition for land rights of all Larrakia people."

criticism that 'the book studiously avoids ... the inner working of the editorship of *Bunji*' [the newsletter].

The book is subtitled 'a story' in recognition that it is only one of many stories, or ways of interpreting the events. No reviewer other than Povinelli, however, has previously suggested this view amounts to 'a personal account of the role [Day] played'. The high mortality rate within the movement meant few survivors live to mythologise the campaign which, after eight years of struggle, won back 350 hectares of land in the City of Darwin. The book now fulfills this important social and cultural role in the north of Australia, as Povinelli may discover in the coming Kenbi land claim hearing. I am disappointed that the book's allegoric theme of self-discovery on one level is seen by Povinelli to be the main intention of the text.

Why has a [Aboriginal] newsletter edited by a white man become out of place in 1983 when, apart from content, Aboriginal newspapers like *Koori Mail* and *Land Rights News* show little innovation in layout or language in 1996? According to Narogin (1990:45), 'if [Aborigines] choose to use white forms we are in effect "thinking white"'. In contrast, contemporary Aboriginal activist Cheryl Buchanan described *Bunji* as 'one of the best leaflets I have ever read. It really gets your message across in black terms'. Unlike other Aboriginal newspapers, *Bunji* was not written in standard English, which Narogin (1990:96) claims 'acts as a distancing mechanism' for black readers and devalues 'Aboriginal English'.

Povinelli notes 'the book seems to me at its best when describing the complex alliances and singular strivings of a larger number of Aboriginal communities and individuals'. It is an issue expanded upon by Duncan (1975), using Gwalwa Daraniki as an example, in a paper titled 'Aboriginal protest: One movement or many'. However, why does Povinelli exclude non-Aborigines? Wood-

The six page Forward by the late Stewart Harris is worthy of mention in the summary of contents. His knowledge of the protagonists and his ethnographer's habit of taking notes each day in the field makes his descriptive piece an important primary source of historical commentary.

Yours sincerely,

W.B. Day
March 20, 1996

References

- DUNCAN, L.S.W. 1975 Aboriginal protest: One movement or many? *Anthropological Forum* 4 (1):56-68.
NAROGIN, M. 1990 *Writing from the fringe: A study of modern Aboriginal literature*. Melbourne: Hyland House.
PILGER, J. 1992 *A secret country*. London: Vintage.
WOODWARD, A.E. 1974 *Aboriginal land rights commission: Second report*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

ward (1974:53) describes me as 'the secretary of [the Gwalwa Daraniki] organisation, a white man [who] has achieved remarkable results in obtaining press coverage and other forms of publicity for the claims of this group'. As a white broker, I do not remember any racist ordering of the alliances formed.

I emphatically dispute the statement by Povinelli that the newsletter at times enraged Aboriginal activists. Supportive letters came from Cheryl Buchanan, Denis Walker, Bill Rosser, Gary Foley and Kevin Gilbert, while Marcia Langton only recently personally expressed her admiration for our campaign. Contrary to Povinelli's statement, these leaders in black consciousness-raising at no time to my knowledge made an issue of the fact that the journal was edited and largely written by a non-Aborigine. However, in reply to criticism from conservative Aborigines, in 1972 I stated in the media that the newsletter was 'a sincere attempt to express the feelings of Aborigines from the grass roots, but does not presume to speak for the majority'. Further evidence of the acceptance of *Bunji*'s Aboriginality comes from John Pilger (1992:21) in *A secret country* when he attributes one of my poems to 'an anonymous Aboriginal poet 1971'.

Correspondence:

Dear Editor,

I write in response to Elizabeth A. Povinelli's review of my book, *Bunji: A story of the Gwalwa Daraniki movement* (A.F., v.7,n.2, 1995). As an anthropologist representing one of the three claimant groups in the long running Kenbi (Cox Peninsula) land claim, Povinelli is an appropriate person to review a text documenting the preceding struggle of the Larrakia people and their allies. Povinelli's emphasis on the perceived radical nature of the struggle as illustrated by my text is a reflection of the present incorporation of Aboriginal aspirations into bureaucratic and government structures.

Bunji: A story of the Gwalwa Daraniki Movement may be 'self-indulgent' in comparison to a supposedly objective ethnography, but it is far from a monophonic narrative. Abandoning the mountaintop, *Bunji* is fragmented by many voices that continually subvert the authority of the author. Although Povinelli criticises me for failing to 'consider more fully and honestly the question of voice and representation', it is the text which finally deconstructs the myth of unmediated meanings. The public, and painful, tearing away of the authorial mask in the last chapter contradicts Povinelli's

Anthropological Forum

1996 7(3): 500-5001

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ELIZABETH A. POVINELLI
Department of Anthropology
The University of Chicago

'[A(n) Aboriginal] newsletter edited by a white man is out of place' (*Bunji*, May 1983).

Bill Day's *Bunji: A story of the Gwalwa Daraniki Movement* is a personal account of the role he played in helping Darwin Larrakia fight to secure legal possession of Kulaluk and in directing the course of Aboriginal land rights more generally. '*Bunji*' refers to a radical left newsletter edited by Day between 1971 and 1983. Never non-controversial, *Bunji* would at times enrage non-Aboriginal political parties on the left and right, such as when it wrote, 'In Alice Springs the tribes have been throwing stones at cars. If the Liberal and Country Party wins the next election on May 18th it will be no good throwing stones. Here is how to make a little petrol bomb'. At other times it would enrage Aboriginal activists who saw the newsletter as representing the views of Day and not the majority of Aboriginal women and men. If ultimately a self-indulgent treatment of his mistreatment by white Australians and Aboriginal men alike, Bill Day's perspective on the land rights movement is valuable in so far as it provides a ground-level perspective of the emergence of a new social movement and the often eclectic forces that precede any movement's 'rationalisation' and 'bureaucratisation'.

The Gwalwa Daraniki movement was begun, according to Day, on National Aborigines Day 1971, when 'incredulous Darwin motorists passed the ragged spectral remnants of the once strong Larrakia carrying defiant banners in a ten kilometre march from the northern suburbs of Nightcliff to the city centre' (p.4). Meaning 'our land', Gwalwa Daraniki originated in the

joint effort of 'the Brinkin, Wagaitj and Larrakia...to fight together' (p.16). Especially important to the emergence of the land rights movement, Day writes, were the Larrakia, who since the late forties and early fifties actively protested the alienation of their land by the City of Darwin and other economic interests. But what the book also makes clear is the symbolic role that the Larrakia have served in framing the critical importance of a land-based social movement. The Yirrkala, for instance, in their 'bark petition for security of tenure in 1963 listed eight points, including the fear "that the fate which has overtaken the Larrakeah tribe will overtake them"' (p.4). This same logic of 'tragic annihilation' was the grounds on which the Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Olney, rejected the *Kenbi Land Claim* (for Larrakia lands across the Darwin harbour), finding that Larrakia traditional Aboriginal owners no longer existed. Thus, if for no other reason, *Bunji* is an important record of not only the existence of Larrakia men and women, but their passionate engagement with the social, economic and legal institutions that seek to erase them.

However, Day also makes clear that the early land rights and civil rights movement was a 'mixed' effort. Aboriginal groups throughout Darwin, the Daly River, and Arrnhem Land 'stood together'. Indeed, the book seems to me at its best when describing the complex alliances and singular strivings of a large number of Aboriginal communities and individuals. These 'stands together'—sometimes on the basis of language group, sometimes on the basis of residence, sometimes on the basis of strong affection—were the grounds on which Aboriginal men and women would reclaim their positive self and group identity and the grounds against which opponents of land rights would craft legal and economic obstacles. Thus, while Day's main intention may have been to answer the question 'Why is Bill going and why is he destroying the

home he has carved from the bush and which captures the imagination of all who visit?' (p.134), in the process of answering it we see Aboriginal men, and some women, working with and through the continually changing relationship between culture and political economy. The stories Day tells range from Aboriginal activists' encounters with developers to their efforts to change Australian air force policy. But whether camping on *Duwun* (Quail Island) in order to stop the air force from using the sacred site as a practice bombing range or collecting the ten-cent and dollar coins and notes it would take to print the *Bunji* newsletter, Aboriginal men and women are shown working out the dynamic meaning of the Dreaming in contemporary Australia.

That said, this book will irritate some and perhaps even enrage others. Bill Day never sought to be bland. Even his statement in 1983 that '[a(n) Aboriginal] newsletter edited by a white man is out of place' seems written more as lament or accusation than as understanding of the specific historical and political truth of that statement. Unabashedly Marxist in thought and inflammatory in rhetoric, Day intended to upset the 'establishment' and did so. But what Day, however, did not do, and still has not been done in this book, is consider more fully and honestly the question of voice and representation. And here we are led to ask information that the book studiously avoids—that is, the inner working of the editorship of *Bunji* and its effect on the content of the still controversial newsletter: in short, the negative effects of political radicalism, as well as the positive.

