

## “A Time to Dream II”

### Synopsis for Pilot Episode

The story follows the lives of three famous Aboriginal political activists over four decades. From 1950 to 1994, we trace the lives of three who came to play a key role in the great Aboriginal uprising of the late 1960's, and we see what subsequently became of each of them.

The stories of these three intertwine over three decades during times of great political upheaval which went largely unnoticed by an apathetic and uncaring Australia. Now that there is a great burgeoning interest in the subject it is apt to look at three lives which, whilst being representative of those of many activists of their era, also encompass range of elements of tragedy, trauma, drama, pathos, humour, persecution, harassment and fun. Their stories and story will inspire and uplift all Australians, but more importantly it will make them better informed of their own history and in doing so will make them better Australians.

Against the backdrop of the dramatic events of the Koori political actions of the 1960's, '70's, '80's & '90's; the Freedom Rides, the Gurindji Struggle, the “Black Power” Movement, the “Black Moratorium” demonstrations, the 1971 Springbok Football tour, the 1972 “Aboriginal Tent Embassy”, the 1983 Commonwealth games Demo's, and the Anti-Bicentennial protests of 1988, the battle to re-open Northland Sec. College 1992-95, and much more; we follow the life-paths of Koori political activists Bruce McGuinness, Denis Walker and Gary Foley.

We examine their lives as young Kooris struggling to come to terms with the institutionalised racism that was Australia in the 1940's and 1950's; how each coped with the poverty, oppression and discrimination that was Koori life of that era; and how each separately developed their own personal survival skills, and political analysis of their individual situations.

By the mid-1960's Denis Walker, son of world famous poet Kath Walker, had come to prominence as a 'radical', outspoken leader of the Brisbane Murray community, and was a key figure in the battle for Aboriginal control of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) in 1967 - 70. Alongside such legendary Aboriginal resistance fighters like Don "the Punchin' Pastor" Brady, Sam Watson Jnr, and Steve Mam, Denis fought tirelessly in the late '60's to expose the brutal racism of the QLD "Acts" under the notorious Bjelke-Peterson Government.

Walker also in the early 1970's established and led an Australian Chapter of the Black Panther Party, which provoked such paranoia in the QLD police that Denis was subject to extreme harassment for most of the two decades since.

In 1968 Walker formed an alliance friendship with Bruce McGuinness, charismatic leader of the Victorian Koori delegates to FCAATSI (and who in 1970 became the first Koori Director of the Aborigines Advancement League in Melbourne), and ultimately formed the breakaway National Tribal Council along with people like Don Brady, a Koori who had been harassed for most of the two decades since. McGuinness had created a strong, well-organised group in Victoria which had organised numerous Land Rights demonstrations, non-Koori support groups and campaigns in solidarity with others such as the Gurindjis, Lionel Brockman and the anti-apartheid actions of 1971.

In 1969 McGuinness was instrumental in bringing "Caribbean Black Power Leader", Roosevelt Brown, to Melbourne to address an Aborigines Advancement League, an action which attracted retaliatory measures from the Federal Government when a \$40,000 grant was subsequently withheld from the League. However, the following year McGuinness led a Koori delegation to the international Congress of African Peoples in Atlanta, and to the United Nations in New York, the first ever Australian Aboriginal approach to the UN.

Meanwhile, Foley had served an intense political apprenticeship on the streets of Redfern from 1966. In the period between 1967 and 1969, Foley had been there as Redfern Koori population grew from 3000 in 1966 to 35,000 by 1968 as a result of a mass exodus from rural NSW after the 1967 referendum opened up the 45 NSW State Government-run "concentration camps" (euphemistically known as "reserves" and "mission stations". That mass

exodus to inner-city Sydney suburbs during the late 1960's, in turn generated the radical action which saw young Koori political activists like Paul Coe, Gary Williams, Foley and others (heavily influenced by the writings of Malcolm X and the Black Panther Party people in the US) preside over the establishment of community-controlled, self-help organisations like Legal, Health and Housing Services.

Paul Coe and Garry Williams (both law students at UNSW and Sydney University respectively) had set up a "discussion group" of young Koori's in Redfern in 1969 and encouraged the group (which included Foley) to read Black American political literature which they stole from Bob Gould's "Third World Bookshop" in Goulburn Street in Sydney. (The thefts ceased when Bob Gould negotiated a "deal" with the activists to provide the books free of charge). As there was no available Native American political stuff available then, the group read the works of Malcolm X, Bobby Searle, George Jackson, Eldridge Cleaver and Huey P. Newton. They considered such material relevant because the situations and circumstances described by American Black writers to be almost identical to the Redfern "ghetto" in 1969.

Most certainly the police harassment described by Huey Newton and Bobby Searle in Oakland was very similar to the constant police victimisation and intimidation tactics being experienced on a daily basis in Redfern, and so Paul Coe advocated that it was worth trying some of the tactics the Californian Black Panthers had used in countering the problem in Oakland. This was fine except for the fact that what the Panthers had done was firstly find a loophole in California law whereby it was legal to carry weapons under certain circumstances. They then utilised this legal loophole by arming themselves with guns and following and monitoring police cars that entered their black community. They told the police that they were there to "defend the black community" and that if the cops "kill any of our people, then we will kill you!"

