Community politics in Arnhem Land - Maningrida and Galiwinku (1939-1978)

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The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text. The material has not been submitted, either in whole or part, for a degree at this or any other university.

David Benn

DAVID BENN
The study of European and Aboriginal relations in the post contact era has been riddled with over-generalisation and over-simplification, the result more of subjective rather than empirical analysis. This dissertation represents an attempt, albeit limited to a specific context and time frame, to redress this imbalance. It is concerned with an historical comparison between Maningrida and Galiwinku - two remote coastal Aboriginal communities in Arnhem Land - between 1939 and 1978. It is based around a conflict model in which the clear-cut separation between the analytical concepts of domain and domain separation (or the more general perspective of Aboriginal resistance or accommodation to European domination) have limited applicability. The thesis focuses on the "turbulent muddy waters" of cross-cultural contact and the pragmatic political adaptation accompanying it. It concentrates on the historical evolution of Aboriginal cross-cultural intermediaries and their varying roles as cross-cultural facilitators. This theme is further developed by an analysis of the relationships evolving between dominant individuals across both cultures and the importance of social interaction and "bonding" often subsuming the economic domain. Another important theme concerns the influence of rapidly changing government policy (externally derived and imposed) and the impacts of ideologically opposed European enclaves in the mission and government settlement environments. The thesis concludes that there was considerable variation in the political response to the European presence in Maningrida and Galiwinku, even though both communities were similar in size and established roughly at the same time within the same geographical region. It is suggested that this sort of variation, centred around differing historical and cultural factors, is symptomatic of Aboriginal and European relations - especially this century - and makes generalisation about their political and social relations very difficult.
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Australian Archives (Northern Territory)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AADS</td>
<td>Aboriginal Advisory and Development Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALPA</td>
<td>Arnhem Land Progress Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARDS</td>
<td>Aboriginal Resource and Development Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASOPA</td>
<td>Australian School of Pacific Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAR</td>
<td>Council for the Civil and Economic Development of Arnhem Land</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDEP</td>
<td>Community Development Employment Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMS</td>
<td>Church Missionary Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAA</td>
<td>Department of Aboriginal Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAMCO</td>
<td>First Aboriginal Mining Company Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ORC</td>
<td>Outstation Resource Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>MHA</td>
<td>Maningrida Housing Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOM (MMS)</td>
<td>Methodist Overseas Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPA</td>
<td>Maningrida Progress Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAC</td>
<td>National Aboriginal Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>NLC</td>
<td>Northern Land Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTA</td>
<td>Northern Territory Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTRS</td>
<td>Northern Territory Archives (series number)</td>
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<td>UCNT</td>
<td>Uniting Church of the Northern Territory</td>
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### Glossary of Yolngu Matha, Burarra and Ndjebbana Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anbarra</td>
<td>One of the five sub-communities of the Burarra.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bayini</td>
<td>A near mythical people constituting part of the folklore of the Yolngu of Galiwinku.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balanda</td>
<td>A generic word used throughout Arnhem Land to describe a European person.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bäpa</td>
<td>A Yolngu word meaning father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bäru</td>
<td>Crocodile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunggawa</td>
<td>The Macassan word for boss. It is one of the two hundred or more Macassan words contained within contemporary Yolngu Mata.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burarra</td>
<td>A federation of Aboriginal people, concentrated on the Blyth River, living mainly along the coast between Maningrida and Cape Stewart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhuwa</td>
<td>One of the two moieties of the Yolngu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabulgu</td>
<td>Entrance Island.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganma</td>
<td>A Yolngu word meaning the turbulence arising from the flow of freshwater meeting the tidal flow of salt water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gidjingali</td>
<td>A group of Aboriginal people located on the eastern side of the Blyth River.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunavidji</td>
<td>The traditional land-owners of Maningrida.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinang</td>
<td>A grouping of Aboriginal people located inland from Cape Stewart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mala</td>
<td>Clans or group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madayin</td>
<td>A word meaning Aboriginal law. Different clans have distinct Madayin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayali</td>
<td>The description given by Yolngu leader (Burrumarra) to describe the deeper meaning behind black-white</td>
</tr>
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relations. Simply means "meaning".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nakara</td>
<td>The group of Aboriginal people occupying the territory between the Gunavidji and the Burarra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndjebbana</td>
<td>The language spoken by the Gunavidji.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranga</td>
<td>Sacred objects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringitj</td>
<td>Ceremonies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rrupiya</td>
<td>Money.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wulamba</td>
<td>One of the sub-groupings of the Dhuwal people of north-east Arnhem Land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yiritja</td>
<td>The opposite of the Dhuwa moiety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yolngu</td>
<td>A word used by the Aboriginal people(s) of north-east Arnhem Land to describe themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yolngu Mata</td>
<td>A generic term used to describe the five or six languages (approximately twenty dialects) spoken by the Yolngu.</td>
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This thesis is about conflict and pragmatic political adaptation in two remote Aboriginal communities in Arnhem Land. It is concerned principally with the common ground between politically powerful figures which, in part, transcend the social constraints often characteristic of cross-cultural situations. It does not deny the existence for Aborigines and Europeans of separate cultural and physical domains but prefers to focus on the formation of cross-cultural power relationships. These power relationships evolved historically and in a dynamic fashion as power-brokers from both cultures formed alliances in a pragmatic fashion based on functional interdependence and complex patterns of social interaction. Many of the major players at the cutting-edge of this social interaction and their relationships between one another have been examined. The analysis is concerned with particular themes and specific incidents in relation to a numerically small group of people and it should be stressed that its conclusions are specific to two Arnhem Land communities. The conclusions reflect an aspect of the diverse and complex arrangements that have developed between Aboriginal and European cultures since their first tentative steps to interact cross-culturally.

The rationale for selecting Maningrida and Galiwinku for the purpose of contrast and comparison is examined subsequently but it should be pointed out that the emphasis in this comparison has been directed more towards Maningrida at the
expense of Galiwinku. There is no particular reason for this bias other than the fact that the accumulated primary research material tended to favour Maningrida. Additionally, the motivation to undertake this research thesis was initiated by previous experience employed within that community.

I am particularly indebted to Aboriginal informants in both communities — especially Joseph Mungudja, Jack R...., Charlie Yirrawala, Horace Minmellin and Richard Gandhuwuy — who patiently guided me through the complicated business of acquiring an accurate and culturally sensitive perspective of remote Aboriginal community cross-cultural politics. Unfortunately they have not figured as prominently in the following text as was anticipated. The unstructured interview often tends to be vague and overly anecdotal and is a more popular form of data presentation which is, arguably, not as suitable for an academic thesis as archival records and structured interviews. Readers who may be offended by the mention of a deceased Aboriginal person's name (in print) are strongly advised to proceed no further until they have approached me. The convention of declining to reveal the identity of an Aboriginal person, now deceased, has been observed only in so far as such people were known to me personally. A host of other individuals and organisations contributed to the development of this thesis. The staff of the Australian Archives (based in Darwin) who provided every assistance in searching through early records, many of which have been misplaced, poorly catalogued or lost deserve special
mention. Also of inestimable help was Michael Loos, State Reference Library senior librarian and Greg Coleman, the principal archivist at the NT Archives. Additionally, considerable assistance was provided by the controlling bodies for these archival records and two of their representatives, Pat Bennetts (ATSIC) and the Reverend Jim Downing, the former moderator of the Uniting Church (NT). Thanks should also be extended to those who made their time and knowledge available in the form of structured interviews. In this context, Harry Giese, Les Penhall, David Bond, Eddie Carey and Clem Gullick; all provided valuable information and insights, many of which have been incorporated in the following text and their invaluable assistance is acknowledged.

The thesis would not have been possible without the active support of my employer, the Department of Education (NT), Batchelor College and colleagues within the Community Management Education Centre. I am also indebted to my wife, Ruth Benn, who provided much-needed support in my quest for higher education and acted as proof reader as the thesis progressed from draft to finished form. As far as word processing was concerned, Marion Buwalda-Pedler whose speed and accuracy transcribing written text was quite breath-taking deserves special mention.

Thanks should also be extended to the cartographic facility provided by Monash University which assisted in the production of the thesis maps as well as various academic staff employed by
the Northern Territory University. Lastly, but certainly not the least, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr A Heatley, who helped me improve the thesis structure and theoretical focus not only by paying attention to detail but by providing a broader understanding of NT "mainstream" politics during the period covered by this study.
"This is our country and this is our house", Mungudja said, pointing to the Maningrida Council building, "and you will do as we say". It was with these words that the author was greeted by the second most senior traditional landowner of Maningrida, a remote Aboriginal community in north-central Arnhem Land, soon after his appointment by Maningrida Council Incorporated as Town Clerk in April 1986. The manner of Mungudja's approach was both aggressive and threatening and, during the subsequent weeks, was reinforced by other senior landowners. The collective refrain during these unsettling encounters, which contained a powerful undercurrent of repressed anger, was "just remember Balanda¹, we are the bosses not you". Initially, comprehending the nature and the intensity of this anger provided the personal impetus to understand the immediate work environment better and, in the longer term, it became the principal motivation to undertake this dissertation.

Maningrida was founded as a government Aboriginal settlement in 1957 and, from its inception, was a town within which conflict was endemic. It pervaded social interaction on the individual, group and cultural levels; intra-group conflict among non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people was also common. Virtually no collective sense of "community" existed and decisions often affecting the entire population were made
without reference to a common plan. Decisions made by council one day were often rescinded the next as the community lurched from one crisis to another. Social conflict and lack of collective purpose were further reinforced by inadequate community-based services and a complex physical infrastructure the mechanics of which were only vaguely understood by the indigenous population. There was also an excessive reliance on externally-based government agencies and expertise.

After a two-year occupancy as Town Clerk, considerable community-based research and general reading, it was concluded that Maningrida township was largely an artificial creation which had evolved haphazardly and was composed of conflicting enclaves without a shared agenda for either the community's present or future directions. Indeed, it was the outcome of a particular era and policy that had promised prosperity and development by the absorption of one culture by another. These conclusions provided an explanation for the conflict which characterised Maningrida's social reality but they were largely experientially based. Mungudja's anger had an infectious quality which only time, isolation from Maningrida and more intensive research could redress.

An inter-disciplinary perspective, particularly one grounded in history, provided the essential approach necessary to understand the complex political processes and social formations that evolved in Maningrida. For example, a broader historical analysis would demonstrate that Maningrida's
development as a government settlement was atypical in the coastal Arnhem Land context. The Methodist Overseas Mission (MOM) and later the United and Uniting Churches were mainly responsible for establishing and maintaining communities in this region.

Additionally, consideration of indigenous cultural factors would be useful to explain the conflicting clan loyalties which characterised the "melting pot" of Maningrida's Aboriginal population, as well as the traditional rivalry which existed between its Liverpool and Blyth River people(s) but this approach was restrictive because the analysis and its conclusions would be confined to a particular community. For instance, were the pragmatic political adaptations and history of Maningrida unique or were they replicated in another Aboriginal community of similar size and social complexity within the same geographical region? Did government policy impact differently on the government-inspired settlement of Maningrida when compared with one of the geographically-close Methodist Missions? To what degree were the attitudes and motivations of European people living in the remote settlements of Arnhem Land similar and how did these attitudes and motivations affect the indigenous populations of the region? The criteria of size, social complexity and geography made Galiwinku a suitable choice for the purposes of comparison and contrast. (see map 1, page 4 for additional geographical details about both communities).
The selection of Galiwinku broadened the focus of the thesis and provided an effective research instrument. The decision to use a comparative approach was largely determined by the obsessively community-centric approach contained in much of the literature and research relevant to remote Aboriginal communities. Many writers, both popular and academic, were unable to see past "their" respective communities. Often, their observations and conclusions were highly pertinent to "their" community but tended to infer an applicability to other communities which was often inappropriate. A comparative approach would facilitate a broader understanding of the political dynamics within the remote Aboriginal community context generally. It's application, however, was not without difficulty. By broadening the analysis with the element of comparison, it was probable that a clear theoretical focus would not be achieved. The focus of the thesis was deliberately narrowed by confining the period of study from the establishment of both communities until Self-Government in the Northern Territory (1978). It was further narrowed by focussing on critical historical events and the role played by particular individuals. Within this narrowed focus, a thematic approach has been employed, the overall objective being to develop a more thorough understanding of community conflict and pragmatic political adaptation made by the populations of Maningrida and Galiwinku. These themes were not restricted to particular chapters but are woven into the chapter sequence and structure thus providing continuity throughout the dissertation.
The central themes are community conflict and pragmatic political adaptation which are presented in an historical setting. Community conflict arose between (and within) cultures, to varying degrees, through a complex interplay of factors such as institutionalisation, over-population, dislocation, traditional rivalry between Aboriginal groupings, cultural fragmentation, differing attitudes to the market economy and the rapid turnover of (often) ideologically-divided European staff. However, the European cultures were not so clearly defined (as domain theorists tend to argue) as to allow complete separation and social closure; rather, there was a turbulent cross-cultural "grey area", the preserve of particular Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people with highly developed cross-cultural skills that few have sought to understand or analyse. Many Aboriginal men (for women are significantly underrepresented) possessing these cross-cultural skills became significant power-brokers within their communities. The numerical strength and influence of these cross-cultural intermediaries was prone to fluctuate. The composition of this group also fluctuated, conditioned as it was in part by changes in government policy and differing historical and cultural factors. They have exerted considerable political leverage as power-brokers within both communities from their first encounters with native patrol officers, then Methodist missionaries and government superintendents and, later still, community advisers. Their function was not to access the material domain of goods and services exclusively for, while this was important, so also
was their social access to power. They saw the material domain as a means to an end and certainly not an end in itself. The group's existence was tolerated by the more traditional not only because it had an access function but because, in the traditional domain, there were no rules or sanctions in place to restrict either the existence or expansion of such a group.