Bunji: A story of the Gwalwa Daraniki movement, by Bill Day. Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 1994. xii, 157pp., maps, photographs, figures, notes, references,

further reading, chronology, *Bunji* directory 1971-1983. ISBN 0-5575-240-8 (paperback).

Anthropological Forum 1995 7(2): 326-327

Ned Leach: UWA

UNIVIEW

IN FOCUS



Champion UWA rowers (from left) Merome Hall, Emma Cross, Liz Moir and Sue Peacock.

UWA Rowers Represent Australia

UWA's sensational rowers—Liz Moir, Emma Cross, Sue Peacock and Merome Hall—may well have scored a first when all four were selected to represent Australia in the lightweight women's coxless fours at the World Championships in Indianapolis in September.

The WA foursome were chosen after winning the National lightweight fours title in May. Says UWA Boat Club secretary Duncan Barton: 'It's very unusual for selectors to choose the crew from a single club to represent Australia. Usually the team comprises the best performers from different clubs.' However being the best carries a price tag: the four have had to buy two training boats plus cover travel expenses to recent lead-up regattas in Europe.

The Rowing Club and Guild have helped with a racing shell (donated by ex-Club member Don Philp) and specialised oars, but the talented contestants are still more than \$25,000 out of pocket in their effort to represent their country, State and club.

The team has had a remarkable rise to prominence since it was formed early last year under the guidance of coach Warren Gibson (who has been involved with in the Boat Club since his undergraduate days in the 1970s). If you can help these highly-motivated UWA rowers with some financial backing, phone Duncan Barton on (09) 380 2745.

More Sports Talk

On the subject of sports success stories, UWA's team won—for the first time—the State Universities Sports Championships held at UWA Sports Park in May. The win was a great boost for sport at UWA and motivated many team members to compete at the 1994 Australian University Games in Wollongong in September. UWA will be represented by a team of 100 in 12 different sports.

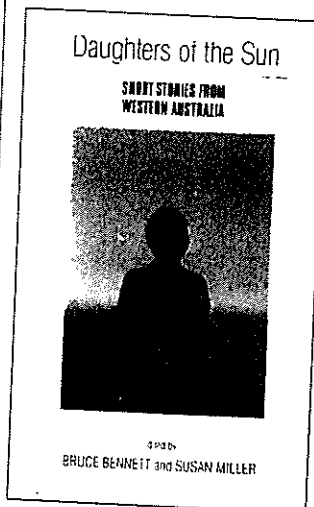
BUNJI—A Provocative Account

Judging by the media release that accompanied the launch of his book *BUNJI, A Story of the Gualala Daraniki Movement* author Bill Day—a former security officer at UWA and now an arts student—has been at the centre of a fair share of political storms. The *Sydney Morning Herald* dubbed him 'Darwin's most active black militant—except he's white'. At the height of his political activism, former Prime Minister Bob Hawke refused to start a press conference until Bill Day left the room. After 13 years as editor of a black power newsletter, Bill Day has now written a provocative account of the 1970s land rights battle of the Larrakia people in the Northern Territory. The book has been published by the Aboriginal Studies Press in Canberra.

Daughters of the Sun

Still on the subject of books, the UWA Press has produced a fine collection of short fiction that explores the predicaments, pleasures and preoccupations of women and girls—and therefore of men and boys—*Daughters of the Sun*.

The line-up of talent brought together in this volume is impressive: Sally Morgan, Katharine Susannah Prichard, Tim Winton, Fay Zwicky, Marion Campbell, Henrietta Drake-Brockman, Robert Drewe, Xavier Herbert, Elizabeth Jolly, Tom Hungerford—and many more. Settings range from the tropical to the temperate, from bush to coast and the works have been well-selected by the editors, former members of UWA's English Department, Bruce Bennett and Susan Miller. A stunning cover painting by Cliff Jones adds to the special pleasure of this book. It's available from the University Bookshop and other major booksellers.



Accolades for Academy

The article in the May issue of *UNIVIEW* *Taking the Pain and Strain out of Ballet* aroused considerable interest—in fact remarks by UWA researcher Ann Clarke of the Department of Human Movement on the diet and training of baller dancers were picked up and carried by the local media. While we mentioned that the research was funded by the WA Academy of Performing Arts (Edith Cowan University) and

involved their dance students, we failed to make clear in this article that the Academy initiated the research at the suggestion of Ms Clarke (one of its part-time lecturers) and Academy lecturer Patrick Dadey. If we gave the impression of ownership of this research—rather than just the involvement of one of our researchers—that was not intended. The Academy needs to take a bow for acknowledging the importance of this research.

Help Acknowledged

School of Social Work lecturer Maria Harries called us after reading our May *IN FOCUS* story on the debt UWA owes doctors who give their time and skills to help our medical students.

'What struck me was that UWA benefits from so many unpaid and altruistic educators without whom we couldn't produce the quality of graduates that we do,' said Ms Harries. 'Social work students spend half of their study time on practicum in agencies in Western Australia. The fieldwork educators on whom we rely for the daily supervised practice of these students are busy social workers who are managing difficult workloads in turbulent times of change.'

Yet another example of the sort of help and interaction that links UWA with the wider professional world, and which proves invaluable to our students.

At the Art Gallery

You still have time to catch Michele Sharpe's fine abstract paintings in the artists' first solo exhibition at UWA's Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery. And while you are there you will want to see recently-opened exhibitions featuring one of WA's most respected artists, Brian Blanchflower and Louise Paramor's sculptural work. The latter makes striking use of mirror glass in a dazzling suspended installation. Next month sees openings of a solo show of recent sculpture by Lou Lambert and paintings and works on paper by Chris Hopewell who is currently living in New York.

Aug 94

'I am always on the side of outsiders, probably because I am an outsider myself'

An old beatnik mixes politics and palm trees

BILL Day, a former school teacher, is the self-styled keeper of Kulaluk, Aboriginal land in Darwin.

Mr Day parked his caravan on Kulaluk six years ago and guards it as jealously as any tribal elder.

He came to Darwin looking for flower power and found land rights and Kulaluk instead.

Kulaluk is a special purpose lease about 8km from the city, granted in 1975 to Aboriginal descendants of the Larra-keyah people.

Mr Day lives there in South Sea island-style grass huts he has built.

Set up in a clearing a few hundred metres from the beach, Mr Day is ever at the ready to defend Kulaluk.

Talk of roads, drains, feral pigs or any other unnatural invasion of Kulaluk's bush environs is enough to send Bill hunting for his war paint.

His escapades include barricading the entrance to Kulaluk against council contractors and their heavy earth moving equipment.

On one occasion he enlisted the help of local children.

They darted in and out

of long grass at a safe distance from authority but within television camera range.

The stunt achieved the desired publicity although it did not stop the trucks.

Mr Day's constant war against bureaucracy is also waged through the letters to the editor section of the daily newspaper.

Born in Perth, Western Australia, he arrived in Darwin in the late 1960s.

He describes himself as one of the old beatniks who identified with the peace and love messages of the flower power people.

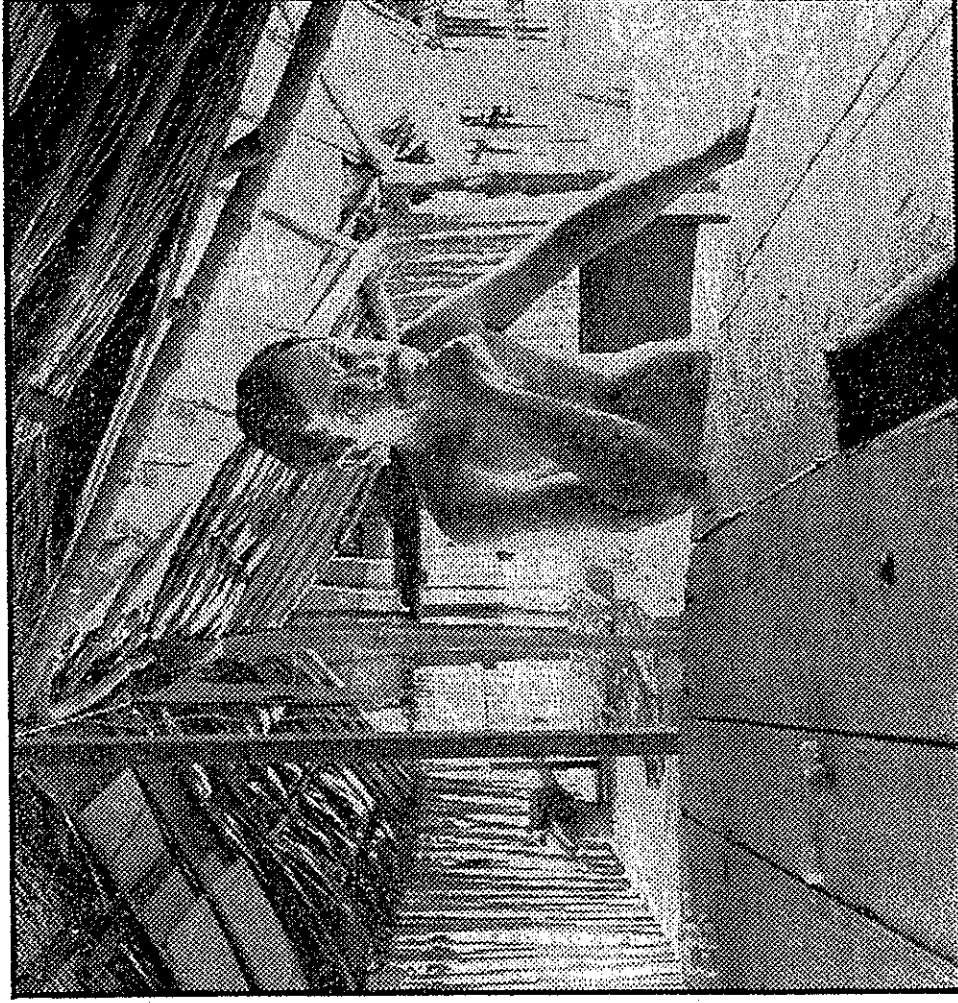
Soon after his arrival Mr Day found a group of hippies living on Lameroo Beach and moved in with them.