Needless to say, in subsequent years numerous Panthers across America died in an FBI-orchestrated official over-reaction to the basic political claims of the Black Panther Party.

The reason the same thing did not happen in Australia was that when Coe and the "discussion group" researched the legal situation in Australia they found no similar loopholes in Australian laws which would have enabled the

Redfern activists to arm themselves "in self-defence" (although a couple of years later Denis Walker would come close with his self-styled, Brisbane-based, Black Panther Party of Australia). But Coe decided to persist with the basic idea of "monitoring" the police in Redfern in what became known as the "Pig Patrol".

One Saturday night in 1969, into the Empress Hotel in Redfern (legendary Black hotel in 1960's, considered the toughest in Sydney, to outsiders) walked three Koori activists, Paul Coe, Garry Williams and Gary Foley, each armed with, a pen, a notebook, and a remarkable naievity born of political determination. When the police arrived for their nightly "entertainment" they found themselves confronted with this sober and earnest trio of young Koori;s writing down their numbers and everything they did, whilst a large contingent of awe-struck Koori's waited to see if the cops would kill them now or later.

It was probably that the tough NSW Police "21 Division" (set up in the 1930's to fight the Razor Gangs of Darlinghurst, it had been 'turned loose' on the Koori community in Redfern in the late 1960's) was that night so dumbfounded by the audacity of these three activists, that they let them live to tell the tale. Which was a mistake from the NSW Police point of view, as the information the three and others went on to collect provided sufficient evidence for some of the most eminent names in the NSW Legal profession to join Coe, Williams and Foley six months later opening the doors of the Redfern Aboriginal Legal Service, the first free, community-controlled, shop-front, legal aid service in Australia.

Within weeks Redfern community activists had set up a community-controlled Medical Service based on the concept of the legal service, and soon a 'Breakfast for Kids' program in a Newtown park (another idea adapted by Coe from Black Panther community programs in America) was developed into the Murawina Aboriginal Women and Childrens program, and in no time a Housing Co-operative and Black Theatre had evolved from an unstoppable community dynamic. All this action, along with the attendant constant political marches and rallys, meant that Redfern had become a very exciting and changing place by 1970.

Earlier, when Foley met the older and more politically articulate McGuinness and Walker at a FCAATSI conference in 1968, they became friends and began to develop a key political alliance that eventually linked the east coast

Aboriginal movement. This alliance played a major role in coordinating the series of major political actions that included mass demonstrations along the East coast of Australia, the creation of today's national Koori symbol, the Aboriginal Flag, and culminating with the "Aboriginal Embassy" in 1972.

The "Aboriginal Embassy" protest put the Land Rights struggle on the world political map, as well as the television screens of the world. It began when, on Invasion Day 1972 (26th January), the then Prime Minister of Australia Billy McMahon made the biggest political blunder of his Prime Ministership and announced that his Government would never grant Land Rights to Aboriginal people! Within hours of McMahon's statement on national TV, a group of Koori political activists which included Gary Foley, Gary Williams, Kevin Gilbert, Billy Craigie, Lyn Thompson, Isobel Coe and others, had decided to create an "immediate response" and despatched a group of five men to set up a protest on the front lawns of Parliament House in Canberra that night.

When asked that night by the media what the protest was, the men told them that this was the "Aboriginal Embassy" to represent the Aboriginal people who now felt like aliens in their own land after McMahon's statement. Furthermore, when police were called they advised the Koori activists that there appeared to be no actual law that prevented people from camping on the lawns of Parliament house; as long as there were less than 12 tents there was nothing that the ACT Police could do about the protesters. The next day Koori reinforcements arrived and thus was born the most effective Koori protest yet, because it was legal, peaceful and quickly captured the public imagination because of its audacity and good humour.

The "Embassy" set up a mail box in front of the tents and the next day the PMG began delivering mail which came in from all over the world as international news crews took an interest in the story. More exquisitely joyful for the Koori's was the knowledge that there was no way really for the politicians across the road to avoid seeing them every time they walked out the front door. And so the "Aboriginal Embassy" stayed for six months, through into the freezing winter of 1972 (when we only survived by the kind generosity of Canberra citizens who supplied them with hot soup and warm blankets), until the McMahon Government decided they could bear the embarrassment no longer.

In middle of the night of 19th July 1972, the Government passed a law making it illegal to camp on the lawns of Parliament House, and when the bill was gazetted at 9:00AM the next morning, the first police had begun to surround the tents. Koori political activists were caught by surprise by the speed of the government action, and whilst Gary Foley, Billy Craigie and Gary Williams managed to fly into Canberra from Sydney at 8:45AM on the morning of the 20th July, most of the rest of the Koori political movement began immediately to organise back-up support to be urgently bussed to Canberra.