Aboriginal power-brokers operating within the cross-cultural domain formed alliances with their European counterparts. These alliances could be most adequately described as those based on social interaction between persuasive personalities which partly transcended the constraints of culture. Aboriginal power-brokers acted as cultural go-betweens, facilitating communication between their people(s) and European authority figures. The dominancy exerted by these Europeans was attributed, in part, to their control over goods and services and the remote, insular and parochial nature of both communities. They were important factors but there were others of equal and perhaps greater significance. They included the length of stay by various individuals and their differing levels of performance within the community context. Identification or "bonding" ("bonds of familiarity" to use the terminology employed by David Trigger [1992] in Whitefella comin) occurred between individuals and it was not uncommon for some Aboriginal respondents to become possessive about particular authority figures (for instance, "my Town Clerk"). Personal charisma and the absence of centralised political
power and government in traditional culture were other important factors in the development of this theme. One of the ironies contained in this thesis was that individuals should play such a disproportionately large role in what were traditionally very conforming, non-individually-oriented societies. It has been argued that it was consistent with a model based on conflict and pragmatic political adaptation that the exchange was not all one-way. Aboriginal power-brokers in the cross-cultural domain were not purely the servants of persuasive individuals like Superintendent Hunter at Maningrida. Individuals like Hunter and Reverend Shepherdson at Galiwinku actually absorbed aspects of the traditional culture. Their respective leadership styles and personalities were pragmatic, essentially consensual in approach but capable of extraordinary political will if the situation warranted it.

The thesis stresses that conflict was not restricted to the political power relations between cultures or among different Aboriginal groupings. Community conflict reached its most intense and sustained levels in Maningrida during 1977. The conflict involved ideologically-opposed European enclaves: the so-called "left" and "right". This period witnessed the partial but temporary withdrawal of Aboriginal power-brokers from the political forum as various Europeans attempted to gain their support. The conflict became politically significant both in the Territory and nationally and it has been analysed in some depth. This polarised ideological
situation did not occur in Galiwinku. There, the older
generation of MOM-appointed generalist staff held different
attitudes and beliefs to the more recently-appointed
specialised lay staff but these differences were contained
within the community.

The final theme deals with the rapid and often dramatic shifts
in policy in the administration of Aboriginal affairs mainly
in the Northern Territory and its differing impact within the
community context. It is argued that a gap, often wide in
dimension, existed between personalities and other political
forces which shaped the formation of new policy and
bureaucratic processes. The bureaucracy (regardless of
whether it was attached to the Department of Native Affairs,
Northern Territory Administration-Welfare Branch or the
Department of Aboriginal Affairs) tended to be conservative in
nature and actively resisted rapid change. It was not,
however, immune to societal pressures and the community-
influenced views of its field based operatives (patrol
officers, superintendents and later community advisers) who
often clashed with senior management. Additional conflict
occurred between the Methodists and the government (especially
during the period of assimilation) as their differing
ideologies reached an uneasy and often tense alliance.

Prior to providing the reader with a more thorough review of
the contents of the following chapters, a brief physical and
cultural description of both communities is necessary to set
the contextual background.

Maningrida lies to the west of the Crocodile Islands on the estuarine mouth of the Liverpool River, 360 kilometres east of Darwin. Galiwinku is situated 140 kilometres further eastward forming part of the Wessel Islands, approximately 150 kilometres west of Nhulunbuy. Both communities are physically isolated with similar but far from identical geological features and climatic conditions. Their climates are controlled by the monsoon regime which delivers an annual rainfall of between 750mm and 1500mm. The rainfall is restricted to a period termed the "wet" usually occurring in the summer months between November and April. The period prior to this is called the "build-up" which reaches its climax with a deluge of rain and often violent electrical storms. The average temperature for the communities is approximately 30°C although Galiwinku's average is consistently two or three degrees less. In addition, its "build-up" is less severe, the weather is more moderate in the winter months and the average rainfall is slightly less than Maningrida. The communities share a "varied landscape well interspersed with geographical and botanic complexes including eucalypt, tall open forests, mangrove swamps and black soil plains" (Cawte et al., 1958, 17). Moreover, they are bordered by long pristine beaches broken only by minor water courses where there is an abundance of seafood. Access to both communities during the "wet" is restricted to barge or by aeroplane. As Galiwinku is an island, it is impossible to
reach it by road but Maningrida has been accessible in this manner since 1964. The physical isolation of both communities coupled with the declaration of Arnhem Land as an Aboriginal reserve in 1931 (as well as its continued protection under the Northern Territory Land Rights Act, 1976) has resulted in the retention of many aspects of traditional Aboriginal cultures in both communities.

The physical similarities between both coastal communities were not shared by their cultural composition. In this respect, they were socially and linguistically disparate. In order to understand these differences better, it is useful to consider the existence of two separate cultural blocks sharing a common border emerging on the Arnhem Land coast at Cape Stewart (near Milingimbi). The eastern of these blocks consisted of the Murngin, meaning literally "shovel-nosed spear people". This term was first used by the American anthropologist Lloyd Warner as a collective description for Aboriginal people living between Milingimbi and Numbulwar and inland beyond Gapuwiyak (Lake Evella). In order, however, to determine the cultural composition of Galiwinku, it was more productive to focus on the intermingling of the Dhuwal and Dhuwala, two groupings of mala (clans) of the Dhua and Yiritja (also spelt Jiritja) moieties. These two loose federations of clans extended from Castlereagh Bay to Cape Shield but remained culturally distinct from the Nano (to the north-east of Galiwinku) and the Djangu and Dhangu located between Port Bradshaw and Arnhem Bay. The Dhuwal have sub-groupings with
the Wulamba having the most significant influence on the composition of Galiwinku's Aboriginal population. Prior to the Methodist presence, the Wulamba maintained a long term and, at times, productive exchange with the Macassans. Indeed Berndt (1954) has argued convincingly that contact with the Macassans was preceded by a sustained contact with another Asian culture termed the Bayini\(^3\). The Wulamba possessed a common linguistic framework with distinct dialect divisions, regional differences and a clan organisation with a patrilineal emphasis as well as a shared religion with sacred symbols but these regional cultural differences became blurred "due to the relocation of discrete groups like at Elcho Island" (Cawte et al., 24). Regardless of the differences, the Murngin possessed a strong collective identity and termed themselves Yolngu. Although there were recognised variations in dialect, they collectively spoke Yolngu Mata. In Galiwinku, the principal spoken dialect was Djambarrpuynungu which is understood by the community's numerous mala. These clans were related to each other by an extremely complex network of kinship and marriage ties.

Cultural integration was further reinforced by an active ceremonial life and the observance of other traditional matters (for example, initiation and mortuary rites) with the varying clans having responsibility for differing ringitj (ceremonies). An interesting feature of the community was the clear separation of the non-secular from the secular domain.
By contrast, the eastern cultural block traditionally lacked unity and cohesion. Consequently, Maningrida became a "melting pot" of varying languages, "tribes" and clans as different Aboriginal groups arrived in the community in a haphazard and uncoordinated manner between 1957 and 1960.

The traditional clan "owning" Maningrida forms part of a number of clans who were collectively termed the Gunavidji (spelt variously as Gunaviji, Gunabidji and Gunawitji). Additional clans have responsibility for the Gunavidji estate which extended from Juda (also spelt Juta) Point to the south-east (encompassing Entrance Island) almost to the mouth of the Tonkinson River to the north-west and inland ten to fifteen kilometres. Throughout the text, Gunavidji and the more generic description, the Liverpool River people, are used interchangeably. Also strongly represented in the community are the Burarra (also spelt Barara, Barera, and Burera), a federation of people who lived mainly along the coast between Maningrida and Cape Stewart and which comprised five sub-communities: Anbara, Marawuraba, Madia, Maringa and Gunadba. Their heartland was the Blyth River and they were further divided into nineteen landowning units. There has been some anthropological debate, initiated by Hiatt (1965), concerning the Gidjingali (located on the eastern side of the Blyth River). He argued that they were sufficiently different to be described as separate from the Burarra. This debate has not
been revisited here; again, a more generic description, the Blyth River People(s), is preferred. Sandwiched between the Liverpool and Blyth River people(s) were the Nakara, traditionally the peacemakers between the two, often conflicting, sides. Their physical location acted as a buffer but they were also able to moderate conflict by having formed marriage ties with both groups. Other major tribal groups represented in the community were the Gunwinggu, Gungorogne and Rembarrnga. A number of Aboriginal languages were spoken in Maningrida, the two most important were Burarra and Ndjebbana (pronounced Jebena). But the most common language spoken in Maningrida and Galiwinku was English.

In order to understand the previously described themes better, as well as the manner in which they relate to the thesis structure and content, the subsequent chapters are reviewed briefly.

Chapter one consists of an appraisal of the relevant secondary literature and its relationship to specific aspects of theory pertinent to the analysis of community conflict and cross-cultural politics in remote Aboriginal communities. Several additional issues are addressed in the discussion particularly the comparative absence of women as cross-cultural intermediaries and the interventionist approach employed by DAA in its dealings with remote Aboriginal communities. It is argued that cross-cultural analysis has been restricted to numerically few remote communities and has tended to lack the
necessary depth and breadth that an inter-disciplinary approach based on a comparison between communities is able to provide. The existence of a general theory explaining the complex and diverse experience of remote Aboriginal communities remains problematic; rather it is inferred that a series of social formulations grounded in empirical research will better portray the social and political dynamic of community interaction.

An overview of the three major shifts in policy underlying the administration of Aboriginal affairs in the Northern Territory in general and Arnhem Land in particular provides the main focus for chapter two. Protectionism, assimilation and self-determination all broadly correspond to the remaining major chapters thus providing additional structure to the thesis as well as locating the political dynamics of Maningrida and Galiwinku within a broader societal context. The chapter attempts to portray the rapid speed of change and how much of it was driven by forces often external to both the Northern Territory and Arnhem Land. It also focuses on the gap between the formation of policy and its administration and some of the more obvious differences between the Methodist missionaries and government agencies as well as the processes surrounding their co-existence (for instance, mission/administration conferences).

Whereas the previous chapter analysed the form and content of externally driven policy in relation to the administration of
Aboriginal affairs, chapter three focuses on its implementation and the resultant cross-cultural interaction in Maningrida and Galiwinku. The discussion deals with the historical origins of both settlements and the philosophy underlying protectionism viewed principally through the eyes of its main custodians, the patrol officers and the Methodist missionaries. It seeks to analyse the interplay between dominant individuals at a time before political relationships had been institutionalised and when the pace of change was much slower. In the protectionist era, there was more scope for the development of individual initiative. People like patrol officer Kyle-Little and mission Superintendent Shepherdson emerged as dominant individuals because the era and policy of protectionism allowed them to do so.

It was hardly coincidental, as chapter four seeks to demonstrate, that the later phase of assimilation (post 1964), which was characterised by a rapid expansion of both the type and variety of community organisations, was also a period of increased social and political unrest in Maningrida and Galiwinku. Progress associations, housing associations and village councils all have their genesis in this period and the evolution of these organisations provides the central focus for this chapter. The pace and sophistication of change was staggering. Increased numbers of Europeans, present in both communities, was paralleled by the erosion of the monopoly of power previously maintained by the missionaries and the Welfare Branch of the NTA. Additionally, increased
polarisation and tension occurred between the Welfare Branch (later the Social Welfare Division) and other segments of the NTA (such as the operation of the forestry branch at Maningrida) and the Methodist missionaries. This period was a fertile one for European and Aboriginal power-brokers both of whom searched for allies with renewed vigour. It witnessed the emergence of the Gunavidji in Maningrida as a dominant political force and their accession to power. This chapter also focuses on the role played by Superintendent Hunter in the transition to self-determination and concludes with the "first explosion" - the removal of DAA and later forestry staff from Maningrida. Galiwinku experienced similar problems adjusting to the rapid change although here the polarisation was not as intense. The Church saw the consequences of the "development push" with its political extension and the subsequent change in policy to self-determination earlier than the NTA. Consequently, it was able to divest considerable political power in an orderly manner prior to the transition. Their continued presence in the community would be determined by the Yolngu who were now, in the eyes of the Uniting Church, free to decide their own political direction.

Chapter five centres around the "non-directive approach" and the origins and development of the Decentralisation movement. It is a central chapter as it forms a bridge between the later part of the period of assimilation and the emerging period of self-determination by examining in more detail the policies of the DAA which were thought to provide the definitive
alternative to the "evil" period of assimilation. This discussion is critical in understanding the motives of many of the players in the following chapter. It argues along the conventional lines that the Decentralisation or Outstation movement mainly evolved as a response to over-institutionalisation, the presence of large European populations, gross inequities in the distribution of wealth and increased conflict among both Aboriginal and European people. It also seeks to expose a number of myths, principally, that the movement was purely a reactive phenomenon. It was alive and well in Galiwinku twenty years prior to the date usually ascribed to its evolution. Moreover, most contemporaries cite the Reverend Shepherdson as its founder. Another myth supported by some observers, if not directly then by inference, was that return to "country" was a return to the pristine simplicity of the past. Evidence tends to suggest that many of those who did return wanted to do so with most of the material comforts of the larger community, a pragmatic response which does not sit well with the romantic, idealised one.

"But who will rule the rules?", the sixth chapter, analyses the intense conflict between individuals and organisations in both communities (especially Maningrida) as European and Aboriginal power-brokers competed for control in the absence of a clearly defined system of community decision-making. These conflicts are analysed amid a backdrop of externally-driven political change. This chapter focuses on what has
been labelled the "second explosion", that is the intervention of the federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, the "sacking" of Maningrida council and the removal of the "Maningrida eight". It also analyses the Gunavidji's consolidation of power and the very directed "non-direction" of DAA in the control of Maningrida council's affairs. It observes, additionally, that the increased intrusion of external politics within Maningrida between 1977 and 1978 pushed sections of the conflicting European enclaves to prominence, while Aboriginal power-brokers pragmatically, assumed less prominent positions.

The thesis concludes without universal generalisation in relation to the politics of cross-culturalism in remote communities and warns the reader about the difficulties of making sweeping conclusions in the context of this diverse array of communities. In Maningrida and Galiwinku, the dissimilar involvement of the NTA and the Methodist missionaries and the differential impact of government policy coupled with each community's varying historical evolution produced differing responses to European domination, even though both communities were of similar size, geographically proximate and culturally complex. In both communities, Aboriginal and European cultures impacted upon one another through their principal power-brokers and this process of cross-culturalism was not purely one-way. Although beset with differences, one notable similarity between Maningrida and Galiwinku was the historical evolution of cross-cultural
intermediaries and the prominence attained by particular persuasive individuals. Caution, however, should be observed appraising the role of Aboriginal go-betweens because the pragmatic adaptation does not denote an acceptance of either the political or social legitimacy of the dominant culture. These adaptations were primarily the product of survival and should not be viewed necessarily as an endorsement of European ways.
END NOTES

1. Balanda is a word commonly used by Aboriginal people in Arnhem Land to describe people of European decent. It is a adaptation of the Dutch word Hollander.