A born activist, Mr Day organised his first protest when the council attempted to evict the group from the beach.

He is particularly whimsical about that period in his life.

"There were about 300 of us living there, young people from everywhere, and I organised a mass protest — it was great," he said.

The land rights movement in the Territory gained momentum in the early '70s and Mr Day was in the vanguard of



Bill Day at his Kulaluk hut ... 'leaving won't be easy'

those sympathetic to Aboriginal aspirations.

He said he sympathised with Aborigines because they seemed outsiders in their own country.

"I am always on the side of

outsiders, probably because I am an outsider myself," he said.

It has been a long time between demonstrations and protests and Mr Day, ever on the lookout for controversy, has itchy feet.

He said he gave himself five years at Kulaluk when he first moved there and it had now been six.

Leaving won't be easy, but Mr Day believes this is probably his last dry season at Kulaluk.

Farming bucket of

By LEONIE BIDDLE

THE Northern Territory is on the verge of a new, multi-million dollar prawn farming industry with spin-offs for fishing and agriculture.

The Territory's first commercial prawn hatchery, built at a cost of about \$1 million, opened near Darwin in November.

The hatchery is a private joint venture between Darwin and Taiwanese interests.

Taiwanese expertise is behind the venture, the first attempt to cultivate Northern Territory tiger prawns.

It is early days, but the successful spawning recently of more than half a million juvenile prawns in the hatchery's breeding tanks is a promising start.

Taiwanese partners, Mr Telo Ma and Mr George Chin, expect to harvest the first prawns in August for export to Singapore.

Projected monthly harvesting estimates are between five and six tonnes by the end of the year.

They are also confident of achieving a 90 per cent or better survival rate within five years.

Prawn farming, or aquaculture, is relatively new to Australia, with only a handful of hatcheries throughout the country.

But rising fuel costs, diminishing agricultural markets and fish reserves are making it

Darwin's satellite

NT

Discipline, documentation, deep passion

BUNJI

A Story of the Gwalwa Daraniki

Movement by Bill Day

Aboriginal Studies Press

\$19.95 157pp

Review by Teena Raffa Mulligan

Aboriginal Land Rights is a sensitive issue which remains unresolved after 200 years of conflict between black and white Australians. The latest publication from Aboriginal Studies Press offers a rare insight into one small group's battle for land rights, seen through the eyes of a Western Australian man who devoted thirteen years to their fight.

As noted in the foreword of this slim yet comprehensive volume, it was the Larrakia people of Darwin who made the first move in the direction of the demand for treaties. In March 1972 they sent a petition to the Prime Minister William McMahon. It was rejected in June and Judith Wright in her book *We Call for a*

Treaty (1985) quotes *Bunji* author Bill Day: 'Now it is back to the battling-grounds for the tribes, and more confrontation'.

Over the years that confrontation drained Day, who was left questioning the value of all he had done as one of the leading players in a battle for land rights that caught the attention of the national media.

There is no question *Bunji* is 'an important contribution to the history of Australia, written with discipline, much documentation and deep passion', as Stewart Harris writes in the foreword. 'Only Bill Day could have written it. We are lucky that he had the fortitude to do it. ...Patiently and sometimes impatiently, Bill fused his idealism with a rare sense of realpolitik. Bill was a determined man who became experienced in the art of protest.'

Day was born in Perth in 1940 and taught in a rural school before travelling overland to London in 1964. On his return he worked his way around Australia as a fettler, taxi-driver and chainman before travelling to Darwin to discover himself amongst the hippies. There he identified with landless Aborigines and founded a black rights newsletter which he published and edited from 1971 to 1983. The first issue of *Bunji*, or 'mate' to urban Aborigines, was a single page typed on a borrowed typewriter in a union office at the back of a wharfies' mess room and printed on an old gestetner.

In the next 13 years, the simple publication was to carry its call for justice across the nation. It related the story of the Larrakia's fight 'in simple English for all the tribes to understand' and as Day acknowledges, 'enraged many, inspired some, rewrote the past and recorded the present tenaciously for twelve historic years.'

The full sixty four editions of *Bunji* are available in some libraries and a reprinted complete set can be ordered as a cross reference. Extracts from the newsletter give Day's book an immediacy and authenticity that sets it apart. Articles and cartoons from *Bunji* graphically illustrate his account of the Larrakia's land rights fight and help to bring the characters involved vividly to life.

People who decided they had lost enough and were prepared to make a stand against what they saw as an overwhelming injustice that must be set right regardless of what it should take. The campaign was persistent and often bitter. There were marches, strikes, walk-offs and protests. Aborigines said no to uranium mining and to efforts by contractors to develop land they believed strongly was theirs.

Some of those who figure largely in Day's account went to prison and stood trial for their convictions; many died too soon to see the Federal Court reverse a 1991 decision by the Aboriginal Land

commissioner that 'no traditional owners of the Larrakia estates now lived to claim their ancestral country'.

Day's book is sometimes irreverent, often moving. Its honesty and simplicity are its greatest strengths.

'Before reconciliation is possible, Australians must share the experience of being Aboriginal during 200 years of conflict between black and white,' Day writes. '*Bunji* has a message of recovery and healing, contributing to the emergence of a truly national identity for a new millennium.'

If white Australians are going to understand their Aboriginal counterparts, books such as this are vitally important. *Bunji* is essential reading. It offers an insight into the past and a hope for the future.

Bunji, A story of the Gwalwa Daraniki Movement is available from leading bookstores or direct from Aboriginal Studies Press, GPO Box 553, Canberra ACT 2601.

COMMENT

Bunji with a story to tell

MANY stories attach to William Bartlett Day whose book, *Bunji*, a story of the Gwalwa Daraniki Movement, is being launched in Perth today.

They provide a sample of the impetuous courage, and deprecating humor of the man who between August 1971 and November 1983 organised the Aborigines who previously owned Darwin — the Larrakia — in their bid to regain dignity and have their right to own land recognised.

The following stories are among my favorites:

In 1935, Bill then aged 25, was working on board a fishing vessel gill-netting cod off Iceland.

Leaving Reykjavik harbor at night, the crew spotted a woman — a would-be suicide — floating in the water.

"I used my Australian lifesaving skills by tying a rope around my waist and dived in and swam to her," he said.

Freezing

"It was freezing. It's so cold you can die in 15 minutes.

"I guess that is why I dived in and not the Icelanders."

The effort earned Bill the headline: "Utelandinger — meaning foreigner — rescues woman."

Later, he earned a more notorious headline: "Utelandinger attacks partygoer."

"There was an American base in Reykjavik," Bill said.

"I saw a member of the Ku Klux Klan walking down the street so I at-



tacked, telling him to go back to America.

"The trouble was he was an Icelandic going to a fancy dress ball."

Then — in the 1970s — Bill and I were among the leaders of a May Day march, including that venerable former shearer, Communist Party organiser and militant trade unionist, Neil Byron, who were accosted by demonstrators on what was then the Old Darwin Oval — now the Esplanade.

The mood turned ugly.

The vanguard of the march was for throwing the demonstrators over the Lamerloo Beach cliffs.

Mindful of the media furore this would provoke, I turned to Bill anticipating help in calming the outrage.

"What do you think we should do Bill," I asked.

"We should attack them with sharpened sticks," was the response of my comrade who was then a keen supporter of liberation wars and peasant struggle.

Now, at 53, Bill is a third-year student of literature and anthropology at the University of Western Australia.

His book is based in the 64 editions of the magazine *Bunji* which he founded and edited in Darwin.

It deals with the Larrakia claim for Kulaluk, Coconut Grove, Nightcliff, and shows that Paul Keating's Native Title, or Mabo, legislation did not happen in a

vacuum. The legislation is the culmination of many and varied struggles.

It also documents the journey of a young middle-class West Australian schoolteacher who hitchhiked north to join the then hippies as beachcomber and ends with a new understanding of himself, mostly prompted by his association with Aboriginal Australians.