Foley, Williams and Craigie arrived at the "Embassy" to find the office tent surrounded by the small group of regular "Embassy" staff and a large group of Canberra residents who had spontaneously responded to a call for support. This group had linked arms around the symbolic "office tent" and were chanting slogans for Land Rights. Foley and the other two quickly joined the group and defied Police to touch the tent.

The resulting fracas was described in the media at the time as being "the most violent demonstration in the history of Canberra", in which Gary Foley, Bobbi Sykes and five others were arrested and Foley was later admitted to Canberra Hospital and treated for concussion and bruising. The violent scenes were flashed on TV screens not only around Australia, but around the world creating intense embarrassment for the McMahon Government, and generating outrage in both Koori and non-Koori communities.

Within three days thousands of Aboriginal people and their supporters had gathered in Canberra from all over Australia. A major demonstration on the 23rd July where the tent was re-erected was met with similar police violence resulting again in horrific TV news footage being flashed around the world. This time McGuinness, Walker and Foley were among the key leadership which organised and led the 2nd demonstration.

One week later, on the 30th July 1972, all the combined forces that the united Koori Political Movement could muster assembled for the big showdown. Between 5000 - 10,000 Kooris and supporters were faced with every available ACT Police officer, supported by two special teams from the NSW Police Riot Squad, as well as Duntroon Military Academy being on special alert (just in case!).

The tension of the day could have easily degenerated into a major battle with serious casualties, but for the extraordinary discipline within Koori ranks and the decision by the leadership (which included McGuinness, Walker and Foley) to claim the obvious moral victory of having made their point before the eyes of the world. The McMahon Government was humiliated and stood exposed as the inept, insensitive, out of touch bunch that they were.

McMahon and his government never recovered politically, and were soundly defeated six months later by Gough Whitlam, who has always maintained since that the "Aboriginal Embassy" actions of January to July 1972 were a major destabilising factor in bringing down the McMahon Government and ending thirty years of conservative governments.

After the triumph of the "Aboriginal Embassy" Foley returned to Redfern where he became involved in the embryonic National Black Theatre Company which consisted of Bindi Williams, Bob Maza, Zac Martin and Eileen Corpus. Foley joined the troupe in November 1972 and co-wrote and performed in their now legendary "Basically Black", which was the first all-Koori political revue. It was performed at the old (equally legendary) Nimrod Theatre in Kings Cross for a six week season which not only helped put the Nimrod on its early financial feet, but also did its final show on the night of the 1972 Federal election.

The show was later adapted for TV by Foley, Maza, Williams and ABC-TV comedy writer John O'Grady and in mid-1973 became the first ever all-Koori television show when screened on ABC-TV. In 1993 Australia's greatest satirist, John Clarke, said in the Melbourne "Age" that he saw the TV version of "Basically Black" when he first arrived in Australia and considered it "inspirational" and pioneering Australian satirical comedy.

Meanwhile, McGuinness had enrolled at Monash University, largely to prove something to himself, but also, fortuitously at a time when there was great political intensity on Australian student campuses. It was at Monash in late 1972, as part of an assignment, McGuinness wrote, produced and directed his first film, "Black Fire". The 20 minute, 16mm film cost \$400 to make and became the first film written, produced and directed by a Koori person.

McGuinness then set about to produce his second film in early 1973 (about the time Foley was filming the ABC-TV version of "Basically Black") and

was preparing to shoot extensive footage of the now legendary 1973 "Aboriginal Arts Seminar" at which the most respected leaders of the Aboriginal cultural and political scene were expected to attend. Again McGuinness, Foley and Walker's lives connect at the conference, and McGuinness recruits Foley as his 2nd Cameraman shooting the film which became "Time to Dream".

The footage shot at that conference shows the cream of the political and cultural wings of the Koori Movement at the peak of their power, and looking and feeling strong just a few months after the advent of the Whitlam Government and the supposed "new deal for Aborigines". To view this film in 1995 is to realise how appalling the attrition rate is in the Aboriginal movement, because just 20 years later most of the leaders in the film are deceased (you can see in the film how young most were in 1973). They include Aboriginal tenor, Harold Blair, Pastor Don Brady of Brisbane, Theatrical legend Bryan Syron, Actor Zac Martin, Wundjuk Marika, Poet Kath Walker (Oojeroo Noonuckle) and others.

At the same time as attending Monash University and directing "Time to Dream", McGuinness had been playing a major role in the development of the Whitlam Government's Aboriginal advisory body, the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee (NACC). Foley, McGuinness and Walker had all been appointed by first Whitlam Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Gordon Bryant, to positions on the interim NACC in early 1973 and that body had organised the first national NACC elections. After those elections, Bruce McGuinness was elected National Chairman of this first nationally elected, representative body.

Bruce also had his expertise and credentials in Aboriginal education acknowledged when he was appointed as Aboriginal education adviser to the Schools Commission by the Whitlam Government.