2. Warrawi (Goulburn Island) was established in 1916, followed by Milingimbi (1923), Yirrkala (1935) Minjilang (Croker Island) in 1941 and Elcho Island (Galiwinku) in 1942. In strict historical terms, the latter community was first settled in 1921. The settlement, however, was abandoned after two years and was relocated at Milingimbi. Throughout the text, the community has been identified as Galiwinku, unless it was referred to as Elcho Island in primary source material.

3. Little is known about these mysterious people. They were real enough for Berndt to devote a chapter describing them. According to his Yolngu informants, the Bayini arrived in north-east Arnhem Land sometime between the Yolngu's dreamtime and the arrival of the Macassans. They were light skinned in complexion, lived in stone dwellings, cultivated the land and wore brightly coloured sarongs. It is not possible to determine accurately their length of stay, when they arrived or when they departed.
Chapter 1

The literature and the theoretical context.

We need a series of ethnographies and histories which illustrate the many contingencies of the relation between old forms of power and new forms of power (Rowse, 1992, 27).

Tim Rowse's pertinent observations about the absence of a corpus of empirically-based "histories and ethnographies" concerning the power relationships between Europeans and Aborigines in remote communities forms not only the central focus in this chapter but also one of the main rationales for this thesis.

The ensuing discussion seeks to consider briefly the nature of much of the secondary literature and to suggest some tentative reasons underpinning the absence of a widely accepted explanation applicable to the analysis of conflict in the context of remote communities. The literature reviewed deals principally with cross-cultural and intra-cultural conflict in isolated communities. When aspects of theory appear relevant, they are contextualised within the thesis. The primacy of the social domain in determining political interaction between the cultures has been emphasised. Consequently, the valuable contributions made by authors such as Altman (1982) or Saunders (1986) concerning economic relationships in remote Aboriginal communities receive scant attention. Within the
Northern Territory alone, there are at least fifty-two remote communities and in the majority of these most of the inhabitants are Aboriginal. They are not only remote physically but also socially. Each is the product of differing historical processes; often, they are culturally non-heterogeneous and characterised by a peculiar parochialism and intensity of social interaction. The distinctly isolated nature of these communities caused particular individuals to adopt more dominant political positions than they may well have assumed in more populous, homogeneous and mainstream communities. Shepherdson, Hunter, Walalipa, Burrumarra and Maritji (and others) are not romanticised figures; rather, the social and political relationships occurring between them were the product of the environment within which they operated. Whilst they were figures representing disparate and unequal domains; they accommodated each other for various reasons at the cross-cultural interface. The complex nature of these communities is reflected in the eclectic nature of the literature written about them. No one theoretical approach is applicable; consequently the tendency to place the literature into neat theoretical boxes has been avoided as this approach would tend to distort the sources being subject to critique. Indeed, much of the literature consulted during the course of this research contains little or no theoretical analysis; narratives like Keith Cole's *The Arnhem Land Aborigines* (1979) and Ella Shepherdson's *Fifty Years in Arnhem Land* (1981) fit into this category. Other writers like Colin Tatz (1964) and C D Rowley (1974) have made important contributions to the
literature with a minimum of theoretical input. These contributions are complemented by more detailed works which embrace a number of theoretical perspectives and academic disciplines. For example, Cawte's (1958) study of Galiwinku used a combination of behavioural disciplines covering subject matter as diverse as psychiatry and geography. Another excellent example of the value of combining theoretical perspectives can be found in David McClay's *Surviving the White Man's World* (Unpublished Ph.D, 1988) which considers the role of adult education in Aboriginal society and relates it to the experience of the Walpiri of the Central Desert. McClay recognises the difficulty of leaning too heavily on a particular theoretical position, and thus has combined only elements of theory useful to explain the empirical side of his research. In doing so, McClay has acquired many valuable insights into the dynamics of cultural conflict in the context of the remote community and more than passing reference has been made to his work.

It is suggested, regardless of the theoretical perspective employed, that the empirical analysis of remote Aboriginal communities must take into account their respective histories and the dominant role played by individuals across both cultures. This is clearly evident in Tonkinson's (1977) study of the Western Australian Desert community of Jigalong, the lesser known but important work by Bagshaw (1977) concerning the conflict between a multi-clan society and local government institutions in Maningrida and, more recently, Trigger's study
Bagshaw's political analysis described the complex interplay between (and within) both European enclaves and Aboriginal clans. His argument incorporated elements of orthodox Marxism with Sahlin's (1972) concept of dominant sites of symbolic production and Swartz's (1972) distinction between "arena" and "field" in politics. Sahlin's concept of dominant sites of symbolic production was particularly important to Bagshaw's analysis. His application of this concept explored the separate nature of the conflicting cultures. Within the European domain, the dominant focus was materially-directed; in the Aboriginal domain it was based on a set of social relations. In addition, Bagshaw referred to the absence of an "institutionalised government apparatus" among Aborigines where "decisions are made on a consensual basis after consultation with kinsmen" (Bagshaw, 1977, 63). Sahlin's concept of different cultural domains was given additional theoretical rigour by Bagshaw's incorporation of the structural concepts of "arena" and "field" attributed to Swartz. For Swartz, a political "arena" comprised "all those actors, values, meanings and resources related to, but not directly involved in, the activities and attitudes of participants in a specific, normally local level, political field" (Bagshaw, 68) while a "field" was defined as the boundary around social activity which represented the interests and involvement of a particular set of participants.
Thus, from Bagshaw's perspective, "European bourgeois society and the encapsulated Aboriginal structure incorporated on a political level within it, constitute the arena in which the Maningrida field is located" (Bagshaw, 69).

Marxism as employed by Bagshaw conceded that "the methods of analysis (and most especially Marxist historical materialist analysis) which may be eminently applicable to the Western bourgeois social context are not necessarily amenable to the so-called primitive orders" (Bagshaw, 60). Bagshaw reviewed relations between Europeans and Aborigines historically and argued that they had been characterised by "mutual misunderstanding and incomprehension" (Bagshaw, 60). For him, Aborigines had not constituted a disenfranchised proletariat which the "captains of industry" could exploit as a labour force but rather, with the destruction of their traditional economic base, "Aboriginal society became an anomalous, structurally dependent cultural enclave within the wider European dominion characterised by periods of encapsulation" (Bagshaw, 66). The existence of distinct spheres of social activity had important political ramifications for Bagshaw. As there was no traditional Aboriginal counterpart to legitimised power (authority) in the secular domain, a state of "jural selectivity" ensued and was characterised by Aboriginal involvement in Maningrida's local government politics. "Jural selectivity" was the process identified by Bagshaw which accounted for the rise of a group of Aboriginal power-brokers who were able to communicate effectively with
Europeans. The principal forum for this group of go-betweens was the Community Council, a forum which traditional elders possessing either ceremonial and/or land based power did not wish to dominate. Bagshaw saw this new group of power-brokers, which he termed "the political spokesmen", as middle-men being the product of a particular period of policy formation inaugurated by the Whitlam government. In Bagshaw's view, these cross-cultural intermediaries were an adaptation to Maningrida's environment and changed political and economic circumstances. They possessed highly developed cross-cultural skills and their views about many matters were "relayed to the Aboriginal populace who placed much faith in the opinions of these individuals" (Bagshaw, 76). Unfortunately, Bagshaw did not view the evolution of this group from an historical perspective; rather, he portrayed them more in terms of a specific political adaptation, the product of a particular time and policy. His position was ahistorical, not reflective of historical materialism and apparently a negation of Bagshaw's qualified support of orthodox Marxism. In his quest for structural rigour, over a comparatively short time frame, Bagshaw neglected to incorporate the broader sweep of history into his analysis, an omission this dissertation seeks to rectify.

Tonkinson's (1974) study of Jigalong, a Western Desert community was centred around Aboriginal adaptation to a mission-dominated environment. The mission was established in 1946 by the Apostolic Church. Tonkinson undertook an
examination of the mission's European sub-culture as well as
the maintenance and strengthening of Aboriginal "law" and the
mechanisms by which Aborigines resisted change sought by the
Church. He argued that:

No matter where it occurs (camp or main settlement)
most Aboriginal interaction is of a formal
structured nature and implies differences in status
and authority....There are no close friendships
between the missionaries and no reciprocal visiting
occurs on this basis....Aborigines evaluated
themselves and others according to actions rather
than the amount of their material possessions. When
the Aborigines finally settled in the contact
situation they had no reservations about adopting a
range of western goods, but their motives were still
utilitarian and had little if anything to do with
the considerations of status (Tonkinson, 102-104).

Tonkinson maintained that the Jigalong Aborigines adopted a
successful survival strategy in the presence of the Church.
The steady increase of intermarriage between members of
different linguistic groups

led to the development of many affinal bonds
between co-residents and an associated web of
reciprocity which crosscut linguistic divisions and
make it increasingly difficult for people to oppose
one another readily on the basis of pre-contact
loyalties. Since all at Jigalong are immigrants,
they share a new home territory to which no one
group has exclusive rights (Tonkinson, 140).

Unlike Bagshaw's description of Maningrida, where traditional
linguistic and clan groupings exist mostly in a state of
conflict, the "leadership structure [of Jigalong] has not been
a suitable locus of community integration in the contact
situation, so the new entry emphasises its unity through
ritual activities" (Tonkinson, 141). Tonkinson viewed this shared agreement about the central importance of ritual and the maintenance of the "law" which integrated Aboriginal people within the community and "unifies the Jigalong mob against the dominancy exerted by the Church as the overriding characteristic of the "desert victors" (Tonkinson, 42).

In later publications, Tonkinson reconsidered the internal political dynamics of the community after the Church had withdrawn. He noted that the "regime of self-regulation", the product of church withdrawal and the change in government policy had impacted heavily on the social and political fabric of Jigalong. Areas of responsibility, traditionally the preserve of the Church (such as the distribution of goods and punishment for misdemeanours and delivery of services), now came under the control of the community which lacked the political controls and "whitefella" political experience to readapt successfully.

Tonkinson's study and his description of the Apostolic Church in Jigalong bear little comparison to the activities of the Methodists in Arnhem land. Unlike the MOM, the Apostolic Church, during its twenty-three year involvement in Jigalong, rigidly adhered to the dormitory system, employed staff with little sympathy with Aboriginal culture and language and even less experience in missionary work. Their rigid, uncompromising stance resulted in the ultimate insult, the inability to make one successful conversion during their stay.
Generalised references about the impact of the missionaries upon Aborigines, in the remote community context, should be avoided simply because there was considerable variation in the philosophy, practice and personnel in the various churches.

Trigger's (1986) study of race relations in Doomadgee (a north-west Queensland Aboriginal community, previously a Brethren mission) demonstrates the diversity of black-white relations on a mission. Trigger recognised the existence of two domains which adopted three forms of separation – the physical, intellectual and social. Some of his analysis was centred upon the physical aspects of domain separation although he argued that

\[ \text{the constitution of a domain or particular physical space can never be permanently fixed by the location itself...it is on fundamental social processes that the analysis of domain must focus....[T]hrough maintenance for the separate Blackfella domain Aborigines affect a form of social closure...they are clearly not the dominant group, this closure is nevertheless exclusionary rather than usurpatory...it is designed to exclude, limit or subject to conditions, the access and participation of whites. As the subordinate group, Doomadgee Aborigines are certainly unable to usurp greater access to material resources and/or the means of producing them through closure. But the form of exclusionary closure by which the Blackfella domain is maintained is not orientated towards this goal. Doomadgee's Aborigines exclude whites as part of a defence against constant administrative intrusiveness and attitudinal ethnocentrism on the part of whites (Trigger, 115).} \]

Trigger concluded that Aboriginal maintenance of control over their domain in spite of the formal pervasiveness of white authority bore some resemblance to Tonkinson's study of
Jigalong but, unlike Tonkinson's research where the separation between the "whitefella" and the "blackfella" domains was virtually complete, Trigger recognises not only Aboriginal separation and resistance but also the compliance of Aboriginal councillors and Aboriginal policemen. Although he recognises their limited effectiveness, they were nonetheless incorporated within and became part of the "apparatus of settlement administration". The idea that domain separation can exist alongside domain interaction has much relevance to this thesis because this analytical approach more accurately reflects the reality of many remote communities. Trigger adopts the same position as Genovese (1975) who argued that there was no "superficial bifurcation of resistance and accommodation" for there was "a continuum of resistance" (quoted in Trigger, 1992, 15). Trigger develops the thesis further by looking at the historical evolution of Aboriginal power-brokers whom he calls "go-betweens". He charts their development through the "wild times", the pastoralist era and the mission era maintaining that the "long standing relationships between Aboriginal workers and their bosses were often close and supportive" (Trigger, 46). Although, "Aboriginal people of this region were dominated structurally by both the economic and political forces of the colonising society" (Trigger, 54), some were still able to develop "bonds of familiarity" because "Aboriginal people undoubtedly have had great affection for particular missionaries who lived in the settlement for a long time" (Trigger, 149). One close point of contact occurred between the Mission manager and the
Aboriginal councillors, the majority of whom were Christians. Although the manager's style of leadership (described by Trigger as "didactic paternalism") was abrasive, the Councillors were still able to perceive him as "father boss" (Bāpa in the context of Galiwinku). They identified with him even further by adopting a similar ideological position, speaking publicly about their "responsibility" and "authority" and actively supporting the dormitory system. They resisted traditional ceremonies and law, and, in comparison to the role of Aboriginal councillors in Galiwinku and Maningrida, they ranged quite outside their legitimate authority. Given the forthright, vehement views expressed by the Councillors in their support for the Brethren Church, it is significant that Trigger was unable to discover firm evidence of material gain by them. The strict Christian ideology coupled with the limited material resources of the Brethren Church would have acted as severe limiting factors to the acquisition of material gain by the Councillors. They gained more in social standing rather than material assets. The same applied to the Councillors at Galiwinku and Maningrida. It is debatable, however, whether the "relations of familiarity" in these Arnhem Land communities helped to legitimise the "relations of inequality" to the same degree as they did in Doomadgee.