It was a journey that should fascinate all who have a regard for contemporary Australian history regardless of their political affiliations.

Three of Bill Day's paternal ancestors served as the Mayor of Maidstone, Kent.

Another, George Throssell, succeeded John Forrest as Western Australia's second premier.

His great uncle, Hugo Throssell, won a Victoria Cross at Gallipoli and married the author Katharine Susannah Pritchard.

Fought

His father, also a William Bartlett Day, fought with the AIF at Balikpapan.

Bill made his own pilgrimage to the battlefields of Gallipoli in 1964.

His book will be launched in Perth by WA Inc Royal Commissioner and deputy chairman of the Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee, Sir Ronald Wilson.

It will be launched in Darwin next week.

It should cost \$19.95 and be available from most bookshops.

Gwalwa Daraniki means "our land" in the language of the Larrakia.

Bunji means "friend".

Contin
University
Paper 94
August 1994

GROK!

BUNJI - listening to a new (old) truth

Bill Day's book *Bunji* tells of the struggle of the Larrakia people, the original inhabitants of the coastal lands of Darwin.

Written by a white, it is also a symbol of hope for the future, of a process of reconciliation, understanding and respect for Aboriginal people and culture.

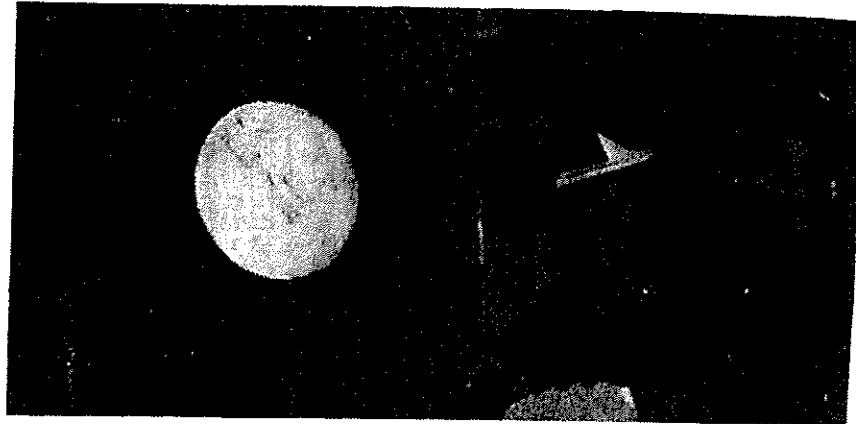
A Broome mate of mine who lived in Darwin during the 1970s and 80s, when asked about Bill Day, said simply, "He was a good bloke."

Bill's book is much like that. Unpretentious and uncompromising, it covers the period from the early 1970s until the mid 80s, using material from *Bunji*, a black rights newsletter, founded and edited by Bill Day.

Whilst it centres around the struggle of the Larrakia people to remain on their land against the encroaching expanse of suburbia and the greed of the land developers, the book, like the original newsletter, also touches on other issues. Racism, police brutality, alcohol abuse, health and other matters are also part of the fabric of the story.

And it is a story that needs to be told. Particularly at a time when 'land rights' has again become an item on the media agenda following the historic decision of the High Court on the 'Mabo' case and the subsequent State and Federal legislation.

The coverage by the media of the Mabo decision has been nothing short of scandalous. It has been a process of disinformation whereby *The West Australian* and *Sunday Times* have sacrificed content to simply reprint 'adventorial' from the mining lobby under



... and we want it now.

THE SURFER . . . page 13...

of being the first surfer to reside at Gnarly Bay. He

dole like everyone else," he replied with a wry chuckle. "But I'm the sort of bloke that got a bit bored, you know. The dote isn't the answer - you

Reviewed by Michael Hovane

Bill Day's book is part of that process of listening to the truth, to the whole story, not an idealised and sanitised version.

the guise of 'news', without any real attempt to analyse and explain.

As a lawyer who has studied the decision, it is apparent that its future application would be limited. Most existing land title would not be touched by the decision. Ironically, those Aboriginal peoples who have been most dispossessed will find little redress, as it will be difficult for them to satisfy the requirement of "continuing association with the land" which is defined in a narrow and legalistic 'whitefella' way. Its greatest value is mainly on a symbolic level, an acknowledgment that Aboriginal people were living upon, and had rights to the land before whites came, (a concept recognised in the US, Canada, New Zealand and other countries).

The ignorance and indifference of white Australians to the true history of this country and the treatment of Aboriginal people is profound. However it is essential to a true understanding and reconciliation that we take responsibility to find out the truth.

Bill Day's book is part of that process of listening to the truth, to the whole story, not an idealised and sanitised version.

READ IT. Read some of the other books listed in the "Reference" section of *Bunji*. You may well be shocked and ashamed at what you find - and amazed at the strength and resilience of Aboriginal people.

On a final note, one of the most attractive things about the book is that it shows a group of people who didn't just whinge, or accept unjust decisions, they acted. A salutary lesson for the armchair critics and activists like me.

SOUND GARDEN • SONIC YOUTH • BREEDERS

Rare Aboriginal Insights

KEN RALPH

Bunji Bill Day, Canberra, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1994, pp 157.

There are many books available which will give you the history of Aboriginal land rights. *Bunji* by Bill Day, however, gives a rare and detailed insight into one community's struggle, that of the Larrakia people, the traditional owners of Darwin.

Bunji is the name of the newsletter which was produced by Bill Day from 1971 to 1983. Bill, a non-Aboriginal, saw the need for Aboriginal opinions and demands to be put into print. His aim was to inform the wider community of Aboriginal needs and to keep Aboriginals up-to-date on local and national issues.

The Larrakia were especially unfortunate in being claimants to land adjacent to an expanding city. The opposition to their claims was intense. They were not asking for land in the desert or in isolated wilderness but part of the outskirts of Darwin. There was conflict and confrontation with police, developers, public servants, racists and even the military who used land sacred to the Larrakia for barracks and a bombing range. Bill Day covers it all, the protests, sit-ins, arrests and even fire-bombs.

It would be easy to criticise the lack of attention to the legal and political issues

but it must be remembered that the book attempts to present an Aboriginal perspective (even though written by a non-Aboriginal). The land is sacred to the Larrakia and to them the return of their ancient lands is a matter of justice. The Larrakia experienced a great deal of frustration from the delays in processing their land claims. The political and legal imperatives were not understood.

Bill Day includes many extracts from *Bunji* and this gives a reality to the telling and a credibility to the characters. Each significant event has its coverage in an issue of *Bunji*, with its simple language and clear message. The descriptions of the camps of the various groups and the insights into life is worth the reading. The characters are real and you come to understand their struggle — the struggle for beaches, mud flats and mangrove swamps. You can feel the anger when the land is torn up for canals and cleared for subdivision and used as a dump by the nearby city. The Larrakia struggle is topical because it shows how people living close to cities have difficulty in using land rights legislation. The legislation is usually operative for unused crown land and such land is scarce around cities. Stringent cultural criteria are also applied to groups and individuals and you need go no further than the High Court's definition of Aboriginal in the Mabo case to see how many groups can be ex-

cluded. The current debate concerning the establishment of an Aboriginal Land Acquisition Fund is critical as it is the only proposal at present which would allow Aboriginals in cities to acquire significant amounts of land.

The book is easy reading even though at times the flow from one set of facts to another seems disjointed. However, this does not affect the overall cohesion of the story. Some of the action taken could be seen as extremist. The plan to take and hide the picture of the Black Madonna from Darwin's Catholic Cathedral and, of course, the firebombing of the developer's truck are examples. It should be remembered however that the Aboriginal situation was critical and perhaps desperate measures were necessary when friends were few and support limited.

Bill Day's story gives life and meaning to what for a long time has been just a few lines in other works. He gives us the characters and the world in which they lived and we come to appreciate the Larrakia struggle, a struggle repeated in many other parts of Australia. The Larrakia were fortunate to have a friend and supporter like Bill Day.

Ken Ralph is director of the Yalbalanga Aboriginal Centre at the Strathfield (NSW) campus of the Australian Catholic University.

BOOKS OUT

2135

Run out of town

Not just the story of how the Larrakia people have been thwarted in their land rights claims, but also of how one man's passionate involvement led to his being virtually run out of town. Review by Chips Mackinolty

Bill Day *Bunji: A Story of the Gwaiwa Daraniki Movement*
Aboriginal Studies Press,
\$19.95pb

TWO DAYS before last June's Northern Territory elections, a group purporting to represent the Larrakia people — the traditional owners of what is now the city of Darwin — announced a Mabo-style land claim over Darwin.

On the surface it looked like a set-up by the Incumbent Country Liberal Party (CLP) whose dirty tricks department has successfully played on suburban electoral fears over land rights at every election since self-government in 1978. For years the spectre of land claims in and around Darwin has been raised as a rallying cry for the whitefellas clinging to the edge of Australia's northern coastline.