During the period of the Whitlam Government McGuinness, Foley and Walker were initially prepared to allow them a chance to see if they were genuine in their proclaimed desire for Land Rights, social justice and equity for Aboriginal Australians. And, indeed, the Government made an admirable start when, in one of the very first official acts of the Whitlam Government (when Gough and Lance Barnard were running the country in their initial two-man junta), they gave the Gurindji People the land that they had fought so long and



so valiantly for. This single act, in the minds of many Aboriginal activists, remains the solitary honourable act of any Prime Minister in the history of white Australia.

But within months disillusionment had begun to set in as it quickly became apparent that not all of this government was made of the stuff Gough Whitlam was!

The first cracks appeared when almost overnight Gordon Bryant (self-proclaimed "nice guy" of FCAATSI) transformed into an "instant expert" and came to believe that he knew all the answers. (we did not realise it then, but this syndrome is one which has afflicted all Ministers for Aboriginal Affairs ever since) Naturally, due to the invariable ethno-centric nature of their upbringings, no white Minister for Aboriginal Affairs can ever even begin to comprehend the life experience of Aboriginal people in racist Australia, so Gordon Bryant's approach was doomed to disaster and that is precisely how it ended up, with him resigning in disgrace and in the process alienating most of the Aboriginal community from the Whitlam Government.

The subsequent collection of Ministers for Aboriginal Affairs under Whitlam had, long before the Fraser coup, effectively destroyed the previous good relations between the Whitlam government (as distinct from Whitlam personally) and the Aboriginal community. This disillusionment, and the realisation that there were probably many decades of struggle before the Aboriginal peoples could hope to attain the goals laid down during the "Aboriginal Embassy" battles, brought McGuinness, Foley and Walker back to earth very quickly, but they found that a new element had entered the Aboriginal movement.

Suddenly, after early 1973 the Whitlam Government began to make vast amounts of Federal monies available (through the bureaucracy) for Aboriginal Affairs. In order to administer these monies (\$40million in the first year) the government made its first major mistake in creating the (later notorious and hated) Department of Aboriginal affairs. The sudden influx of such resources now meant that the DAA (staffed by officials of the notorious Aboriginal Protection Boards and the like) could now use tactics similar to those used in the United States of America against the similarly successful Black rebellion of the 1960's -'70's; the public service began recruiting Aboriginal people of potential leadership.

In 1972, at the time of the Aboriginal Embassy, there were only three (3) Aboriginal people employed in the Commonwealth Public Service. They were Charles Perkins, Reg Saunders and Margaret Lawrie. Within two years of the mass recruitment drive of 1973, thousands of Kooris had been employed across Australia. These people were among the most talented in Black Australia and were now subject to the rules and regulations of the Public Service Act, which not only effectively silenced them but actively began to use them in strategies against their own people. It was these type of policies developing in an increasingly powerful federal public service which seem to pull the strings to make their political "masters" dance, that led our three heroes very quickly back to their political home of the streets and working in their communities again. Their flirtation with the "system" had been brief but very educational.

Foley had since the Aboriginal Embassy been impressed with the political style and substance displayed by the Victorians, and decided to spend a bit of time in Melbourne after assisting on "A Time to Dream". McGuinness secured a position for him attached to the Monash Association of Students (MAS) as "Race Relations Officer".

McGuinness achieved this by one day walking into the office of the President of MAS and saying,

"You know what your organisation needs?"

To which the ever alert President shot back, "What?"

"A Race Relations Officer!" McGuinness triumphantly declared.

A wary MAS President then enquired what that might involve and was visibly relieved when told by Mac that all that was required was a desk, chair, telephone and phone book. Subsequently, when five minutes later directed to the space and equipment sought, McGuinness instructed Foley to look up secondary colleges and ring them up offering his services as a lecturer in Aboriginal studies at \$20 per talk. Because the Whitlam government was beginning to encourage Australian studies in schools, this line of work proved modestly lucrative enough to enable Foley to spend a year working politically with McGuinness whilst the latter attended Monash University.

That year was a greatly learning experience for both Foley and McGuinness as they broadened their political and social horizons, as well as provoking some interesting debates on campus with a variety of creative stunts designed to confront but make people think. The most memorable of these were the confrontation between radical Zionist students and others when McGuinness and Foley stepped in to speak up for the Palestinian people during the emotive Yom Kippur War of that year, and the near riot created at Easter when Foley and McGuinness tried to tear down a Cross erected by the Monash Evangelical Union (it triggered a mass debate on the effects of Christianity in the history of colonisation).

In November 1973 Foley was elected leader of the 2nd Aboriginal delegation to visit the Peoples Republic of China as special guests of the Chinese government. Over the next 6 weeks the delegation travelled extensively throughout China at a time when it was still almost impossible for westerners to get in, and when the "Cultural Revolution" was in its concluding stages. For Foley this trip was a fantastic learning experience in a range of ways, and was to influence his thinking on many aspects of the way the Koori political struggle was organised.