The concept of domain separation has also been applied to the remote community by Stephen Harris. His contributions to the study of cross-cultural relations have been numerous and mainly directed at Aboriginal language and the implementation
of bi-lingual education. Many of his conclusions were supported by research he undertook in Milingimbi (another ex-Methodist mission in Arnhem Land approximately half way between Maningrida and Galiwinku) between 1975-76. In his description of that community, he touched upon the differences between both the European and Aboriginal domains in terms of political decision-making and their varying culturally-defined conceptions of power. His observations about the differences between consensual decision-making among the Yolngu at Milingimbi and decisions, made by individuals who have the clear traditional authority, is pertinent to both Bagshaw's and Meyers' (reviewed subsequently) interpretations. One contemporary anthropologist (McConvell, 1991) has taken issue with Harris over Harris's tendency to stress the distinct nature of the Aboriginal and European domains. More recently, Harris replied to this criticism arguing that McConvell has overstated and misrepresented his dependence on domain theory (Harris, 1991).

Although McConvell and Harris employ the concept of domain in different senses (one as an anthropologist and the other as a linguist), two salient features of this discussion have emerged. McConvell (1991) argued that some Aboriginal socio-linguistic constructs are very similar to those contained within European culture. He made the valid observation that

[A]boriginal people have engaged in two way exchange of ideas with each other for a very long time and with Asians and Europeans in more recent history. Aboriginal people are developing theories on how
such exchange can work based on ideas of natural interactions and social exchange from their own traditions. Many Aboriginal leaders see this process rather than cultural domain separation as the key to cultural survival today (McConvell, 23).

McConvell presented the Yolngu metaphor of ganma to illustrate his position further. Ganma was a joint Aboriginal and European educational project but traditionally it meant

[t]he turbulence and foam which arose where the downstream flow of freshwater meets the tidal flow of salt water from the sea....Ganma sees powerful and positive effects arising from the interaction, and limited amount of synthesis, involved in the meeting of the cultures. As the sea never merges with the river, however, the two cultures do not merge (McConvell, 17).

McConvell was concerned that analysis based on the separation of cultures "plays down the importance of individual differences in behaviour and thought patterns in Aboriginal groups and the capacity of Aboriginal individuals to innovate" (McConvell, 14). This view led McConvell to stress the greater relevance of theory based on social interaction than domain separation. Certainly, the cutting-edge of the cross-cultural political interface, as represented by the cross-cultural intermediaries was characterised more by domain overlap (often accompanied by intense conflict) than separation. Analysis should be contextually driven. Domain separation and social closure as well as interaction based on functional interdependence and pragmatic adaptation apply to almost all remote Aboriginal communities to varying degrees.
A less narrow and more culturally interactive study was provided by Nancy Williams (1987) in her study of the application of Aboriginal and European law in the resolution of disputes at Yirrkala. The Yolngu of Yirrkala are related to those of Galiwinku and the community was also a Methodist mission at the time of her research between 1969 and 1970. Williams argued that for the Yolngu the focus of "authority was based on seniority and it was further legitimated on religious and political grounds" (Williams, 45). Thus, authority was based in persons where the "power differential in the relationship between Yolngu leaders and their followers is expressed in terms of reciprocal obligations" (Williams, 112). Even the missionaries (especially the Superintendent) played active roles within this arrangement. The mission Superintendent was termed Bäpa which was the name of a clan leader who had the role to act as mediator within disputes. According to Williams, the role as mediator contained a reciprocal component, for example:

Chasling's status was equated with that of a yolngu leader geographically distant but of roughly equal power who could request help from his counterpart and who in turn would expect to give comparable help at a later time (Williams, 113).

Williams also observed that the political impact of the Town Council on the daily lives of Yirrkala's Yolngu was negligible; rather, it was the separate and traditionally powerful Village Council that made the "important" decisions.
Within the culturally defined view of politics shared by the Yolngu, Australian law was only dimly understood. It was not necessarily "bad law" but seen as "too (very) far" and conceptually different. Williams's study was both innovative and informative for, although separate cultures and ways of resolving resolutions were recognised, there was a concurrent "overlap". Rowse (1992) found her views inconsistent with Tonkinson's study of Jigalong where Aborigines had a more clearly defined agenda while Yirrkala's Yolngu were "less inclined to elucidate what is distinctive about their agenda" (Rowse, 46). Perhaps the agenda for the Yolngu did not have to be defined in the same terms as those developed by the Western Desert Aborigines. The Yolngu experience was not one of starvation and resistance but rather a case of pragmatic adaptation to a dominant but relatively less destructive European culture.

The focus of this thesis is directed towards the interactionist model, consequently domain separation receives comparatively little emphasis. It should be clearly stated, however, that domain separation did exist in both Maningrida and Galiwinku although it would be reasonable to conclude that the separation was not as complete as it was in Doomadgee and Jigalong. Maningrida was divided into a number of differing domains and they reinforced the extreme levels of conflict within the community. Like Doomadgee, the European domain was clearly defined and accessed by Aboriginal people along
clearly prescribed lines. Additionally, different federations of clans separated themselves physically, socially and culturally: the Gunavidji formed the Bottom Camp, the Blyth River people(s) constituted the Top Camp and the two Side Camps were occupied by the Nakara and the Gunwinggu. The extent of domain separation which characterised Maningrida was not present at Galiwinku. The unified nature of the clan groupings tended to work against the idea of separate Aboriginal camps. The missionaries built their houses in an area broadly described as "the Mission" and, unlike Jigalong and Doomadgee, this did not take on the appearance of a medieval compound with clearly defined boundaries. The most significant aspect of the dwellings of Galiwinku was not their physical placement but as Jack R..... remarked (see chapter 4, 140) the houses of the missionaries were similar to those occupied by the Aborigines. Less defined domain separation resulted in lower levels of community conflict and higher levels of adaptation between the missionaries and the Yolngu of Galiwinku.

Unlike the historio-ethnographic works of Tonkinson and Trigger, John Bern (1974) was a sociologist whose doctoral thesis was based on the study of Ngukurr, a south-east Arnhem Land community. Originally formed in 1908 by the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the community attracted "fragments of Aboriginal groupings" which were largely the result of the disruption caused by pastoralism within the region. Similar
to the Western Desert people described by Tonkinson, the Aborigines of Ngukurr "lacked an internal cohesion but shared a common ideology, in general terms, expounded the relationship between the people and their environment...and provided the superstructure for social relations" (Bern, 1977, 3). Central to Bern's thesis are the concepts of "competition" and "domination". An "inner core" of powerful Aboriginal families competed for power for "political relations are those which are aimed at affecting the community's internal organisation" (Bern, 5). Outstanding individuals, "big men", were recognised by Bern but he was mainly concerned with the "structure, process and practice" of domination and competition. Although the "village" was a closed social system in one sense, it was still part of "whitefella" law represented by the missionaries. The existence of these two separate spheres, "blackfella business" and "whitefella law", made the analysis of power difficult for Bern. Whilst he embraced a "marxist problematic" centred around Ngukurr's socio-religious superstructure, Bern found power "an illusive concept" and argued that a broad definition was necessary. He found Weber's definition of power "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance regardless of the basis on which this probability rests" (quoted in Bern, 1974, 6) to be useful but subsequently argued that his interest was not so much an analysis of power but the result of its application to competition. Domination, in Bern's view, "was the practical and empirical expression of
power" (Bern, 6). Thus, power relations and domination were not the preserve of one domain but common in differing forms to both. For example, in Bern's view, wealth in "whitefella law" was based on property where individual property rights are sacrosanct but "wealth in Aboriginal society is women...and ritual property (ceremonies, songs, myths and paraphernalia)" (Bern, quoted in Rowse, 1992, 21). In Aboriginal society, it was the "solidarities" as well as the competitive relations among senior men where power relations were determined. It was this "inner core" which exerted power over younger men and women because, in Aboriginal society at Ngukurr, power relations were determined by "a religiously sanctioned hierarchy of gender and age" (Rowse, 1992, 22).

In a later article concerning the politics of Ngukurr, Bern (1989) argued that Aboriginal people had learned to manage dependency by reducing external interference; he criticised commentators who observed that Aborigines were unable to govern themselves. In Bern's view, "internal unity and harmony" were unlikely outcomes in a situation characterised by the "external onslaught" of "whitefella law". He did concede, however, that the "integrity" of the community's power relations was prone to compromise through the "sectional interests" of the "inner core" of decision-makers.

Rolf Gerritsen (1981, 1982a, 1982b, 1985), drawing on field work derived from Ngukurr and other communities in the Katherine (Northern Territory) administrative region, provided
a substantially different interpretation of cross-cultural politics. He sought to question the idealised stereotype of contemporary rural Aboriginal politics, characterised as he perceived it by "sharing freely", "lacking material attachments" and not "caring about money". He gave those who took this position the derogatory label of the "gee whiz school" within which he rather unjustly placed many anthropologists. Orthodox Marxist interpretations (he used Hartwig [1975] as an example) occupied no place in his analysis which also questioned the tradition that treated Aborigines as an "undifferentiated mass" rather than viewing their political struggles as a "Hobbesian-like" (Hiatt's term) struggle for goods and services. In order to analyse these power struggles within the community context and their relationship within and external to that community, Gerritsen used a typology of actors, centring around "dominant men" whose power derived from ceremonial attainment, control over the "sacred" (traditional land) and "whitefella power".

Aboriginal outsiders, unable to access the first two elements (that is ceremonial attainment and control over the "sacred") which distinguished "dominant men" formed a sub-set called "adventurous" men. Gerritsen's provocative argument was further developed in a subsequent article where he argued:

The unequal access to services (and resources) within communities was often the function of that community's politics, reflecting particular advantages that individuals, families or clans have obtained viz-à-viz the other occupants of the settlement (Gerritsen, 1982a, 16).
Using the "dominant men" as his starting point, he argued that they were prepared to take "initiatives and not merely to react passively to government demands" (Gerritsen, 17). They were supported by "prominent men" and "adventurous men" as well as their followers who formed "the retinues of the dominant men" (Gerritsen, 21).

For Gerritsen, the issue of power relations within communities was clear cut. The "gee whiz" school maintained there are no real leaders and the existence of "dominant men" directly contradicted this assertion. He maintained that

Power in Aboriginal communities (and its benefits, status and prestige, not necessarily money per se) is in control over the lives of one's fellows. Controlling access to community vehicles, housing and so on was as real and important to Aborigines as controlling access to ceremonies or traditional lands (Gerritsen, 1982, 21).

The power of the "dominant men", however, was not absolute and was subject to "occasional checks". His model was made more sophisticated by the addition of subsets. For example, one subset of the "prominent men" (according to Gerritsen they constituted one third to one half of the adult males in Ngukurr) were the "businessmen". Conversely, Europeans in an "Aboriginal settlement" fell into two categories, those "extrinsic" and those "intrinsic" to the "village". The former (composed of government employees) were generally viewed an "ephemeral" although, if they stayed on a community
for any length of time, "they do have an impact" (Gerritsen, 27). The latter were employed by the community. Gerritsen termed them "wayfarers", the white equivalents of "adventurous" men (Gerritsen, 29). These individuals came from varying backgrounds and sought "to ingratiate (themselves) to the dominant men" (Gerritsen, 29). They had "allocative power" and "seek to create dependence on [their] skills" (Gerritsen, 30). Unlike "adventurous" men, however, they possessed no single sponsor.

Subsequently, Gerritsen (1982b) shifted his analysis from the internal politics of Ngukurr and the Katherine region and applied his model to an analysis of outstations which he viewed as a "phenomenon of great complexity". He described the political dynamic at Lajamanu where he argued the "dominant men" were the "victors" who control the Community Council whilst the "losers", his "prominent" men, retreat to "their outstations". Although Gerritsen's observations may be valid for Lajamanu, when he applied this dichotomy to explain the conflict between Maningrida Council and the Outstation Resource Centre between 1975-77 his conclusions were flawed. In doing so, he failed to recognise the unpredictable, volatile and complex political dynamic of Maningrida where "dominant" and "prominent" individuals existed within both the Liverpool River and Blyth River collectives and where no particular individual, family, clan or linguistic group dominated political life. Gerritsen's model may well have been valid for Ngukurr and other towns in the Katherine region.
but it failed in its quest for more general validity. It did not contain the universality to provide a plausible model for the analysis of the political dynamic in either Maningrida or Galiwinku.

It would be unfair to dismiss Gerritsen purely on the basis that his typologies were too simplistic. In order for his work to have its original "shock value", a great deal of brevity was required; a polemic embedded in a morass of theory would have been unlikely to produce the desired reaction from Gerritsen's colleagues. In his simplistic approach, there were several serious deficiencies. His arguments were weakened by a narrow and very European definition of "goods". For Gerritsen, all power stemmed from accessing these goods which were products of the material domain. Although he recognised that the power of the "dominant men" consisted of three elements, he made no attempt to analyse the first two - "ceremonial attainment" and "control" over traditional land - systematically. Rather, his dominant men "dominate the channels of communication between bureaucracy and community, not those between the community and the realm of the spiritual" (Rowse, 1992, 26). It is debatable whether Gerritsen could be described as "ethnocentric"; if he were to be given a label it should be that of the "almost like us school". Unlike John Bern who used pseudonyms to describe the two dominant families in Ngukurr, Gerritsen blithely mentioned their names directly in text. It is a matter of conjecture but Aborigines, if they
were aware of Gerritsen's indiscretion, would universally exclaim "that man got no shame".

Finally, Gerritsen could well reduce the cultural bias in his model if he considered the views of Stanner (1979). After decades of anthropological research he concluded that neither Europeans or Aborigines had

[c]learly grasped what the other seeks....It is rather an encounter of two peoples who in general have failed to comprehend the ethos and structure of each other's lives....If one tried to invent two styles of life as unlike each other...one might end up with something like the European and Aboriginal tradition (Stanner, 43-59).

This fundamental difference between the cultures had led Stanner and his contemporaries in the pre-World War Two context to conclude that Aborigines "could not possibly survive; that they had no adaptive capacity" (Stanner, 1973, 262). Subsequently, Stanner recognised Aboriginal "restless activism and opportunism" and found Tonne's concept of "associated in spite of separation" and "separated in spite of association" (quoted in Stanner, 1979, 62) useful to explain their often pragmatic adaptation to mission and settlement life. Pragmatic adaptation, however, does not necessarily denote an acceptance of either the political or social legitimacy of the dominant culture. These adaptations are the product of physical and social survival and should not be necessarily viewed as an acceptance of European culture(s).
The role played by dominant Aboriginal individuals is an important aspect of Von Sturmer's study of the impact of Uranium mining in the East Alligator region in the Northern Territory. Von Sturmer argued that although mining had partially affected the residence of Aboriginal people, the increased flow and accessibility of resources had resulted in considerable "struggle among powerful figures to control the channels through which this money has flowed, or the distribution of expensive commodities - notably vehicles - which have been purchased out of these moneys" (Von Sturmer, 1986, 151). Von Sturmer stressed that mining introduced a new dimension to the politics of the region and posed a central question: which people would control the distribution of any benefits to flow from these intrusions? In terms of the Northern Territory Land Rights legislation this power had been given to the Traditional Land Owners (or their delegates) but, like the Gunavidji of Maningrida (see chapter 6), this did not necessarily eventuate. Rather, these resources were readily assessed by the mission-trained community councillors, the cross-cultural intermediaries who dominated the Community Council at Oenpelli. "When benefits started to flow in the form of royalty moneys and Toyotas", observed Von Sturmer, "it was again the same people who controlled their distribution whether they were traditional owners or not" (Von Sturmer, 152). Von Sturmer was cautious not to blame particular individuals for these excesses because his main concern was to look at the "mechanics whereby inequalities arise" for "Aboriginal people are no different from others when it comes
to keeping up with the Joneses" (Von Sturmer, 152).