At one stage the CLP expanded the perimeter of Darwin's town boundaries to an area larger than Greater London in an attempt to thwart the Kenbi Land Claim over Cox Peninsula across the harbour from the city. As has been the case with most Northern Territory Government litigation designed to stem the tide of Aboriginal demands for land justice, the town boundary scam failed in the courts. Another chapter in what has become an obsessive history for Darwin: the dispossession of the Larrakia and their struggles to get some of their land back.

Internal government documents that have surfaced since the election suggest the CLP spin doctors had no prior knowledge of the election eve land claim: the uncharacteristic ineptness of their response at the time indi-

cates unusual innocence in the deceitful game of politics. In any case, the would-be claimants have since been repudiated by the Larrakia and the Northern Land Council.

Whether the announcement of the claim influenced the election result is difficult to gauge, but the event certainly qualifies for inclusion in the obsessive history of the Larrakia and it is the obsessive nature of this history that drove Bill Day to the point of madness over thirteen years as he joined with the struggle of the Larrakia.

The old litany of the Top End has it that Territorians fall into one of three categories: mercenaries, missionaries and misfits. From his own account, and that of the many in Darwin who remember him, Bill Day was a misfit, from the days he first arrived in town as a hippy and part-time worker on the wharves. He was certainly no mercenary — he was virtually run out of town with little but the files of the *Bunji*

**The old litany of
the Top End has
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Territorians fall
into one of three
categories:
mercenaries,
missionaries and
misfits.**

newsletter to show for his time in the north. While the redneck line says that whitefellas who work with blackfellas are mere modern-day missionaries manipulating Aboriginal, Bill Day's zeal was more complicated. It was borne of the converted, not the converter — if anything Day was missionised by the Larrakia in their fight for social justice rather than the other way round.

Bunji, which Day edited between 1971 and 1983, is one of the most important, if somewhat idiosyncratic, histories of Aboriginal people in contemporary times. Starting from wax stencil mimeographs, the 64 issues of *Bunji* chart the radicalisation of Aboriginal politics thousands of kilometres from better publicised events such as the Tent Embassy.

The Larrakia, like the Arrernte in Alice Springs, have seen large towns grow up in the midst of their traditional country — all within living memory. In many senses, the 'frontier' Henry Reynolds wrote about ten years ago still exists in places like the Territory, though now the battles are fought with lawyers in the courts and with politicians in Canberra rather than with rifles, spears and poisoned flour.

But when the Larrakia began to take to the streets over twenty years ago, frontier violence was never far from the surface, and the bravery of those such as Bobby Secretary and Fred Fogarty cannot be underestimated. This was before the Whitlam Government and the winds of change it brought; it was the time when the hated Native Welfare still controlled the lives of thousands of Aborigines. It was the time, too, when hysterical conservative politicians were accusing the new class of 'white advisers' of running guns into Arnhem Land.

In the midst of this the Larrakia stood up publicly and were counted for the first time in generations as the traditional owners of Darwin. They were joined by people from other Aboriginal groups in the Northern Territory, many of whom were later to become prominent in the Northern Land Council; support was received from a growing number of Aboriginal activists elsewhere in the country. The natives

continued on page 60

LOOK FOR THESE BOOKS

CAROLINE CADDY

Beach Plastic
Letters from the North

MARION CAMPBELL

Lines of Flight
Not being Miriam

ADRIANA ELLIS

Cleared Spaces, Clear Moments

HEATHER GRACE

Heart of Light

DOROTHY HEWETT

Peninsula
Selected Poems

GAIL JONES

House of Breathing

VASSO KALAMARAS

The Same Light

JOAN LONDON

Sister Ships
Letter to Constantine

SUSAN MELROSE

Eating Out

TRACY RYAN

Killing Delilah

BRENDA WALKER

Crush
One More River

JUSTINA WILLIAMS

Anger & Love

**Penguin Stand
at the International
Feminist Book Fair**

**FREMANTLE
ARTS CENTRE PRESS**

as Wyatt himself is concerned, nothing matters except the heist. He is a man without a conscience or even a soul in the usual sense of the word. He has no emotions, no social skills, no personality to speak of. He moves like a shadow through the book, leaving no trail or even the faintest whiff of a human presence.

If this makes him sound robotic and uninteresting, I can only add that he possesses something that women find both attractive and repellent, a sinewy toughness masking, perhaps, something vulnerable within. This is an idea that may well be developed in the next instalment, using memory implants to more fully create a sense of something lost in Wyatt's childhood. The possibilities are boundless.

New boy on the cellblock is Melbourne's Shane Maloney, who has come up with something different in *Stiff*. This is a comic crime novel set among Labor politics and unionism in the ethnic and working-class heartland from Brunswick through to the Scotch thistles of Coolaroo. The frozen body of an oversized Turk is found in a meatworks chilling room, and no one seems to know what he was doing there except possibly trying to purloin a side of beef. Murray Whelan, true believer and dogsboddy for Charlene Wills, MP, is given the job of investigating the case in order to head off potential union trouble.

Murray is one of those people who just can't say no, the eternal committee member and meeting attender. He is also a de facto single father whose femocrat wife is too busy carving out a political career for herself in Canberra to live with him in their run-down Coburg bungalow. Who can blame her?

Murray soon finds himself embroiled in the volatile Turkish community, mainly through the agency of the heartbreakingly beautiful Ayisha, after whom he lusts. In fact she does finish up in Murray's bed, but unfortunately he isn't in it at the time. There are also a couple of suited heavies in a BMW taking an interest in his activities, drugs planted under his mattress, encounters with cops, nits in his son's hair and person or persons unknown

trying to silence him permanently. Why? Big time rip-offs are happening at the meatworks apparently, and the frozen Turk is merely the tip of the iceberg.

About the only successful exponent of political comedy in this country is Queensland's Ross Fitzgerald, but it has to be conceded that Maloney has made a good fist of *Stiff*. He writes confidently, has a clever turn of phrase, is genuinely funny at times and knows all the backroom shenanigans, which gives the book a solid base of credibility. There's a nice cynical edge, too. My only complaints are a slight tendency towards wordiness, and the author's penchant for puns. These are never funny and should be avoided at all costs.

From page 37

were getting restless!

Bunji, the newsletter, chronicled much of this period, but Day's eponymous autobiographical account of the times does much more. In a sense, Day's almost stream-of-consciousness linking of extracts from the newsletter evokes the obsessive madness of a period of political history far better than a formal academic piece ever could. If it had been illustrated by Ralph Steadman it could easily have been called 'Fear and Loathing in Darwin'.

It was this obsessive madness that drove Day from town, reviled by the establishment, repudiated by younger Larrakia and abandoned by many friends. The same obsessive madness that has meant that the Larrakia have been opposed by the Northern Territory Government in their land claims. With the exception of the Kulaluk lease won by Bobby Secretary, the Larrakia have been thwarted at every turn, and are still waiting to be able to have the Kenbi Land Claim properly heard.

Chips Mackinoly is a Darwin-based graphic artist and journalist. He has worked — at times obsessively — with a number of Aboriginal organisations and communities in the Northern Territory since 1981.



BOOKSHELF



Idjhil

written and illustrated by Helen Bell

Cygnets Books

(an imprint of UWA Press)

rrp \$19.95

This new offering from Cygnets Books tells the story of Idjhil, a Western Australian Aboriginal boy growing up in the ways and traditions of the Nyungar life. He learns how the land, the animals and his people are one and live within one another. In being taught the skills of his ancestors, he savours the joys and challenges of living a Nyungar way of life in the bush that was his home. Unfortunately, at the age of nine, his life is changed forever. In keeping with official government policy of the time, Idjhil is taken from his family and placed into care.

The early years of Idjhil's life are well described in this book for younger readers and the story is accompanied by the author's charming illustrations. Idjhil's life after his abduction is, however, skimmed over—I would like to have read (and feel that younger readers need to know) a little more of the trials and tribulations of an Aboriginal child growing up in an alien environment. For all that, however, this is an attractive book and a worthy addition to UWA Press's growing list of commercial titles.

His future's secure

WILLIAM Day has sat on both sides of the University fence.

From 1989 to 1991, he worked evenings as a campus security guard. Recently, he graduated with first class honours in anthropology.

There was a time when he may as well have called UWA his home away from home. 'For a while, I worked as a security guard at night and was a student here during the day,' he said. But the disruptive nature of night work led the former teacher to give it away altogether.

William now plans to concentrate his efforts on a PhD on the indigenous languages of the 'top end' of Australia. □

LEFT: William Day (left) with security colleague Peter Taylor.



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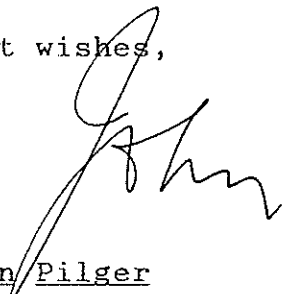
Bill Day
PO Box 892
Nedlands
WA 6009
Australia

COPY

Dear Bill,

Thank you very much for your letter and for sending me Bunji, which I think is terrific. Be assured that when I next write about the subject I shall refer to your poetry and the book. I hope we can stay in touch.