Upon his return to Australia in February 1974, Foley went to live in Canberra where he talked his way into a job as a journalist in the Public Relations Section of the recently formed Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

He lasted just six weeks and became the first Aboriginal person ever sacked from the Department, after punching the secretary (male) of the Head of the Department. When two hours later Foley tried to board a plane to Sydney, he was arrested and charged with assault. When later fined a token \$20, Foley refused to pay, and to this day an arrest warrant exists in the ACT for his apprehension on sight.

Meanwhile, McGuinness had proven to himself what he wanted, and left after 3 years of study at Monash where he had been regarded by lecturers as one of their most brilliant students. During his time at Monash he had maintained his leadership role in the local Koori community and had been instrumental in the establishment in 1973 of the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, which later became (with Redfern AMS) a key group in the proliferation of more than 80 Aboriginal community-controlled health services over the next 10 years.

Then in 1975, McGuinness became involved in setting up a course for Koori students at Swinburne College of Technology. The innovative course became the famous Swinburne "Community Organisation Course" which, over its brief 3 year existence, produced 150 of the best Koori community workers in Australia. Whilst ostensibly taking Koori's who were considered by white CES officials as "unemployable", and after 12 months of studies making them "employable", in fact what the Community Organisation Course did was to firstly instil in students a strong sense of identity through a greater understanding of who they were, personally, and as part of a Koori community. Add to that an enormous amount of information about the real history of Australia, thus changing their perceptions about themselves and the subsequent increase in personal self-esteem, and you have the simple secrets of the amazingly successful Community Organisation Course.

By 1976, Foley, who had briefly returned to Sydney and was working as PR Officer for the Redfern AMS, was invited by McGuinness to visit Swinburne and give a lecture to the Koori students. After the visit, Foley was so impressed with the Community Organisation course that he returned to Sydney and packed his bags and moved to Melbourne and was given a job as Senior Tutor on the Course.

Just prior to returning to Melbourne, Foley had completed a six week film shoot with Phil Noyce, Bill Hunter, Zac Martin (from the old National Black Theatre) and a crew that included Russell Boyd (Camera) and Lloyd Carrick (sound). The film was "Backroads", made for under \$30,000, which ultimately was far more successful overseas, as its subject matter (racism) was not palatable to the 1977 Australian audience.

Back in Melbourne however, in a recurring theme throughout the lives of our 3 activist subjects, just as the Swinburne Community Organisation Course was at the peak of its success as an innovative experiment in Aboriginal education, the Federal Government of Malcolm Fraser decided to cut the funding and close the course. This led to yet another hard fought campaign that attracted international media coverage but which was ultimately lost in 1978 when Fraser refused to budge.

Toward the end the battle to save the Community Organisation Course in early 1978, Foley had become aware that his film "Backroads" was the main

feature in a group of films being toured around European film festivals under the title "Films from Black Australia". These films (13 in all) had been a great success at the 1978 Berlin Film Festival where they attracted great interest and praise from German filmmakers such as Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders and Rainer Werner Fassbinder. But what particularly galled Foley was the fact that these films were being shown to the world by a group of non-Aboriginal people from the Sydney Filmmakers Co-op.

It offended Foley's political and personal sensitivities that Aboriginal statements were being translated to the world by non-Koori people, so he immediately contacted the then Director of the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council, Mr Bob Edwards (a white man who Foley later replaced in 1984 when he became the first Aboriginal Director of the Aboriginal Arts Board in its 10 year history), and demanded that the AAB provide a fare to the upcoming 1978 Cannes Film Festival to ensure that Aboriginal people were able to speak for themselves. Mr Edwards said that all the AAB could offer was an "emergency grant" of \$2000.

Foley took the grant, bought a return ticket to Paris, a one way train ticket to Cannes and arrived ten days later with just thirty English Pounds in his pocket. But, as luck would have it, "Backroads" and the "Films from Black Australia" were the sensation of the Festival thanks to heaps of free advance publicity courtesy of the enthused German directors from the Berlin festival, plus there were several major features in the competition that year which were either about Australian Aboriginal people ("Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith") or had some Aboriginal Theme ("The Last Wave" and "The Shout"). This meant that everyone in Cannes was keen to meet an Aborigine, and Foley (who had expected Peter Weir to fly in David Gulpilil or Fred Schepisi to fly in Tommy Lewis, but they didn't) found himself accidentally one of the most popular people in Cannes during the 1978 Festival.

He consequently was wined and dined (and generally looked after) for the duration of the festival to such an extent that when he left two weeks later, he had twenty of his original thirty English Pounds intact!

But in the midst of the frolicking and frivolity, Foley had secured a wide range of political and social contacts that meant he came away from Cannes in 1978 with not only an idea of what could be achieved by broadening the Aboriginal political struggle into the international political arena, but also the

contacts that would enable him and a group of Koori political activists which included McGuinness to 18 months later begin to build an international support and information dissemination network (starting with the London based Aboriginal Information Centre in 1980) which would bedevil Malcolm Fraser during his last years as Prime Minister.

Immediately after Cannes Foley hitched a ride to London and spent about two months extending his growing range of political contacts before returning to Australia.