Von Sturmer's work is only marginally relevant to this thesis simply because the inflow of accessible resources made possible by the activities of the Ranger Uranium Mine did not occur in either Maningrida or Galiwinku. It could also be argued that there were very few similarities between the activities of the Methodist missionaries at Galiwinku and the missionaries based at Oenpelli. The latter community was run by the CMS and was managed in an excessively regimented manner. The mission was the centre of high levels of conflict in both the intra-and cross-cultural senses. There was a lack of continuity within the community manifested by the high turnover of missionary staff. When the missionaries finally left the community, they left behind a fragmented society containing many self-seeking, opportunistic cross-cultural intermediaries eager to access the abundance of incoming resources. Moreover, there were some partial parallels between the influx of resources into the East Alligator region and the "push for development" experienced in the latter part of the period of assimilation (see chapter 4) especially in Maningrida. There was a considerable inflow of resources during this period but the direct access to them in terms of their equitable distribution was limited. Maningrida may have been "resource-rich" during this period but Aboriginal perceptions of this wealth correctly located it in the "whitefella" domain (Chapters 4, 5 and 6 contain many references dealing with the inequitable distribution of
Just as Gerritsen could find empirical data to support his theoretical position so too could Jeremy Beckett (1982) when he applied Rowley's (1971) original formulation of "internal colonialism" to an analysis of the politics of the Torres Strait Islanders. Beckett defined internal colonialism minimally as:

[A]n internal colony region or enclave which is exploited and controlled from without through a set of distinctive institutions. One of these institutions is a body of doctrines stating the difference between the colonised and the colonisers typically in terms of race but also by reference to religion or acculturation (Beckett, 132).

The form of colonisation was determined by its prime motive—"whether it be territorial control, the settlement of surplus population, the extraction of natural resources or the exploitation of labour" (Beckett, 132). Unlike orthodox Marxist formulations which stressed the separation of the proletariat from the means of production, "internal colonialism" concerned

the development of a proletariat that works without coercion and moves freely in the labour market and a colonial order which must inhabit the realisation of these tendencies without suppressing them completely. The subsistence cultivator must have land but be prepared to leave it to labour for wages....The regulation of this balance is one of the key functions of colonial administration (Beckett, 137).

Similarly, Hartwig was particularly impressed by Harold
Wolpe's (1975) theoretically rigorous use of internal colonialism in Wolpe's analysis of South African society and saw some valid comparisons with the situation of indigenous Australians. For Hartwig, it was the only theory which offered

a satisfactory explanation of the profound duality - class/nation, integration/separation - that has characterised Aboriginal aspirations, and locates the history of Aboriginal - White relations adequately in the comparative history of race and ethnic relations (Hartwig, 1975, 138).

Hartwig stressed the importance of bourgeois ideology in the early phases of the "encapsulation of Aboriginals by capitalism" and argued along orthodox Marxist lines that "exploitation could proceed only through the dissolution of the Aboriginal mode of production and the resocialization of its agents for entry into capitalist production relations" (Hartwig, 132). Subsequently, he argued that Aborigines had failed to enter the relations of production and had been affected by "differential rates of exploitation" for

[i]n the southern areas of the continent the development of the capitalist mode of production was accompanied by a policy aimed at destroying Aboriginal society, in the northern and central areas it often went hand in hand with a policy of conservation and segregation (Hartwig, 135).

The unique social structure and history of the Torres Strait Islanders characterised by a tradition of cultivation, defined land ownership, market economy and dominant families, suited
Beckett's model. Like Gerritsen, however, when he attempted to apply it to other more nomadic or less homogenous and traditional situations (as Beckett did in a later article in 1988 examining the de-tribalised lives of Aboriginal people in rural NSW), it was less applicable.

Changes in government policy (particularly the introduction of citizenship rights to Aborigines) or in Beckett's terminology "the activities of the state", coupled with the imprecise concept of internal colonialism have placed pressure on Beckett (and others) to reconsider the concept. Welfare colonialism (the reformulated concept) leans heavily in the writing of Robert Pain (1977) who first applied the term to describe the situation of indigenous people in northern Canada. It differs from internal colonialism in that it embraces two juxtaposing terms which connote citizenship (welfare) and its denial (colonialism). Moreover, it is a concept embodied in government policy: a policy that is both contradictory and unstable, historically continuous with classic colonialism, liberal rather than repressive. Yet decisions are still made on behalf of the colonised.

Aspects of welfare colonialism are particularly relevant to this thesis especially when applied to the imposition of government policy (as it was interpreted by DAA) on Maningrida and Galiwinku (see chapter 6). Beckett observes that

Yet another contradictory feature of welfare colonialism is its need to secure the assent of its
subjects as the evidence of their political enfranchisement. This is required in terms of the democratic values once indigenous people are included in the nation. It is also a practical measure, intended to avoid the frequent failures of government programs. Ironically, the subjects are often politically weak and fragmented that the state is obliged to create the channels of political expression and articulate indigenous aspirations. In other words, political incorporation of the indigenous minority within the nation-state can be affected only through special structures, which institutionalise colonial distinctions, while creating a political constituency which has simultaneously to be maintained and controlled (Beckett, 1988, 14).

Welfare colonialism also provides an explanation for the material boom in the latter stage of assimilation. The "push for development" in Maningrida and Galiwinku occurred in a context where colonialism was less likely to be the "institution of assimilation" and more likely to develop the community for, in the welfare state, "the only solution to Aboriginal poverty was the massive infusion of government funds into existing communities" (Beckett, 12). Although the proposition has considerable merit, the temptation to use welfare colonialism as a conceptual framework, has been resisted. The concept is useful and there is some evidence throughout the dissertation to support it. To have followed this course, however, would have diminished the interactive focus of the study and reduced community conflict to a level not reflecting its complex nature.

Fred Myer's (1986) ethnography of the Pintupi of the Western Desert sheds light on yet another dimension on contemporary
Aboriginal social structure and politics. The Pintupi drifted in from the outer periphery of the Gibson Desert in a number of movements which coincided with drought periods during the late twenties, early forties, mid-fifties and early sixties of this century. They settled in and around Papunya and Yuendumu because they were hungry and thirsty. They did not expect to be permanently settled in missions and government settlements and found the style of life "restrictive". When government policy changed in the early seventies and favoured decentralisation, many returned to their traditional homelands. Both Kintore and Yayayi evolved in this manner.

Unlike the clans of the Arrente (and those of many Aboriginal clans in the Top End), the Pintupi were not characterised by localised relations of authority and leadership. They described their homelands to the west as a loose "aggregation of estates". In their society, authority was "better understood as a temporary justification of relations among autonomous equals" (Myers, 256). Myers argued:

The high value placed on individual autonomy and the work and strategies required to achieve a policy where dominance must appear incited pose a problem for the society's participants, not one imported from outside. Collectivity is a problem for the Pintupi (Meyers, 256).

Hierarchy existed among them but it was personal rather than corporate. "Bosses" traditionally contributed to the welfare of "growing up" particular individuals. This personally
localised kinship system existed in opposition to the ethos, decision making style and authority of the Community Council. The Council made decisions but sanctions were not in place to enforce them and consequently inaction invariably resulted. The "enforcement" of decisions "was neither sought nor relished by the Pintupi people". The corporate responsibility was shifted to the Community Adviser or Executive Officer of this "non-Aboriginal inspired assembly". Myers, however, conceded that the Pintupi recognised the importance of European technology such as water bores, stores, schools and health clinics. Moreover, he argued they remained around the services contained in "service based aggregations" (for example Kintore) for years often "delaying or resisting the schisms that are prompted by their love of individual autonomy" (quoted in Rowse, 1992, 29).

Unlike Myers, Kenneth Liberman's (1985) analysis of the "congenial fellowship" of the Pitjantjatjara, Mjaanyatjarra and Pintupi was orientated more towards social interaction among that aggregation rather than the issue of power relations between two conflicting cultures. The questions of leadership and domination were comparatively unimportant to Liberman who viewed them as present in social interaction but "invisible". Action was the outcome of consensus which was the product of sustained dialogue conducted more in a congenial than confrontationist manner. This interaction was not necessarily cooperative but conducted by a set of prescribed conventions like conflict avoidance, non-egocentric
behaviour and the desire not to embarrass ("shame"). Liberman viewed consensus not so much as a way of thinking but about doing. Meetings called around issues occurred in situations where time was relatively unimportant. The ultimate goal in these situations was to arrive at a solution congenial to all participants. These meetings were characterised by "speaking softly always" and politeness because Aboriginal people did not draw excessive attention to the personal self of another. This mode of interaction was one of a number described by Liberman, the diatribe and interfamilial controversy being two other identified forms.

Liberman was concerned more about the inner dynamic of social intercourse among his traditional respondents. His discussion drew heavily on a diverse array of philosophers and theorists - Sartre, Hegel and Marx especially - in order to attempt to portray the "feelings" underlying Aboriginal interaction. At times, his analysis became fanciful and at best an idealised construction. For instance, the existence of violent interaction was recognised by Liberman but it was rarely discussed. Consensus always seemed to win out in an environment where harsh sanctions, power struggles and other "dark" matters were invisible. While Liberman did not wear "blinders or a blindfold" he was one of those who belonged to a group described by the local historian Kimber (1991) as "looking through rose glasses".

One of the major difficulties confronting this study was that
a considerable amount of theorising has occurred upon a very narrow empirical base. Generalising from such a limited base has been dangerous especially in light of the often emotive issues raised by cross-cultural interaction. Another problem was the tendency of some writers (especially those writing general interpretations) to rely excessively on the notion of "periodisation". The pre-protection, protection, assimilation, integration and self-determination periods are presented in a linear manner conveying the impression that they were clearly defined and discrete periods which begin and ended at precise calendar dates. In reality, the transition was uneven, affecting groups, cultures and individuals in a differential manner. Elements of these periods exist concurrently throughout the earliest associations of European and Aboriginal cultures. Who would possibly have believed Edward Eyre (the explorer) when he described political organisation among Aborigines he observed as without government. In nineteenth century Australia, it was conventional to talk about Aboriginal "chiefs" and "government", but it was impossible for those who shaped ideology to concede that, in their terms, Aboriginal government was anarchistic.

To be without government, however, is not to be without politics. When Hiatt (1984) addressed the issue of Aboriginal politics, he recognised that three formulations had evolved among the literature. His own, like Lauriston Sharp's (1958) was characterised "by a uniform distribution of rights,"
privileges and duties throughout a social order based on kinship and suffused by an egalitarian ideology" (Hiatt, 6). This formulation, however, was under attack by "Marxian class analysis" and "Hobbesian individualism". Hiatt found that all three formulations were initially compatible statements about different aspects of a complex field of inquiry...there can be no question that certain individuals achieved a level of eminence and prestige beyond that enjoyed by their peers and wielded authority at a supra-familial level (Hiatt, 8).

Hiatt's basic argument was quite valid; political organisation among traditional Aborigines was neither wholly authoritarian nor wholly egalitarian, "rather it contains both elements in strong measure". In making this observation, he speculated "that the tension between them helps to explain some of the characteristic adaptations of Aboriginal society to European hegemony" (Hiatt, 12).

It was the diversity, complexity and "creativity" of these adaptations that made the development of theory difficult and "perhaps there is no one theory that can adequately explain the complexity of social reality and social phenomenon" (McCly, 1985, 28). If such a theory does exist, it needs to "acknowledge conflict and contradiction within all social systems viewing them as dynamic focus tending to produce change" (McCly, 120). Both McCly and Rowse argue that analysis should occur within an interactive framework where
theory confronts data. Social formulations grounded in empirical research will better portray the social and political dynamic of cross-cultural interaction. The only risk with this approach, as McClay notes, was that the literature it produces may well be viewed as eclectic and iconoclastic. Certainly, the combination of elements of existing but sometimes opposed theories explained the success of Bern's analysis of Ngukurr. Paradigms of a "radical" (as distinct from "orthodox" nature, Chilcot's terminology, 1981) need to be further developed along multi-disciplinary, empirical and conflict-oriented models.

Several other contentious issues raised by the thesis need to be identified and discussed. Given the traditional importance ascribed to the role of Aboriginal women in indigenous politics it is surprising that their presence, on the cross-cultural interface, was almost non-existent in Maningrida and Galiwinku. With the notable exception of Daisy Baker (see chapter 6), Aboriginal women appear to have been marginalised to the point of exerting no influence at all over the public domain. This observation is consistent with the findings of Diane Bell and Pam Ditton (1980) contained in their comparative study of Aboriginal women in six Central Australian remote communities. The primary aim of their study was to document Aboriginal womens' opinions of their changing role in Central Australian communities. Bell and Ditton found that:
Male political, economic and ritual roles have been given some status within the new social order, but the importance of the female role has been denied because of the negative perception of women's role and the limited opportunities for women within the new social order (Bell and Ditton, 1980, 8).

Consequently, Bell and Ditton argued that women were not represented on community councils because they were not indigenous institutions and do not always reflect local authority structures. Councils were introduced for the convenience of governments and administrators. The male bias of council decisions and composition reflects the early and present day white perceptions of authority structures in Aboriginal society. Such are generally conceptualised as excluding women (Bell and Ditton, 12).