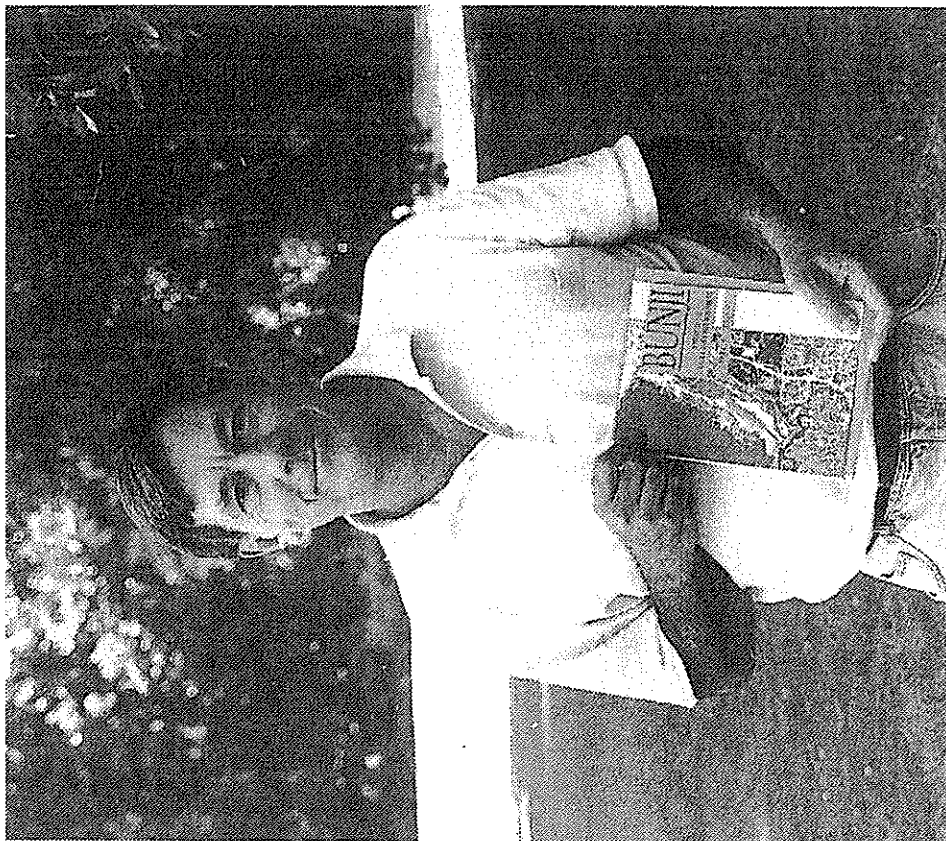
Best wishes,


John Pilger

Note: J.P. refers to the poem on page 26 of 'BUNJI' and also on page 21 of 'A SECRET COUNTRY'



Land rights fighter comes home



Author Bill Day hopes his book will promote understanding and reconciliation between black and non-Aboriginal Australians.

Bill Day is not your average UWA arts student.

He's 53 years old, has a long battle with alcohol addiction behind him and is a veteran land rights activist.

What's more, he had finished his first book even before he started writing anthropology and English essays.

That book, titled *Bunji: A Story of the Gwalwa Daraniki Movement*, was launched on Sunday, April 17, by Sir Ronald Wilson, of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation.

It will also be launched on April 22 by the Gwalwa Daraniki Association in Darwin.

The book documents the struggle of Northern Territory Aborigines for land in the 1970s and the non-Aboriginal people who stood by and fought with them.

Bill, who has been a school teacher, security guard and taxi driver, was one of those people.

He left Nedlands in 1969 to join the hippies living on Lamerloo Beach in Darwin.

POST PEOPLE

By Amanda Bower

He soon found himself involved with Aboriginal fringe dwellers living in Darwin and helped to organise and found an association of the Larrakia clan.

This association was known as Gwalwa Daraniki, which means "our land" in the Larrakia language.

Bill, who is now living back in Nedlands, says that *Bunji* is a book that had to be written — and he is one of the few who could write it.

"This is not just my story," he said.

"The people in this story should be sitting around their campfires and telling it themselves for the next 20 years.

"But they're not here to tell it.

"The average life

Genocide didn't stop in the 1930s — it's still going on today

Bill, who had penned a local newsletter in Nedlands in the 1950s, also wrote the Aboriginal Association's newsletter, titled *Bunji*, which means "friend".

In 1971 the association began campaigning for land rights, which were granted in 1976.

Bill lived on that land from 1972-1985, in a home of grass, sticks and other natural materials.

But the struggle for land rights was not an easy one, and the battle is not yet over.

Aboriginal people living in the western suburbs can understand.

"I'm a white man, who went to Nedlands Primary School and Hollywood High, who had never met an Aboriginal until the age of 20.

"I hadn't even spoken to a police officer before I went to Darwin.

"It was a real journey in discovery for me. I learnt about myself, and I learnt about what it is like to be an Aboriginal.

"Of course, I don't claim that I've done it all. I haven't ever been victimised by racism, and I can come back into the white community when I want to.

"But in some ways that was an advantage. I could work as a mediator and help negotiate between black and white.

"I hope that I'm still fulfilling that role in this book. What I'm hoping is that your average suburban white person will be able to identify more easily

• Continued page 61

• From page 6
with a book written by 'one of them'.
Ironically, when Bill wrote the book in 1991, he was hoping that it might inspire a federal land rights act.
Bill says that recognition of native title is an important step, but the most important thing is getting it to work.
"The Mabro decision is not about policies, it's about people's lives. People are dying. The fringe dwellers in Kalbarrie, for example, are dropping like flies.
"Genocide didn't stop in the 1930s — it's still going on today."
Bill says the experience of the Larrakia people, as portrayed in his book, is helpful in understanding how land rights claims can be used.
"The Aboriginal people aren't against development," he said. "That is one of my proudest achievements, he said.
"Life just gets better every day."
• Bill Day's book *Bunji: A Story of the Gwalwa Daraniki Movement*, is available from most local bookshops at \$19.95.

Bunji: A story of the Struggle of the Gwalwa Daraniki Movement.

by Bill Day, Aboriginal Studies Press , Canberra, 1994. pp.157

"Bunji" in the lingua franca of the Top End of the Northern Territory means friend and Bill Day the author of Bunji is a friend of mine. He has given us a frank account of his work with the Larrakia people and their long fight to gain recognition of their rights to *any* of their traditional land in Darwin. Bill has provided us with awarts and all account of those times. There is no artifice, no attempt to pretty up his or anyone else's role in the struggle.

In the opening passage Bill notes that "In February 1991 the Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr. Justice Olney, regretfully found that under the narrow definition of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* , no traditional owners of the Larrakia estates now lived to claim their ancestral country....many of the native possessors of the land's timeless past had died during thirteen years of legal wrangling". As he later comments in 1992 the Federal court overturned Olney's ruling.

Bunji records the death of many of those who played a part in the struggle to obtain Kulaluk. The passing of significant figures in this process continues, Stewart Harris who wrote the foreword to this book died in December 1994. Though not all which the Larrakia wanted was achieved, and heavy personal costs were paid by many, this book is about triumph it is about a victory against incredible odds.

The Larrakia have title at the moment to Kulaluk, about 300 hectares of low lying land situated between East Point and Nightcliff. It is land which is of tradition significance and at the time it was handed over to the Gwalwa Daraniki was not wanted by powerful white interests except to put a road through. As part of the price for getting this land the Larrakia had to agree to have a major road run through their land. The road is aptly named Dick Ward Drive after the first Northern Territory Land Commissioner who when he'd been a member of the Legislative Assembly had pushed for the excision of the most valuable housing land from the pre-existing Aboriginal reserve.

I have just returned from Darwin where the Chief Minister recently announced to a group of community dignitaries that the time was right to recognise the Larrakia as the traditional owners of Darwin and that

the Larrakia should in return assume their traditional function of controlling the behaviour of other Aboriginal people who come to Darwin as they would have done in pre-European days.

This is the same Chief Minister who was responsible for maintaining Everingham's legal fiction that the town boundaries of Darwin covered an area ten times the size of London in order to thwart the Larrakia's land claim to Cox Peninsula on the other side of Darwin Harbour. Nothing in the Chief Minister's statement suggests that the Larrakia should be able to control the behaviour of the Army which occupies Goondal a sight of major significance for the Larrakia, which they were for many years prevented from even visiting until the Gwalwa Daraniki staged demonstrations. The Chief Minister is just following a long and dishonourable tradition of pretending to recognise the existence of Aboriginal power and assets which have already been alienated in order that when Aboriginal people fail to exercise authority or forget to become rich they can be blamed for their impotence.

In Bunji, Bill describes his relationship with Fred Fogarty who was jailed as a result of a fire bomb being thrown into a surveyors truck during a demonstration staged by the Gwalwa Daraniki to prevent the subdivision of land which they claimed. Bill provides considerable detail about the period 1971 to 1983 of characters, places, actions and of the interrelationship between the Larrakia's fight for their interests and the general land rights question. He does this in a way which puts the debate into a wider Territory context. The book is well written, historically accurate, and gives the reader a glimpse into the sort of person who is capable of maintaining a long drawn out community struggle for justice.