By then Denis Walker had returned to work together with McGuinness and Foley in the creation of the most formidable national Aboriginal political organisation the country has ever seen, the National Aboriginal & Islander Health Organisation (NAIHO).

NAIHO was an organisation which was set up to represent the interests of the dozens of Aboriginal community-controlled Health Services set up by Koori people in communities across Australia. By 1975 it was obvious that the reforms fought for at the "Aboriginal Embassy", and so passionately promised by Gough Whitlam, were being undermined and subverted by powerful vested interests within the all-powerful Canberra bureaucracy. This had led to a situation whereby, of the \$20million p.a. then being spent on Koori health nationally, \$16million was being sent by the Canberra health bureaucracy to their State counterparts in the State Health Departments. These State health authorities would then spend this money on their own "Aboriginal preventive health programs" instead of what experts had said was necessary, ie greater funding of koori community-controlled health care services run by Kooris themselves.

During the early 1970's Foley had been involved in the establishment of the Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service, and McGuinness had been a foundation member of the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service. These two organisations were the first of their type and were the models on which more than 80 Aboriginal communities subsequently over the next 20 years based their organisations on. Consequently, as McGuinness, Walker and Foley's paths crossed during the immediate years after Whitlam (and after his Minister's for Aboriginal Affairs proved to be "duds") they discussed often the need for a national Koori health organisation that would represent bona-fide Koori

community-controlled health services and counter bureaucracy propaganda which maintained all was well.

The dream of NAIHO became reality in the mid 1970's and gave the first truly independent national political voice to Koori communities since the days of late FCAATSI and the National Tribal Council (NTC). An organisation which involved remarkable Koori community leaders such as Naomi Mayers (Redfern AMS), Alma and Marge Thorpe (VAHS), .....,and with Walker as its Information Officer, Foley as its National Secretary, and McGuinness as its National Chairperson, NAIHO became the most formidable and effective independent, national Koori political organisation for the decade between 1975 and 1985.

The protracted battle between NAIHO and the Canberra bureaucracy continued through the years of Fraser and Hawke Governments, and both Prime Ministers presided over vast resources being used to undermine NAIHO and destroy the influence of its leadership which prominently included McGuinness, Walker and Foley. The success of the bureaucrats has come back to haunt Australia in February 1995, as the present government grapples with the reality of complete failure of govt Aboriginal health policies of the past 20 years. NAIHO predicted all of what the govt now faces, more than 15 years ago, and the refusal of government to heed the warnings sowed the seeds of ongoing Koori community resentment and alienation that subsequent governments and their public service puppetmasters have tried to conceal through multi-million dollar public relations campaigns like the "Reconciliation Council".

(TO BE INSERTED..... Koori Koolij  
Mac China trip  
Foley & Mac Europe  
Denis Gaol  
Foley arts board)

But then again in the 1980's, the Hawke Government's destruction of community-controlled, self determination organisations and the creation of a new reliance on government agencies, and a new black middle-class conspired to undermine and erode the gains of the previous decade. During

this time the three friends again went their separate ways as McGuinness recovered from the effects of a serious car accident, Walker spent long periods in gaol as the QLD justice system punished him for previous years of activism, and Foley dabbled in being a senior bureaucrat as Director of the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council.

From the mid-1960's till 1995, these three remarkable Aboriginal political activists have been making headlines around Australia and the world, both collectively and individually. They have each been extremely influential in the amazing social, political and cultural change that has engulfed Black Australia since the early 1960's, yet each of their journeys seems incomplete as each continues to battle on against Australia's continuing attempts to suppress Aboriginal independence of thought, and creeping assimilation (ie cultural genocide).

Today, Denis Walker again languishes in a prison cell in NSW (perpetually persecuted for who he is and what he stands for, a genuine prisoner of conscience), and Bruce McGuinness and Gary Foley maintain a battle to save Northland Secondary College, the fourth major innovative Koori education program they have seen destroyed in Victoria since 1978.

What is interesting is that these three key people involved in, and at the core of such dramatic change in their lifetimes, have personally sought and gained little for themselves after a life of struggle. They all remain as impoverished as when they first met 25 years ago, whilst at the same time wryly observe the birth and growth of the new Aboriginal bourgeoisie (artificially created by government policies) who have enriched themselves on the results of the combined decades of efforts of the likes of McGuinness, Walker, Foley and the hundreds of Resistance Fighters that each generation of Aboriginal people produces.

One would think that only bitterness and cynicism would have long ago consumed our three heroes of this film, but, that is the twist. We see and hear only positive sentiments expressed about where we go from here. But, when the invariable negativity does surface, at least now the viewer must surely have gained a unique insight of the trauma, drama, action and oppression that can allow cynicism to linger.

La Lute Continue.