Writing directly about the role of women in Maningrida, Annette Hamilton (1975) expanded Bell and Ditton's point about the "negative perception of women's role". Hamilton saw this negative perception embodied in the prevailing European notion that Aboriginal men were the hunters while the women stayed at home and tended hearth and kin. Traditionally, nothing could have been further from the truth. Women were the main providers of food and maintained a high level of independence from the men. Hamilton maintained that when the wage economy was introduced to Maningrida, it was the men who benefited at the expense of the women. The social implications of this change were enormous. Suddenly

where the possession of three wives and many children once made a man strong and independent, it now made him, in relation to the new sources of
power, no more than a pauper....Suddenly men had all the bargaining power and women had nothing (Hamilton, 1975, 175).

The consequences of this shift in the economic relations between Aboriginal men and women and their dependence on the wage economy is seen most clearly in the exchange between Council President Yiberarr (misspelt in quotation as Ibberal) and councillor R.... when they observed, "We just spend our money and we haven't got enough" (see chapter 4, 140).

The observations of Hamilton and Bell and Ditton provide a partial explanation for the comparative absence of women within the "new social order". Other factors, however, should be considered. The "new social order", in so far as it manifested itself in remote communities, was not reflective of the fervent in mainstream male/female relations between 1965-1975. Male Europeans in these remote communities tended to be rather conservative in the conduct of their lives. Their spouses adopted less prominent economic and social positions. The entire matter was summarised, in a most succinct manner, by Elizabeth Guy (the wife of a long serving Galiwinku missionary) in her unpublished manuscript Only a Wife (undated). She explained that "only a wife" was a quip used by the missionaries' wives to tease their menfolk. The sober aspect of the quip was that the Methodist Overseas Mission employed only their husbands.

These unequal relationships between European men and women
were viewed by Aborigines as constituting a social norm when applied to the processes of accommodation within the "new social order". Moreover, it should also be noted that not all European authority figures were accompanied by a spouse. For example both Hunter and Wilders (Maningrida Superintendent and acting-Superintendent) were single men. The unequal social and economic relationships that developed between both European and Aboriginal men and women in Galiwinku and Maningrida provide yet another instance of the isolated, parochial and conservative (in the social sense) nature of these communities.

The second issue requiring further consideration has been noted by Scott Bennett (1989). He wrote, "In the early days of DAA, there was excitement over the task that lay ahead...but Aborigines soon found the high sounding policies of self-management and self-determination meant different things to bureaucrats and Aborigines" (Bennett, 85). It has been argued, especially in chapter 6, that DAA (like the NTA previously) did not wish to lose control over the "client group". They maintained this control partly by adopting the strategy of encouraging the political and economic incorporation of Aboriginal organisations. It must be stressed that incorporation per se was not an "evil" process; indeed arguments could be presented in favour of it especially by Aboriginal interest groups who may have gained politically from the process. Certainly the notion that incorporation
would empower Aboriginal groups had been the principal factor behind C D Rowley's active promotion of the idea prior to the implementation of the policy of self-determination. When Rowley's classic trilogy (1972) was published, comparatively few Aboriginal organisations had been incorporated. Rowley had been encouraged by the spectacular success of several outstanding examples. He cited the case of the Nomads Pty Ltd stemming from the Pilbara pastoral strikes and the Pindan movement. Rowley argued that their effective struggle against wage exploitation and the subsequent respect afforded to them by the state bureaucracy was a direct outcome of this incorporation. Furthermore, when Aboriginal groups were not incorporated, they were open to manipulation by both government and churches. As an example, he cited the case of the exclusion of Yirrkala aborigines when the NTA and MOM negotiated with mining interests over the location and subsequent mining of bauxite at Gove. The outcome of these negotiations did not favour the indigenous population. In Rowley's view, similar situations had been repeated many times over and "gradualism" was not the answer. He rejected gradual political change because "the whole approach ignored the fact that people under restraint cannot taught to be free" (Rowley, 1970, 158). The time was ripe for change and the individualising, destructive logic of assimilation needed to be overhauled. Rowley believed the answer lay in two administrative innovations:

The first is incorporation of the Aboriginal group, perhaps as a proprietary company, but in such a way
that 'companies' can form larger corporations as economic and political pressure groups. Without incorporation the special royalty by which the prior claim of the aboriginal group is recognised is simply dispersed and meaningless and incorporation creates an entity which may be compensated with shares in the mining company (Rowley, 164).

Rowley adopted a pragmatic and level-headed attitude towards incorporation, making the perceptive observation that its widespread introduction would not be without problems for "I am not so foolishly optimistic as to assume the process will be easy, or that a minority will in a generation free themselves from the habits of distrust and dependence" (Rowley, 166). After two or three incorporated groups had been established at a community level, Rowley was optimistic that

[T]he starting point for more formal politics has been established, and an initial problem of obtaining unity of interests is posed. Tactics may be worked out on the spot, perhaps by a multi­purposed field worker (almost unknown in Aboriginal affairs): he requires special educational preparation and training mainly in the techniques of community development. But at this stage something new has begun. The official has been withdrawn from the position of power, and the initiative in future relationships with government can henceforth be taken by the people's representatives. If no further step succeeded, the effort would not have been wasted, for the Aboriginal would have made his first move into politics, becoming again a full man and a 'political animal' (Rowley, 1971, 425).

It was Rowley's second innovation, when coupled with the widespread incorporation of Aboriginal groups, that would cause future tensions between DAA and incorporated groups in remote communities. Unlike Rowley's considered views about
incorporation, the manner in which incorporated groups were economically and politically accountable to government was poorly conceived by him. Rowley's views were developed before the existence of DAA. He saw incorporated Aboriginal groups forming direct links with various State government departments and boards and the Federal Office of Aboriginal Affairs. Further, he argued that it was not inconceivable to see more complex ties developing between larger Aboriginal corporations "formulating requests" to government standing committees.

Instead of these idealised links between government and incorporated Aboriginal groups, the Whitlam government created the Department of Aboriginal Affairs early in 1973. The new Department was composed of a large number of NTA staff, many of whom had worked for long periods in a work culture of directed change, and now charged with the responsibility of administering the policy of self-determination. DAA was responsible for initiating change, particularly in the early stages of its existence. It encouraged the Decentralisation movement, reduced the level of community institutionalisation and removed the Mission/Settlement manager. The Superintendent had been withdrawn but not retrenched, he simply moved away from daily contact with a community to become the Regional Director of the Department. The desire to direct and control was characteristic of DAA from its inception and the impact is noted throughout the latter part of the thesis. No community was sheltered from it, not even isolated island communities like Galiwinku where contact with
"government people" had been minimal. The disruptive nature of this intrusion and the conflict created by it is captured no more clearly than in the detailed views expressed by the Galiwinku fishermen Djupandawuy and Rronang (see chapter 6) and with the Department's intervention in the operation of Maningrida Council (see chapter 6).

The following chapters concentrate on the relationship between dominant individuals from both cultures and their activities in the public domain. The thesis is concerned more with the element of accommodation in cross-cultural relations than resistance and domain separation. It is based around community conflict and the analysis is not restricted to the cross-cultural domain; conflict within the ideologically disparate European enclaves in Maningrida forms a significant part of chapters 5 and 6. Community conflict is further developed around a series of critical historical events. The processes observed are pragmatic, adaptive and dynamic for, although both cultures and their representatives were often in conflict and "separated", they were also "associated" giving rise to cross-cultural intermediaries who attempted to translate "whitefella" ways in a manner understandable to their countrymen. The result was a type of functional interdependence between cultures, through processes of social interaction, as different personalities and government/mission policies impacted on community socio-political structures. As McClay (1988) has observed:
Black-White relations are at one level interpersonal and derive from individual face to face encounters. In this sense it is the quality of the encounters that are all important. Yet at another level it is the state that plays a major role in structuring the encounters since it sets the parameters for intervention through policy (McClay, 89).
ENDNOTES

1. Orthodox Marxism has been defined as it was represented by the collective works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Bagshaw has broadened this narrow definition marginally by incorporating Lenin's theory on imperialism in his thesis.

2. Chasling was the mission Superintendent at the time Nancy Williams undertook her research.

3. Bern, Gerritsen and Thiele (1982) have all written extensively about Ngukurr politics. Not only are existing cross-cultural ethnographies and histories few in number, they have tended to be restricted to particular communities.

4. As the High Court of Australia demonstrated recently (June, 1992) with its judgement in favour of Eddie Mabo (and others) against the State of Queensland, there were a number of significant similarities between the Torres Strait Islander and European cultures recognised by common law.

5. By inference, Liberman would argue that this style of interaction exists in contrast to European decision-making which is generally more direct, lucid, assertive and argumentative.
Chapter 2

Changes in the policies underlying the administration of Aboriginal affairs.

There can be little doubt that gradually the governments of the world will take over many of the duties and functions hitherto carried on by the missionary societies. Part of the trouble facing Mission Boards throughout the world is caused by this new activity of governments and possibly we are unwilling because of use and wont, and maybe because of vested interests, to encourage and assist governments to shoulder their responsibilities. It certainly means the dislocation of some of our cherished plans, reversal of long established policies, and temporarily a loss of prestige; but if it means the ultimate good of the races we serve; we must face the situation courageously and fearlessly (NTRS, 44/45. A 7438).

These were prophetic words indeed, for, in 1934, the notion that governments would become the custodians in developing policy and administering Aboriginal affairs would have been entertained by only the most ardent secularists. Arnhem Land had been declared an Aboriginal reserve three years earlier, largely as a response to pressure from the Methodist Overseas Mission and missionary activity had become synonymous with "protecting" Aborigines throughout Australia since the latter part of the nineteenth century. The period of "directed change" in Aboriginal affairs after 1939 was characterised by relatively rapid changes in policy. In order to understand these changes better and their effect on both the Aboriginal and European populations of Maningrida and Galiwinku, it is necessary to provide a brief description of the historical
origins of the policy of protectionism and the manner in which it was applied to the Northern Territory.

Prior to federation, the various colonial administrations had been slow to respond to the "Aboriginal question". Pressure from various church bodies, philanthropists and other interest groups had forced them to develop the semblance of policies and administrations designed to protect Aboriginal people by a process of isolation on reserves. The resulting policies as they were pursued by the separate colonial administrations (and later states) have been collectively termed protectionism. These policies evolved in the latter part of the nineteenth century, although it began earlier in Victoria. Campbell (1990) and Pepper and De Araugo (1986) provide further insights into its development in Victoria. A well researched schematic representation of the policy's varying forms and Aboriginal adaptations to them may be found in Elkin (1950). In general terms, this policy was best viewed as a sustained attempt by both church and government to protect Aboriginal people from physical obliteration and, in effect, represented a policy of segregating the indigenous population from the more destructive influences of European culture(s). As a policy, it was strongly authoritarian and at times highly ethnocentric and prescriptive treating Aborigines "as passive recipients of special treatment, much in the manner of prospective inmates of institutions" (Rowley, 1971, 230).

The policy was administered by a Board of Protectors, a chief
protector and sub-protectors who operated with very restricted budgets and little government support. Consequently, it was of little surprise that the Churches became active in "protecting" Aborigines. Whereas governments grudgingly accepted their guardianship, the Churches saw it as their moral responsibility. Moreover, it was of even less surprise that the prevailing colonial/state orthodoxy of protectionism should have been transplanted into the Commonwealth's administration of the Northern Territory when it commenced in 1911, especially as in the last month of its administration of the Northern Territory, the South Australian Government passed the Northern Territory Aborigines Act (1910) which the Commonwealth took over and referred to as the Aboriginal Ordinance of 1911. In 1918, this was revised to become the Aboriginal Ordinance of the N.T. (No.4 of 1918) and as such provided the legislative framework, much amended, supporting the Commonwealth policy of protectionism until it was supplanted by the Welfare Ordinance (1953).

Like the states, the Commonwealth's administration of Aboriginal affairs in the Northern Territory comprised a chief protector and sub-protectors. The former position was coupled with that of the Territory's Chief Medical Officer; the latter were usually policemen. From its inception, this aspect of the Commonwealth's administration of Aborigines - after 1941, included within the Northern Territory Administration - was understaffed and comparatively ineffectual. It restricted its activities principally to Alice Springs, Darwin and areas
broadly described as "pastoral" seeking to administer part-Aboriginals. The physical size of the Northern Territory, the extremes of climate, limited staff and skeletal budgets meant that the protectors had restricted contact with traditional (mainly remote) Aboriginal communities. Generally, these areas became the preserve of one of a number of missionary societies which often had little direct contact with the government protectors.

The "Comity of Missions" (a descriptive term used by Keith Cole, 1979) was an informal agreement by which the various mission societies regulated the development of missions in the Territory. According to Dewar (1989), a meeting occurred between the Protestant Churches in Melbourne in 1913 (just after the Commonwealth assumed control of the Northern Territory) to determine their respective "spheres of activity" (Dewar, 75). This meeting followed in the wake of a special report sponsored by the federal government concerning the future administration of Aborigines in the Northern Territory. The report had been undertaken by Sir Baldwin Spencer and, according to Dewar:

In reaction to his recommendations for the setting up of reserves, an inter-denominational committee had been established to reach agreement on the delineation of the NT among the various Churches for the purpose of establishing Missions among the Aborigines (Dewar, 76).

Spencer's report and the establishment of the inter-denominational committee became pivotal factors which focused
the interest of the Methodist Church on Arnhem Land. The creation of separate spheres of influence between missionary societies, though meetings between themselves, resulted in an informal agreement and meant that the Territory did not experience the rather "unchristian" in-fighting experienced among some churches in other parts of Australia as they vied with each other to "save souls". The main societies active in the Northern Territory were the Methodist Overseas Mission, the Church Missionary Society, the Catholic and the Lutheran Churches.

It was largely as an outcome of this informal agreement that the Methodists developed and maintained a number of communities along coastal Arnhem Land; the second last to be permanently established was Galiwinku in 1943. In essence, the various missionary societies were free to run their settlements as they pleased so long as they did not run contrary to the existing legislation. They did so with a minimum degree of government interference as well as limited financial support. As E C (Ted) Evans observed in a letter to the Administrator in September 1953, "we should not lose sight of the fact that prior to 1939 Government assistance to missionaries was practically negligible" (AA, F1 53/133).

The preceding discussion has provided a brief backdrop to the main focus of this chapter - the evolution of a different policy known variously as absorption but more popularly as assimilation. For over fifty years, protectionism and the
policies surrounding it had represented an unassailable bastion but its political legitimacy had been slowly crumbling. The underlying logic of the policy was based on the disappearance of Aboriginal people but this had failed to occur. By the third decade of the twentieth century, populations of Aborigines had increased significantly throughout Australia. Moreover, de-tribalised Aborigines, particularly in the south-eastern states, had become far more politically articulate. Through various Aboriginal Advancement Leagues and supported by the public speeches and writings of anthropologists like Stanner and Elkin, they began to exert public pressure on the Commonwealth government to change policy towards indigenous people. The Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities Conference (1937) has often been cited as the first official manifestation of this change (see, for example, McClay, 1991; Bern, 1974).