Anyone interested in the land rights movement should put time aside to read it and at just under \$20 if you are working then you should buy a copy.

Dr. John Tomlinson
Senior Lecturer
School of Social Science
Queensland University of Technology.
5/1/95.

Koori MAIL APRIL 5, 1995 p6

Academic remembers 'Fighter' Fred Fogarty



The last day of March this year was the 10th anniversary of the sudden death of Fred Fogarty (pictured).

Fogarty was born in Cherbourg, Queensland, and made a name for himself as a boxer before moving to Darwin in 1971.

In Darwin, Fogarty joined the campaign of a group of fringe dwellers fighting for title to the land on which they were camped.

Their story is told in the book 'Bunji' by Bill Day, published by Aboriginal Studies Press in 1994.

Typically, for an Aboriginal male, Fogarty was only 53 when he died in mysterious circumstances. He campaigned vigorously against development of the Kula-luk Land on which he lived.

His naked body was found lying in the mangroves near his camp. Fogarty had previously been to prison for firebombing a surveyor's truck. He was released when Cyclone Tracey destroyed the Fanny Bay Gaol.

Author Bill Day, now an honours student in Perth, called for Fred Fogarty to be remembered as an Aborigine who dedicated the last 14 years of his life to the Aboriginal cause.

"He was the hardest working man I have ever met," Mr Day said.

"Not only was he prominent on the political front, but he set about to house the Darwin fringe dwellers using his considerable physical strength and building skills.

"Like old Boxer in 'Animal Farm', Fogarty was sent to the knackers yard. He wanted Aborigines to be independent but he got little thanks for his efforts."

KALALAK TITLE HANDOVER

25th August 1979

The handing over of the title of part of Kalalak to its traditional owner, Mr. Bobby Secretary, is a land mark in a long and continuing struggle for the Larrakia people, and for all Australian Aborigines. The Larrakia's struggle has been instrumental in rousing the consciousness of white Australians. It has publicized the plight of Aborigines, and their attempts to secure title to their traditional land before it is whittled away by constant white encroachment.

If it weren't for the courage of the Larrakia, particularly their leader, Mr. Bobby Secretary, and their able supporters, such as Bill Day, Fred Fogarty and Cheryl Buchanan, there might not be an N.T. Land Rights Act today.

It was their persistence in the face of impossible odds that helped rouse the concern which triggered off the Woodward inquiry.

What has happened with Kalalak is symbolic of what is happening to Aboriginal Land Rights throughout the Territory. The Kalalak title is only a Special Purpose Lease to a small strip of land, most of which is swamp. This strip of land is only a tiny fraction of the whole Larrakia land. This Special Purpose Lease was not granted until the Larrakia accepted a sewerage pipe across their land and a major road through it. Throughout the Northern Territory Aborigines are being compromised down to the bare bones and the Land Rights Act is so designed that Aborigines have very little legal basis for resisting the continuing encroachment on their lands.

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BORROLOOLA

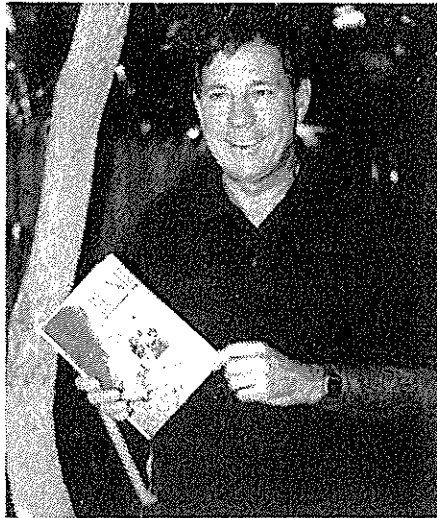
Borroloola people have not accepted the latest Northern Territory Government proposition which was supposed to be aimed at settling contested land areas north of the Borroloola Township. The Aborigines have

company, Mt. Isa Mines. The question is whether this mining company will act responsibly in co-operation with the Northern Territory Government to bring about a land deal that will settle Aboriginal Land needs and the continuity of their own project.

"NEVER GIVE UP"

Some great books this time, so if you're short of dollars put these on your birthday list.

Bill Day knows all about grog and drugs and battling for land rights. He's the whitefella who used to publish the **Bunji** newsletter in the Top End. (No, it's not the same as the Noongar word. This Bunji means "friend" in the Larrakia language they use round Darwin.)



Bill Day

"By 1986 I left Darwin with no friends, family or money" writes Bill Day in his new book **Bunji** (Aboriginal Studies Press \$19.95)

touched grog or drugs for seven years, and is an active Christian.

"I was living in the streets and everything looked hopeless for me. I thought about the 15 years I had been fighting for land rights and suddenly realised that slogans we chanted about the land were going to help me get off the grog and pills."

"We got the land rights and now the people in Darwin own that land," he said. "But the sad thing is, all of my friends are dead."

Bill Day applied the teachings about the sacredness of the land to his body. "When we said 'this is your land, look after it', I took it as also meaning my body." Suddenly, chants like "never give up" and "fight for your rights" took on a new significance.

Today Bill Day is studying Anthropology and English at the University of WA. He hasn't

'BUNJI' by Bill Day, published by

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

85 copies sold at Perth book launch!

Bill Day applied the teachings about the sacredness of the land to his body.

The Whitefella At Fish Camp

Bunji — A Story Of The Gwalwa Daraniki Movement

By Bill Day

Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra

Aus\$19.95

Available at Angus and Robertson

Reviewed by Sally-Ann Watson

I used to drive past a sign on Dick Ward Drive, in Coconut Grove, Darwin, that reads Kulaluk Aboriginal Reserve — Gwalwa Daraniki Association, without knowing what it really meant.

It's only since last year that I've become good friends with some of the Aboriginal people living at Fish Camp, in the Kulaluk Reserve, and begun to see the various problems facing Aboriginal people living in official and unofficial town camps in Darwin.

My friends at Fish Camp, originally from Arnhemland communities, Maningrida and Rammingini, lived at Lee Point near Darwin for many years, until they were evicted last Christmas. Unlike

Aboriginal people in Darwin is no better that it was 20 years ago. Which brings us to "Bunji", Bill Day's story of the Aboriginal pride and land rights movement in Darwin in the seventies.

Bunji tells of the development of the Gwalwa Daraniki movement, which began with a group of Larrakia claiming Kulaluk land in 1971 and ended in the Gwalwa Daraniki Association at last winning the Kulaluk land lease, with conditions, in 1979.

It is an account of the rise of public demonstrations by Aboriginal people, and the attempt by local Aboriginal people to create a united front of the several tribes of the area. It brings to life vibrant, radical personalities such as Fred Fogarty, who with others firebombed a bulldozer to prevent development of Larrakia land. As it is the story of a movement of which the author was a part, it is also the story of an era in Bill Day's life.

Gwalwa Daraniki needed a voice; and so Day produced a newsletter which he called "Bunji", a local Aboriginal term for mate, or friend. The newsletter, published from 1971 to 1983, was an attempt to let people, locally and interstate, know about Aboriginal people in

Darwin — their demonstrations, fights in court, and land rights claims. Day has used cartoon and article excerpts from the Bunji newsletter throughout this book, which, with lots of photos and his colourful prose, brings seventies Darwin vividly to life.

As editor, Day relates, he did think it strange that he, a whitefella,

CONTINUED P19

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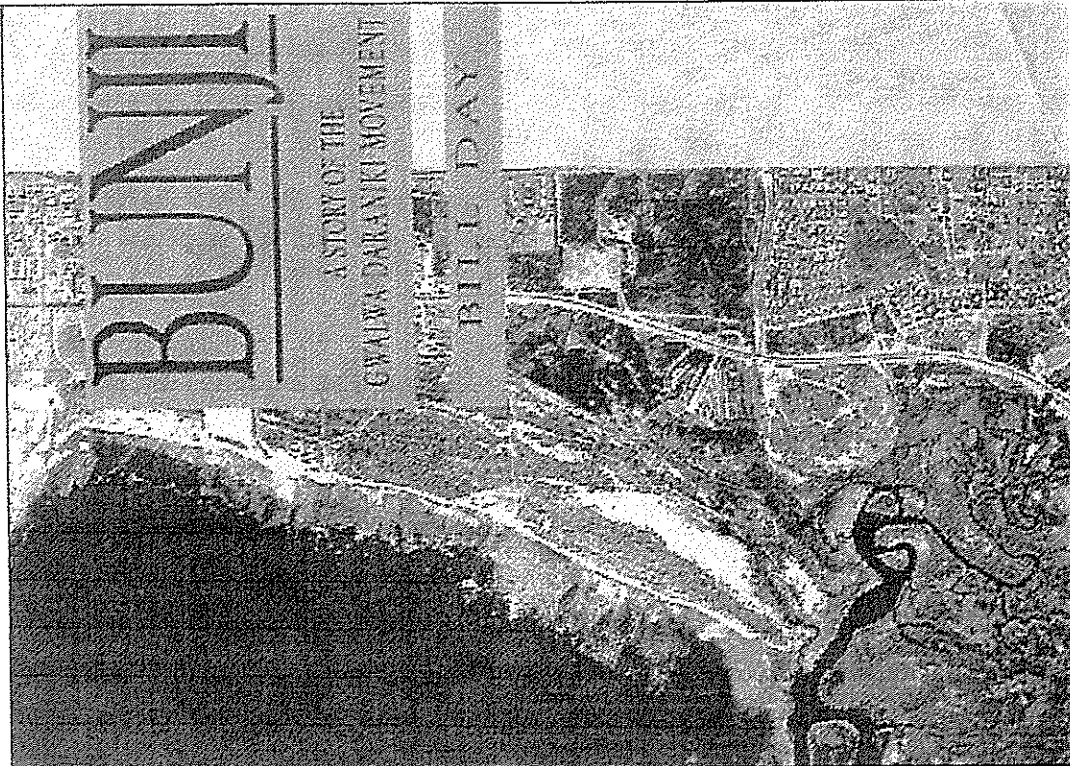