# AUDIO-VISUAL RESOURCE MATERIAL FOR "T.T.D.II" PROJECT

*The Fighting Gunditjmara* (1984) - Film tribute to aboriginal resistance against early settlers in Victoria (Source: Victorian State Film Library No. 016680,VH)

*Rainbow Serpent: Warriors* (1985) - SBS episode about Aboriginal resistance to white invasion (Source: National Film Collection, National Library, Canberra No. A102279644)

*Lousy Little Sixpence* (1983) - Film about the forcible removal of Aboriginal children to be hired out as servants to white masters (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No.015703,VH)

*So You Think They Get Too Much?* (Date?) - Interviews with uninformed whites contrasted with the realities of Aboriginal life (Source: Dep't of Aboriginal Affairs)

*Nerida Anderson 1939* (1982) - Documentary of the Cummeragunya Walkout in 1939 (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No. 301026,VH)

*Encounter, Lake Tyers* (1969) - 16mm film made by Vic. Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No. 003267,16)

*Forgotten People* (1967) - Bill Onus & Rev. Doug Nicholls tour Aboriginal settlements on the Murray and Goulburn Rivers in Vic. (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No.003960,16)

*Exile in the Kingdom* (1992) - Film narrating the history of tribes in the Fortescue River area of WA, (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No. 304102,VH)

*How the West Was Lost* (1987) - Film dealing with the Pilbara strike. (Source: Ronin Films, Canberra Ph: (062) 48 0851)

*The Aborigines of Australia* (1964) - 16mm film showing assimilationist government policy (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No. 000046,16)

***Change at Groote*** (1968) - 16mm film showing influence of the manganese industry of Groote Eylandt on the life of Aboriginal people; made by the Cth. government. (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No.001888,16)

***Two Laws*** (1981) - Film about the Borroloola people's experience of white law from the 1930s-1980s (Source: National Library, Canberra No.A10672915)

***Come Out Fighting*** (1973) - Story about an aboriginal welterweight boxer; reflects white attitudes towards Aboriginal people (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No. 016651,VH)

***People of Weipa South*** (1978) - Propaganda for the Comalco Co. re: bauxite mining and its "benefits" for Aboriginal people (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No. 008261,16)

***Protected*** (1976) - Film re-enacting the 1957 rebellion by Aboriginal people on Palm Island against oppression and exploitation (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No.008811,16)

***We Stop Here*** (1978) - Survivors' accounts of the treatment of Aboriginal people on Palm Island (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No.013677,16)

***Whitewashed*** (1984) - History of the Aboriginal Protection Act in NSW (Source: State Film Centre of NSW)

***Freedom Ride*** (1993) - Video documentary with good footage of white attitudes in rural NSW during the 1960s; archival footage of Charles Perkins (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No.304171,VH)

***Five Australians: Charles Perkins*** (1967) (Source: ABC Archive)

***A Voice to be Heard*** (1974) - Formation of the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee (Source: National Library, Canberra No.A10113428)

***To Get That Country*** (1978) - Formation of the Northern Land Council (Source: National Library, Canberra No. A1001808)

***Sister, If Only You Knew*** (1975) - Aboriginal women's attempt to defend the rights of Aboriginal people; the work of the Council of Aboriginal Women; Ruby Hammond, Gladys Elfick, Mary Williams, Leila Rankin (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No. 009858,16)

***Your Voice*** (1975) - Establishment of the National Aboriginal Consultative Council (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No.012287,16)

***Understanding is Not Enough*** (1983) - A church-sponsored film examining Aboriginal assertion of self-determination and liaison work with the Uniting Church (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No.016343,16)

***A Ticket to Ride*** (1984) - Profiles of Pat O'Shane, Wesley Lanhupuy, Marcia Langton & Ernie Bridges. (Source: National Library, Canberra No. A10691537)

***Dust to Dust*** (1980) Film documenting the struggle by Aboriginal workers in the Baryulgil asbestos mine to gain compensation from the Dust Diseases Board; stresses cooperation between workers and unions (Source: Australian Film Institute)

***Lockhart Festival*** (1974) - Film documenting the 2nd Lockhart Festival featuring dances by Aurukun and Groote Island groups (Source: National Library, Canberra No. A10072160)

***Tjintu-Pakani*** (1976) - The first urban theatre training programme held at the Black Theatre in Sydney (Source: National Library, Canberra No. A10181040)

***First Citizen: Albert Namatjira*** (1988) - The Life of Albert Namatjira (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No.300254,VH)

***Namatjira, The Painter*** (1974) - Namatjira's life, art and influence on fellow aboriginal people (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No. 007430,16)

***Eora Corroboree*** (1985) - 16mm film about a group of Aboriginal students at the Eora Centre for the Visual and Performing Arts in Redfern (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No.016915,16)

***Gunana: Homeland of the Mornington Island Woomera Dancers* (1982) -** Lives and culture of the Mornington Island Dancers (Source: National Film Collection - National Library, Canberra No. A10686568)

***Six Australians Series (1985): Freda Glynn* -** motivating force behind Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association; Sylvia Blanco - dancer/teacher working with the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre in Sydney (Source: Dep't of Aboriginal Affairs Library)