Those participating in the Conference were unable to reach any clear consensus other than that part-aborigines should be absorbed into European society while the solution to the "full-blood" problem was "to preserve as far as possible the uncivilised native in his normal tribal state by the establishment of inviolable reserves" (McClay, 1988, 172). A more formal statement concerning this shift in policy was made by the Minister for the Interior, Hon J McEwen in the McEwen Memorandum in February 1939 when he stated that the future for "the Aborigine" would be
[t]he raising of their status so as to entitle them by right and by qualification to the ordinary rights of citizenship, and to enable them and help them share with us the opportunities that are available in their native land (Rowley, 1970, 328).

Moreover, a significant administrative change had occurred in the Commonwealth's administration of Aboriginal affairs in the Northern Territory, giving the new but unclearly defined policy more scope for development. The position of Chief Protector was abolished and replaced by the position of Director of Native Affairs. E W Chinnery was the first occupant assuming control from the Chief Protector, Cecil Cook. Chinnery headed the expanded Native Affairs Branch which came under the control of the Commonwealth Department of the Interior but had little time to influence the embryonic organisation. A directive by the Administrator on the outbreak of World War Two restricted the activities of the organisation to all but essential services, effectively curtailing the activities of its numerically few patrol officers. The bombing of Darwin by the Japanese in 1942 forced the relocation of the Branch's offices to Alice Springs and it was not until 1946 that the organisation moved back to Darwin. A year later a partly elected Legislative Council was created but its competence was always limited by its composition and overriding Commonwealth controls. Decision-making in the sphere of Aboriginal affairs remained with the Federal Minister, until May 1951. The appropriate Minister controlling the Northern Territory Administration was the Minister for the Interior but with the creation of a new
portfolio, the responsibility was handed to the Minister for Territories and, in 1951, that Minister became Paul Hasluck.

Hasluck, in assuming responsibility for the new Department for Territories, "inherited both the word [assimilation] and the purpose it expressed" (Hasluck, 1988, 70) but, unlike his predecessors, gave the new policy clearer definition and direction. Hasluck's previous experience with Aboriginal people (particularly in the Western Australian pastoral context), his administrative ability and his sense of purpose all combined to make his influence on Aboriginal affairs impressive. This influence was felt especially in the Northern Territory which, unlike the various separate state Aboriginal administrations, came directly under his control. It should not, however, be suggested that Hasluck ignored his state counterparts; indeed, he was at pains to develop a cooperative and coordinated approach towards Aboriginal affairs with them. In part, he was able to achieve this end through the Native Welfare Conferences of 1951, 1952, 1961 and 1963. These conferences provided a forum within which the previously imprecise policy of assimilation was progressively redefined to the following, most commonly quoted definition:

All aborigines and part-aborigines will attain the same manner of living as other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties as other Australians (McClay, 1988, 195).
The origins of this often quoted definition of policy are obscure. McClay, Cawte, Tatz, Watts and Gallacher all attributed it to different sources. Perhaps Hasluck’s observation about the matter is pertinent:

Rapid travellers through social problems, such as journalists look for labels...to tell them where travellers have been and where they are going.... 'Assimilation' is one such label. It is the label to describe a destination but not a label to describe the policy by which that destination may be reached (Hasluck, 1988, 70).

In reality, the policy was applied in different ways and administered by varying personalities (and administrations) in quite diverse regional and cultural contexts. Within the Northern Territory, Hasluck set about creating the Welfare Branch and was directly involved with the appointment of its Director, Harry Giese. Giese and Hasluck held much in common; both were effective administrators and inspired loyalty amongst their staff but, most significantly, both believed in the moral validity of assimilation. The policy was pushed to the forefront in the Northern Territory more than any other state; it was quite understandable, therefore, that its critics should direct their most trenchant criticism towards Hasluck, Giese and senior members of the Welfare Branch. Rowley (1971) and Tatz (1964), in particular, have focused on the coercive nature of the policy declaring it to be authoritarian, ethnocentric and paternalistic, little different from the policy of protectionism which preceded it. Even Hasluck has conceded that "with hindsight...I now see
that my outlook on Aboriginal welfare was...influenced by the evangelism of mid and late Victorian England which placed emphasis on the individual" (Hasluck, 130).

More importantly, a thorough understanding of the policy of assimilation must be seen in the context of post Second World War reconstruction. It was an era characterised by a newfound optimism and unprecedented material expansion. Australia was no longer an isolated nation beyond threat. The national psyche had experienced vulnerability, the very real threat of invasion by a powerful Asian neighbour. Racial barriers assumed secondary importance as Australians undertook activities and endorsed social relationships that would have seemed inconceivable prior to the War. When the War ended, there had been extraordinary advances in technology, medicine, transport and communications. In post World War Two Australia, it seemed this mastery over the material domain would provide answers to all of society's "problems". It was this cultural over-confidence - some might say arrogance - that would characterise government policy towards Aborigines for the next twenty years for, although the policy of assimilation had pre-war origins, the "cultural over-confidence" of the post-war period certainly reinforced and legitimised its development.

Paul Hasluck was very much cast in the mould of this new found material optimism; a principled, authoritarian figure of "little-l" liberal persuasion, he exerted control over an
administration and policy that would succeed. A number of other factors assisted in the expansion of assimilation in the Northern Territory, however, none the least was the "energetic direction" of Harry Giese, the newly appointed Director of Welfare who replaced the less effective and more bureaucratic Frank Moy. Hasluck charged Giese with the responsibility of drafting legislation that was consistent with the new policy. The resultant Welfare Ordinance (1953) and Wards Employment Ordinance (1958) were controversial pieces of legislation which provoked considerable negative reaction from sections of the Northern Territory community. The main concern expressed by the opponents of the new ordinance, particularly the elected and some official members of the Legislative Council, was the seemingly arbitrary and ill-defined nature of the declaration procedure as well as the extent of the powers of the recently appointed Director of Welfare. The previous protectionist legislation had been enacted along genetic lines but the new legislation sought to define its Aboriginal recipients, "wards", in terms of need. Subsequently, an additional amendment was added "if a person was (or would be) qualified to vote under the electoral regulations of the Territory, that person could not be declared a ward" (Heatley, 1979, 141). Part-Aboriginals (defined in racial terms) were also outside the bounds of the legislation because most had the vote already. In effect, the legislation would only apply to tribal Aborigines in remote communities who remained controlled in a similar fashion as they had under the previous policy of protectionism even though the Chief Protector was
now the Director of the Welfare Branch and "guardian of all wards". It should also be noted that the implementation of both pieces of legislation was delayed for a considerable period of time while the necessary preparatory work was undertaken (especially the compilation of the Register of Wards). It was not until 1959 that both pieces of the controversial legislation were enacted, only to be over-turned by the Social Welfare Ordinance in 1964.

The relationship between the Methodist missionaries and, at first, the Native Affairs Branch and later the Welfare Branch was steadily redefined. Before the Second World War, the Methodists had been given a free hand to develop their missions unencumbered but "since 1946...a definite policy has been evolved and encouragement given to Missions to follow a more positive policy in relating to Aboriginal peoples" (AA, Fl 53/133). Now, the Administration was assisting remote mission communities like Galiwinku with direct financial subsidies, not insubstantial amounts of money that the secular authorities increasingly insisted should be accountable. Review reports were instituted and Galiwinku received its first in 1949. But the increased financial control was matched by increased financial insecurity for the missions. In September 1952, the Federal Treasury instructed the Department of Territories that the previous government assistance subsidy to missions would be reduced by £56,000; this would have resulted in a reduction of £11,000 on recurrent and capital expenditure for the Methodists to
administer their Arnhem Land missions. General Secretary Gribble of the Board of Missions was incensed. His angry response was directed to the Administrator on the 17th September, 1952:

We are aware of the difficulties facing the Native Affairs Department with the drift towards Darwin of large numbers of native people. We have tried and in a measure successfully, to occupy and interest the native people in their native areas, believing that it would not be in their best interests to go to move into Darwin. It would seem, if we are to curtail our work, that this problem will be greatly aggravated. It is relevant, I think to point out that at the time when the Government is making most commendable efforts to develop economically the Northern Territory, this step to reduce the welfare work (and our Mission is solely responsible for the welfare of large populations of natives along the coast of Arnhem Land) among the native populations of the Territory will not commend itself to those who are interested in the total progress and development of both people and country (AA, Fl 49/21).

The Director of the Native Affairs Branch, Frank Moy sent a memorandum to C R Lambert, the Secretary of the Department of Territories supporting Gribble. Lambert was quite forthright in his reply to Moy:

If the constructive policy which the administration is now attempting to apply to native welfare had been applied to native welfare long ago as it should have been, a level of expenditure would already have been established and we would not now be seeking to raise the level at a time when Budget restrictions were the order of the day. I would like, also, to point out that, whilst the limitations placed on the mission budgets as a result of Budget restrictions will have a deleterious effect on the implementation of policy, they cannot have the effect of restricting the control and direction by the Director of Native Affairs of the Missions activities in that field which is legally the
responsibility of the Director of Native Affairs. The necessity for the Director to observe and scrutinise what the Missions are doing has always been there by virtue of his responsibility for the care, welfare, education and advancement of the aborigines (AA, Fl 49/21).

Hasluck, having been Minister for only a year, soon became embroiled in the threatened budgetary cuts. He patiently explained, in a letter to the Treasurer, that the missions had agreed to pursue the government's policy of assimilation and now was

[c]ertainly not the time for a budget cut....[I]t was accordingly arranged with the Administrator and the Missions agreed to cooperate and ... would provide the services and training and work activities necessary to give proper effect to government policy....[T]he Missions would settle their programs of financial requirements for assistance by the Government in carrying them into effect (AA, Fl 49/21).

As the Welfare Branch expanded its influence and the Methodists became more dependent on its financial support, the Commonwealth made clear its desire to secularise the domain traditionally monopolised by the missions. For example, The Northern Territory News (19/3/53) announced that the increase in "money for native welfare" had risen from £98,000 in 1948/9 to an estimated £421,000 in 1953. In the same year, there were positions in the Native Affairs Branch for 64 employees. Three years later, the figure had increased to 128 and in 1964 the number had increased dramatically to 504. The "Commonwealth pays while the Missions call the tune", bemoaned one Treasury official in March 1953, arguing that most of the
financial weaknesses characterised by missions could be "overcome if fixed amounts were granted for approved services performed by the Commonwealth" (AA, Fl 49/21).

But the desire to regulate missionary activity excessively was not shared by all government officers. Gordon Sweeney was particularly impressed by the Methodists' "trading activities" and D McCarthy (an official within the NTA) was critical of the suggested implementation of a rigid system of accounting. "Nor does it seem desirable", he observed "that missions should be regimented since the Mission impulse must inevitably wither under such circumstances" (AA, Fl 53/133). The tension that existed between the Administration, the Methodists and the other missionary societies required a "safety valve" which would become the principal function of the bi-annual missions/Administrations Conferences. As Paul Hasluck said in his address to the first conference in December 1953, "we believe that it will be useful for them [the Missionaries] and for officers to talk together and get to know each other's minds, to discover each other's hopes and to profit from each other's knowledge" (AA, Fl 53/401). These conferences spanned twenty years; the last was held in 1973. They provided a fascinating barometer of church/state relations which started pleasantly and ended acrimoniously.

Unfortunately, documentation concerning these conferences in the Australian Archives is fragmented. It is known that over 400 motions were passed and Aborigines were not invited to the
early conferences but the views of "leading Aborigines" (AA, FL 53/401) were sought by questionnaire for the Conference held in 1955. The issues creating the most debate between the Methodist and government officers centred around institutionalisation. The Methodists were opposed to communal feeding and bathing facilities that were introduced by the Administration in settlements like Maningrida and Papunya. They felt that the secular authorities reduced the importance of the family as a nurturing and caring unit. Attitudes also differed towards the availability of alcohol on settlements, cultural mores and customs like polygamy and the degree to which religious observance should be practised on mission stations. Although the Methodists (and later United and Uniting Churches) as well as other missionary societies were given the opportunity to express themselves at these conferences, they were unequal partners in a policy determined by the Commonwealth.

The Administration was eager to stamp its control further over the Methodists by clearly suggesting that they should develop a new settlement between Goulburn Island and Milingimbi. As early as August 1953, McCafferty (the Acting Director of Native Affairs) had written to the Reverend Ellermore about "the greater number of natives from the Liverpool and Blyth River Districts and their nuisance value in Darwin" (AA, FL 54/86). McCafferty inquired about the possibility of MOM starting a mission to address the problem. Ellermore retorted that the matter had been discussed at the 1945 Synod and
rejected. He continued by suggesting that part of the problem lay in the very "liberal welcome" Aborigines received at the Darwin-based Bagot compound. The drift, he suggested, was more as a result of the free food and lack of control provided by the Administration rather than the lack of a mission. His suggestion of withdrawing rations was summarily dismissed by Gordon Sweeney who suggested that it was "impractical" to ration Arnhem Land Aborigines and continued:

The most practical way of preventing the drift of natives from the Liverpool and Blyth River areas to Darwin is to provide medical help, general supervision and reasonable amenities in their own districts and the opportunity to earn these amenities; to provide them with opportunities to develop the natural resources of their areas in useful work and to improve their standard of living and make progress towards assimilation (AA, Fl 54/86).

The matter remained unresolved for several years but the issue was rekindled by Giese in 1956. He was convinced that there was a need to establish further missions in the Blyth-Liverpool River, Caledon Bay and Bulman areas. An abortive attempt by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) to exchange their mission at Oenpelli for the Methodists' mission at Yirrkala further frustrated the Administration. The Methodists were adamant that their inability to attract suitable staff for their existing missions restricted their capacity to establish any further missions. Indeed, at a conference held between Giese, Reverend Gribble, Moy and Minister Hasluck on the 1st November 1960, the Methodists formally conceded in "the not too distant future" the
Administration would have to "assume control of education". The Church was experiencing severe problems attracting teachers and other staff to "these isolated locations" due to the lack of "suitable applicants for such positions" (AA, Fl 59/3353).