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October 10th - October 24th, 1997

The AustralAsian



FROM FIB

newsletter wouldn't have been published, and without it, the Aboriginal movement would not have had a continuous, national voice.

Moreover, a chunk of Darwin's history would have remained largely unrecorded, at least history from an Aboriginal or activist's perspective. By publishing "Bunji", the newsletter, and "Bunji", the book, Day has filled an important gap in Australian historical literature.

As we follow Day's life, as a whitefella working for the Aboriginal movement, loved and respected by many Aboriginal friends, we also see the problems that can arise from his situation.

Helping someone else's movement means that you can't make major decisions, as it's not your movement. Sometimes others will make decisions you don't agree with.

And so the leadership of Gwalwa Daranki changed, and the association compromised what Day saw as its ideals and rights, and the Northern Territory government granted it a lease of a small portion of Kulaluk, with conditions Day and some others found unacceptable. Friendships between the association and those aligned with Day cooled. Disillusioned, and personally disappointed, Day left Darwin.

The story ends with Day's return to Darwin years later, and his question, was it worthwhile, after organising demonstrations and attending government meetings about their demands for somewhere to live, or at least for a water supply at Fish Camp.

When Day is not helping with publicity, writing articles, and watching the singing, dancing and other ceremonies which are part of life at Fish Camp, he works on his doctoral thesis in Anthropology.

Bill Day is now living in Darwin

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October 10th - October 24th, 1997

The AustralAsian

Unpleasant truth of Aboriginal lives

Bunji: The Story of The Gwalwa Daraniki Movement. By Bill Day. Published by Aboriginal Studies Press. Retail price \$A19.95.

Bill Day founded a black rights newsletter, Bunji (Aboriginal for mate or comrade), in 1971. He used Bunji to publicise the Larrakia tribe's fight for their land in the Northern Territory. Spearheaded by the Gwalwa Daraniki organisation ('country belonga we', according to Bobby Secretary, one of the senior members of the Larrakia), marches and demonstrations showed Australians just how insincere big business and politicians had been when dealing with the Aborigines — changing the rules for land

rights, and handing back useless, mined-over land.

Day's book documents the petty irritations, the infighting and the tragedies (there weren't many joys) from 1971 to 1983, when he was expelled from the Gwalwa Daraniki organisation for being too radical. Excerpts from Bunji flesh out his text.

While the tale of the Larrakia tribe's fight is depressing, worse is the casual mention in the passing of Aboriginal deaths from drunken driving, car accidents and substance abuse.

Perhaps Bill Day should have concentrated on fighting for better health (mental and physical). An infant mortality rate of 36 per cent in 1980 is a catastrophe, as are the deaths at 35-39 years of age of so many Lar-



A sign at the second Aboriginal Embassy, Canberra, in November 1973 reads: "Remember the Larrakia tribe, Kulalak, Darwin NT land rights claims Kulalak for Larrakia 700 acres. We wuz robbed. Land Rights now."

rakia adults — a man who died aged 55 was considered old, a patriarch. The tribe was being decimated — no wonder, in 1991, Mr Justice Olney found that no Larrakia descent group

survived to satisfy the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (fortunately the Federal Court found he was in error the following year). Bill Day's enforced alienation from the very people he was trying to help was an unpleasant shock for him but ultimately it distanced him from the movement, enabling him to write a reasonably impartial history of the fight 11 years later. — (J)



Bill Day with his book that documents his struggle for the Larrakia people

Bill is back to tell of battle

By GERALDINE GREEN

A rebellious school teacher left Perth in 1969 to become a hippy in Darwin.

But on arrival Bill Day became immersed in the lives of Aborigines and a champion for land rights.

His battle to help the Larrakia people fight to claim the Kulaluk, Coconut Grove and Nightcliff areas is chronicled in his book *Bunji: A Story of the Gwalwa Daraniki Movement*.

Struggle

Mr Day, 58, who lived on Lamerloo Beach for six months in 1969, returned to Darwin this week after more than 10 years in Perth to meet old friends and reminisce about a grand struggle.

He said: "I guess I mixed freely with the Aborigines because I was as much an out-

cast in Darwin as they were."

Mr Day, although non-Aboriginal, said he was one of the last remaining "elders" of the Larrakia people left alive to record the Larrakia people's struggle in his book.

In the '70s he teamed up with Bobby Secretary and Fred Waters to found the Larrakia Association and the Gwalwa Daraniki.

He began a 12-year battle to secure land rights for the Larrakia.

Their wish came true in 1978.

Mr Day said he hoped that by reading the book, people would see Aborigines "as human beings and know what it was like to live the way I did."

He said he believed reconciliation between Aboriginal people and white Australians could only come about from "radical change; similar to that which occurred in South Africa".

Day, Bill
Books
Ab. Larrakia

Darwin's freedom fighter returns

By WES MORGAN

One of Darwin's seasoned campaigners for local indigenous rights has returned to the Top End.

Bill Day, an anthropologist who spent decades working with Larrakia people in campaigns for land rights around the Darwin area, and who edited *Bunji* - a newsletter that was a common source of controversy in the Top End during the 1970s and early 80s, says indigenous people still face many challenges in the Top End.

"Some things have improved, but aboriginal people around town are still treated like second-class citizens," said Mr Day.

"There are plenty of homeless people, with no roof over their heads, even though they are living in their own land."

"Aboriginal people still face a hell of a lot of racism as well."

Mr Day first moved to the Territory in 1969 and remembers Darwin as a segregated town where aboriginal people were relegated to poor seats in the local picture theatre.

He worked with Larrakia people in the 1970s to try to retain aboriginal land at Kulaluk in Coconut Grove, and during the 1990s worked with aboriginal people who were

'Some things have improved, but aboriginal people around town are still treated like second-class citizens'

- Author Bill Day

being evicted from their camps at Lee Point.

Mr Day - who lived at itinerant camps around Darwin while completing his PhD research - was arrested along with other campaigners during a stoush with the NT Government, when eviction orders were made at Fish Camp, on Lee Point.

Mr Day says many Darwin residents still don't know a lot about the land rights campaign of the Larrakia during the 70s and 80s, and says interest in his book on the subject, *Bunji: A Story of the Gwalwa Daraniki Movement*, is still "very high".

Sun Newspapers are giving away three signed copies of Bill Day's book *Bunji*.

To win yourself a copy, simply write your name and daytime contact number on the back of an envelope and post it to: Sun's Bunji Competition, PO Box 3187, Palmerston, NT, 0831. Entries must be received by COB Monday March 29.



Bill Day, an anthropologist who spent decades working with Larrakia people. Picture: W. MORGAN

Art tribute to friends, family

How to remember - a new exhibition featuring works by Anna Costantini and Jean Martin - will open at the Woods St Gallery this Friday.

How to remember explores the seemingly insignificant events of our lives and the intimate memories of friends and family that we associate with these.

This body of work combines Anna's street art-inspired stencil works and Jean's sensitive photographic technique to create a dedicatory record.

How to remember acknowledges those who we often take for granted.

The exhibition opens on Friday at 6pm.

The Woods St Gallery is open Wednesday to Saturday 10am to 3pm.

Book vote closes

Australian kids have been given the chance to vote for their favourite books in a nationwide poll.

Voting recently closed for Angus & Robertson's Kids Top 50.

Kids aged five to 17 were given a month to vote online, in-store and through their schools for their all-time favourite books.

The votes will be tallied and the final list will be announced at a Melbourne-based event mid-May.

"Books such as Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings are expected to rate highly, however there may also be a few surprises," said A&R's Helen O'Dare.

"A British survey in 2002 named Roald Dahl's books hot on Harry Potter's heels.

"Classics such as Enid Blyton's Famous Five novels, and A.A. Milne's Winnie the Pooh fared well in