***Karbara: The First Born* (Date?) -** Film documenting the First National Black Playwrights' Conference & Workshop in 1987 and the contemporary growth in Aboriginal arts (Source: Dep't of Aboriginal Affairs Library)

***Milliya Rumarra - Brand New Day* (1984) -** Film documenting the First Festival of Aboriginal Arts in Perth (Source: Australian Film Institute)

***Shadow Sister* (1977) -** Biography of Kath Walker (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No.013487,VH)

***Black Sickness, Black Cure* (1983) -** Four Corners report on Aboriginal people taking control of their own health services (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No. 303261,VH; ABC Archives)

***God Knows Why, But It Works* (1976) -** Film about work of Dr. Archie Kalokerinos in Collarenebri (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No. 004368,16)

***Link-Up Diary* (1987) -** Documentary of the work of Aboriginal organisation Link-Up, formed in 1980 to help aboriginal people find lost parents and relatives (Source: Aust'n Institute of Aboriginal Studies)

***Blekbella* (1981)** Film about Aboriginal people in N.T. taking control of their own programmes, including community projects, children's education and radio. (Source: ?)

***Getting Better* (1987)** Changes in Aboriginal health, as aboriginal people assume control of their own projects (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No. 017468,VH)

***Murawina: Self Help*** (1978) - A Film about Murawina, an Aboriginal pre-school in an inner city suburb run by Aboriginal mothers (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No. 012755,VU)

***Yipirinya*** (1981) - Account of the education programme of the Yipirinya community in Alice Springs (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No.014857,16)

***New Achievement*** (1983) - Film about Aboriginal self-management of programmes in NT (Source: National Film Collection, National Library, Canberra No. A107862)

***Not to Lose You My Language*** (1975) - Film about bilingual education in NT (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library, No.007722,16)

***Olga*** (1979) - Film about Olga Collins, an Aboriginal Helath Commission Nurse in Bourke, NSW (Source: State Film Centre of NSW)

***Black Battles*** (1977) - Film showing street scenes, police arrests and political consciousness-raising in Redfern (Source: National Film Collection - National Library, Canberra ("NFL") No. A10177590)

***Koori: A Will to Win*** (1987) - Film version of James Miller's autobiographical book on the aboriginal struggle (Source:?)

***Dark*** (1974) Film intercutting footage of contemporary political demonstration with traditional images of aboriginal culture and belief (Source: National Library No.A10138137)

***My Survival as an Aboriginal*** (1979) - Film by Essie Coffey about black resistance to white cultural domination (Source: National Film Collection, National Library, Canberra No. A10177337)

***Takeover: A Film About Aboriginals and Australian Politics*** (1980) - Story of the Qld government's 1978 attempt to take over Aurukun Reserve to mine its rich bauxite deposits.

***Up For Grabs*** (1983) - Aboriginal politics in the land rights struggle (Source:

*Always Was, Always Will Be* (1987) - Video film examining land rights struggle; interviews with Michael Mansell, Pat Dodson, Marcia Langton. (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No. 302567, VH)

*A Matter of Identity* (1980) - Gary Foley, Pat Dodson, Lionel Fogerty & Charlie Djordio discuss the church's response to racism in Australia (Source: Australian Council of Churches)

*Words and Deeds* (1980) - Gary Foley, Pat Dodson, Lionel Fogerty & Charlie Djordio challenge the church to match words of support with deeds. (Source: Australian Council of Churches)

*Is There Anything to Celebrate in 1988?* (1985) - Discussion forum involving Gary Foley, Kath Walker, Pat Dodson, Naomi Mayers, Rob Riley, Jo Wilmot & Bob Weatherall (Source: State Film Centre of NSW Library)

*Couldn't Be Fairer* (1984) Video Film documenting land rights struggle in Qld and racist attitudes of contemporary white Australia

*On Sacred Ground* (1980) - The story of the Noonkanbah land rights struggle in WA (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No. 303315,16)

*One Mob, One Voice, One Land* (1985) - Story of 1985 demonstration at Parliament House, Canberra (Source: Dep't of Aboriginal Affairs Library)

*Our Land Is Our Life* (1985) - Story of land rights, focused upon the 1985 demonstrations at Parliament House (Source: Community Aid Abroad; Australian Council of Churches)

*The Secret Country: The First Australians Fight Back* (1985) - Aboriginal history and the struggle to rewrite it truthfully through contemporary activism (Source: State Film Centre of Vic. Library No.300716, VH)

*Ningla Ana* (1973) - footage of Koori political movement in 1972. Includes footage of Redfern, "Black Moratorium" demo, Aboriginal Embassy etc. Features Denis Walker, Chicka Dixon, Gary Foley, Paul Coe, Isobel Coe, Alana Doolan, Tony Coorie etc.

**Backroads** (1976) - Story of Koori life in North West NSW in mid 1970's. Features real life people from Bourke and Brewarrina, including Essie Coffey, "Doc" Coffee and "Tricky Dick" Sullivan, Gary Foley and Zac Martin. Shows reality of Koori living conditions 1976 in North NSW.