The issue seemed so irrational to Giese because the Methodists had a "chain of missions" in the immediate coastal Arnhem Land area but even his persuasive powers failed to move his strong-willed adversaries. Whilst Giese's world view was far too secular to be described as that of a missionary, he had developed a fairly defined vision for the future of "aboriginal advancement". In 1956, he, with support of his senior officers, decided the matter must be resolved. Consequently, Maningrida, first described as a "medical control and trading centre" for the Liverpool-Blyth River area, was settled in 1957, not as a mission but as a government-sponsored settlement. Giese reasoned that if the Methodists were able to run settlements - as they had done effectively at Galiwinku - so too could the Administration; as he told the author recently:

There was an element of competition between ourselves and certain missions....[W]e were setting standards like the main run maker [in a cricket match] not by creating a showpiece... [but rather] setting an example to some missions by encouraging them to seek government support (Giese interview, 1991).

The hallmark of the policy of assimilation was to have been
its gradual application. It was to have been applied to the respective communities which were viewed as integrated entities. For instance, a timber mill would function not to export timber to Darwin but rather to provide employment and training to Aboriginal people as well as timber for the construction of dwellings within the community and immediate environs. A very similar approach had been applied by the Methodists but, in Hasluck's view, the Missionaries were often "wedded to their job". The Missionaries had become victims of inertia; only the Administration could provide the necessary leadership to change the situation. Consequently, Hasluck exhorted his superintendents not to "show me the improvements in the community, show me the improvements in the people"6 (NTRS, 52-53 7484). The Administration Welfare Branch reports during this period, however, are characterised by a plethora of reports about the material improvements on settlements, at the expense of fostering the less obvious but equally important equality of social relationships between Aborigines and Europeans.

Absorption or assimilation was not a static policy. It was pro-active, pervasive and based on the domination of one culture over another. It was applied with great energy in Maningrida where institutionalised control was centralised and manifested itself in concrete community realities. Typical of these agencies of assimilation were the school, the health clinic, the government store and the communal kitchen. Unlike Galiwinku, where the school and the health clinic evolved
gradually and in the absence of direct government intervention, Maningrida witnessed their development in the comparatively short time frame of three years. Successful outcomes were necessary to justify the new policy; unlike social relationships, material "advancement" could be measured. These agencies were imposed, without negotiation or consultation, on a population expected to conform without question. For example, school attendance was compulsory and Aboriginal students were taught English only. The concept of a bi-lingual teaching program was inconsistent with the policy of assimilation. All of the teachers were European and often unprepared for the complexities of living in a remote Aboriginal community; consequently, the turnover of staff was high. The communal kitchen further reinforced institutionalisation and welfare dependency because it treated Aborigines as subjects unable to prepare their meals. Europeans and Aborigines lived in a different class of dwellings, dressed differently, ate in different ways and places and were paid different rates of pay for the same work. These differences increased the resentment many Aboriginal people harboured towards Europeans and fuelled elements of conflict already existent in Maningrida (and to a far lesser degree, Galiwinku).

The new policy was, however, under threat from a number of directions. In 1962 changes in the Electoral Act gave Aborigines the right to vote in federal elections. In reality, most did not exercise their right to vote but this
new legislation virtually destroyed the legislative legitimacy upon which the Welfare Ordinance (1953), the central plank of the assimilation policy, was founded. Consequently, the legislation was redrafted to become the Social Welfare Ordinance (1964). It represented a "softening of policy" with the removal of the imposed element. Aborigines no longer would conform to a policy; now, they might wish to do so. It was during this period that Hasluck was moved from his ministerial role and the days of Giese as director of the Social Welfare Division (from 1968 to 1973) were limited. Some of the responsibility for this outcome lay with Tatz's effective criticism of the Northern Territory Administration's Welfare Branch, what he perceived to be l'ancien régime. Nonetheless, the Administration adjusted to the shift in policy with an even greater emphasis on development (which has been described as the "development push" in chapter 4). The Administration actively pursued the development of progress associations, town councils and housing associations. Accompanying the shift in policy was the additional expectation that the community's Superintendent would be surrounded by "his" councillors, like students in a socratic model, as he imparted knowledge both a leader and a teacher. This style of leadership was to be based around the model of primis inter pares rather than, as before, an often non-enlightened Machiavellian prince. Training was characteristic of this period, not only for Aboriginal councillors at specially convened conferences in Darwin but also for other community workers. It was in this context that the Training
Allowance Scheme was first introduced within remote communities (1969). The scheme provided a guaranteed minimum wage to Aboriginal people whilst they undertook various types of training. Although these wages were below the minimum industrial awards of the period, they represented a transitory stage to wage parity with Europeans engaged in identical jobs. Training allowances were removed gradually from remote communities after 1973 and replaced by equal wages.

This shift to a more liberalised policy of assimilation in the administration of Aboriginal affairs between 1964-73 must be viewed in a broader societal milieu. Attitudes towards the stereotyped images of Aboriginal people by "average" Australians were changing. This shift in community attitudes was punctuated by critical incidents like the Bark Petition presented to federal parliament by Aboriginal people representing some of the clans of Yirrkala (1963) in protest over the mining on Gove Peninsula and the strike by Aboriginal pastoral workers at Wave Hill (August, 1966). The overwhelming success of the 1967 federal referendum, the "tent embassy" on the lawns of Parliament House in Canberra and the radicalising impact of the protests that centred around the Vietnam War; all combined to politicise community attitudes towards Aborigines.

These changes in societal attitudes concerning indigenous Australians were reflected by the Liberal/Country Party governments of Harold Holt (1966-7), John Gorton (1967-70) and
William McMahon (1970-2). The policy of assimilation was gradually modified to one of integration. The new policy was characterised by a recognition of increased Aboriginal involvement in decision-making and rudimentary moves towards land rights, a policy paradoxically initiated by a conservative rather than a reformist government. The change in perspective was clearly stated by Prime Minister McMahon in April 1971 at the Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers where he observed, "They [Aborigines] should be encouraged and assisted to preserve their culture - their languages, traditions and rights so that these can become living elements in the diverse culture of Australian Society" (NTRS, 52-3 7484) or, even more cogently, it was stated in an official statement on Commonwealth policy on 26th January 1972 when he stated, "The Government recognises the rights of individual Aborigines to effective choice about the degree to which and the pace at which they came to identify themselves with Australian Society" (52-53 7484).

One significant outcome of the 1967 federal referendum was that the federal authorities were constitutionally empowered to assume far greater responsibility in administering Aboriginal affairs throughout Australia, thus by-passing what had been constitutionally a state responsibility. Administrative changes were soon to follow; the formation of the "Council of Three", the Office of Aboriginal Affairs and the elevation of particular ministerial advisers undermined the power of the Social Welfare Division and its Director.
Even the remarkably consistent statements endorsing the policy of assimilation found in the introduction of every Welfare Branch Annual Report since 1957 were showing signs of adapting to the policy shift. The following extract is indicative:

The policy of the Commonwealth Government with respect to Aborigines in the Northern Territory is that, with all other Australians, they should have equality of opportunity and full enjoyment of the same rights and privileges, and accept the same responsibilities. To achieve the policy aims, Aborigines are encouraged and provided with opportunities to understand and participate fully in the cultural pursuits and social arrangements of the community generally. At the same time they are encouraged to retain their traditions and pride in their Aboriginal ancestry [emphasis mine] (Social Welfare Division Annual Report, 1970, T1, 8).

Still, for all of the government's intention to flag change, little occurred. In many respects, it was similar to Hasluck's appraisal for the early stages of the development of the policy of assimilation; many statements were made but little change eventuated. It was a policy which evolved slowly over the following five years with the leadership of the Liberal/Country Party treading cautiously along the road to reform. This conservative approach came to an abrupt end in December 1972 when the Whitlam government assumed office. The Labor Party's policy of sweeping social reform, heralded by the electoral rallying call of "It's time", reached many aspects of Australian society and Aboriginal affairs was no exception. Within six weeks of election, Whitlam had disbanded the Social Welfare Division (formally the Welfare Branch before 1968) and replaced it with the newly formed
Department of Aboriginal Affairs. As will be seen in later chapters, even comparatively isolated communities like Maningrida and, to a lesser extent Galiwinku were severely disrupted by these developments, albeit not so much by their ideological content but by their manner of application.

The new policy which was called self-determination would be, in the view of Whitlam and his advisers, a truly liberating one. Speeches made by him during this period show a man of considerable moral rectitude intent to bring in the new and quickly dispense with the "tyranny of the past". His arguments were strong, principled and, at times, compelling. When he spoke to Aboriginal people in Maningrida soon after his election, his main theme was forcefully stated, "It's your country now, you do with it what you wish" (Bond interview, 1991). They believed him, he was after all the bunggawa and they set about acting on his advice. Neither Whitlam nor Aboriginal people were fully aware of the entrenched power of the bureaucracy administering Aboriginal affairs. As Heatley (1979) has pointed out there were some "casualties" in the administrative reshuffle between integration and self-determination (principally Harry Giese). Some officers with the old Northern Territory Administration, moreover, were unable to cope with the mental adjustments required in moving between the old and new policy. Some resigned, some moved sideways into other departments but many stayed and continued to perpetuate the values of the preceding administration.
The new Department of Aboriginal Affairs received an influx of finance and personnel at a rate that dwarfed the early stages of assimilation. The Woodward Commission was inaugurated and three years later would lay the basis for the Northern Territory Land Rights Act (1976) which provided legislative recognition of traditional land ownership, formed land councils, land trusts and perpetuated the permit system. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs thoroughly endorsed the concept of the decentralisation of communities and therefore sanctioned the official development of the Outstation movement. They strongly disapproved of the institutionalised nature of settlements which had characterised the period of assimilation. Superintendents were replaced by community advisers keen to elicit the "felt needs" of their clients in a "non-directional" manner. The principal outcome of the new policy was to be the increased involvement of Aborigines over the decisions that affected their lives. Aboriginal people in both Maningrida and Galiwinku would soon realise, however, that there was a considerable gap between the beliefs of those that provided the political impetus to policy and those concerned with its practical application. Although the Yolngu of Galiwinku would be less harshly traumatised by these events, it would require considerable skill on the part of the cross-cultural intermediaries of Maningrida not to be consumed by the factional infighting generated by this gap.

The Methodists foresaw the changes as early as their Committee of Inquiry (1965). Increasingly, a number of fundamental
contradictions had developed between their original "mission" and the Administration's emphasis on the material expansion of settlements. Whilst they saw some advantages in this expansion, particularly in the areas of health, education and the community's physical infrastructure, they felt that it had severely damaged the element of reciprocity that had characterised Aboriginal and mission relationships prior to assimilation. They were quite critical of their failure in certain areas; for example, until 1965 they had been unable to attract any Aboriginal people to the Methodist Ministry.

On a wider front, changes were also occurring in the various Churches throughout Australia. The missionary role of the Methodists was now being tempered by an increased emphasis on urban involvement and the upgrading of parishes. They were subsumed into the United Church (1972) and three years later this was renamed the Uniting Church (1975). The infusion of differing protestant traditions, consistent with the societal ferment of the day, had a large bearing on the progressively liberalationalist position of the Church and would, nine years after the original Committee of Inquiry, generate a significant document, the Free to Decide Report (1974). The position of the United Church in 1973 was that the Aboriginal people in the communities they administered should decide their own futures. A considerable amount of economic and political power had already been transferred by the Church to Aboriginal people in Galiwinku since 1965. The Yolngu responded by retaining aspects of church involvement reduced
to less threatening and amorphous forms in the training and economic spheres. The political and decision-making domains moved into the hands of a younger, more articulate and independent group of Yolngu who had highly developed cross-cultural skills.

The reforming zeal of the Whitlam government, as manifested in the policy of self-determination, came to an abrupt end in 1975. Although the subsequent Fraser coalition made no substantial attempt to alter the policy over the next three years, it tended to favour its dilution to the more innocuous form of self-management. Additionally, there was an increased tendency for the federal Aboriginal affairs bureaucracy to intervene in the operation of community councils directly (for example, the sacking of Maningrida Council in 1977) and a desire to tighten-up and reduce budgetary outlays to Aboriginal organisations and communities. For instance, Galiwinku community was threatened with funding cuts in July 1975 as part of the Coalition's moves towards austerity in funding Aboriginal affairs. After 1975, arguably, political changes federally were overshadowed by the greater influence of Northern Territory "mainstream" politics in remote Territory Aboriginal communities. The preceding observation was especially valid in the lead-up to the 1977 NT elections and the impact of this development has been dealt with, at greater length, throughout chapter 6.

Comparatively rapid changes in the policies underpinning the
administration of Aboriginal affairs have occurred on a political level throughout the latter part of this century. However, one of the main themes in this dissertation is the manner and speed these policies were implemented in two remote Aboriginal communities by the bureaucracies empowered to do so. Although a clear change of policy was flagged by government, it was met by a conservative response by the administrators. As each administrative epoch flows into the next there was a tendency for those involved to replicate themselves and their policies. As Jim Downing commended wryly at the 41st ANZAAS conference:

There is a new philosophy. Will these changes effectively benefit the people or will they simply be further administered though with a bit more understanding and a few more Aborigines in evidence. Time alone will tell....[S]ome genuine and encouraging efforts are being made within the Northern Territory Service. However, the Government has a large public service sector involved. These are not notorious for working themselves out of a job or an empire. It is to be hoped that the present promising signs indicate a true change of heart, and not merely of faces, letterheads and titles (NTRS, 52/3 7484).

Scholarly works have arrived at similar conclusions. Tatz (1964), Rowley (1971) and more recently McClay (1988) have all observed the close parallels between a particular policy and its administration with that which preceded it. Other critics, like Martin Mowbray, argue that assimilation is still characteristic of contemporary Aboriginal affairs in the form of "mainstreaming". Tatz, in the recent lecture Aborigines: A Return to Pessimism (1989), acknowledged, rather tragically,
that much of the personal commitment he directed towards changing the policy of assimilation had produced little in the way of constructive results. On the opposite end of the political spectrum, Hasluck (1988) argued that self-determination had simply failed to achieve its stated aims. For most Aboriginal people living in Maningrida and Galiwinku, many of the superficial aspects of the new policy were understood but most of them were unaware of the liberationist values underlying it because they were unconscious, in large part, of their capacity to act as free agents.

In his own inimical manner, that consummate political tactician, John Hunter, had perceived the crux of the problem of translating political change through an inherently conservative bureaucracy. Confiding to Dan Gillespie after Maningrida Council had taken the unprecedented step of occupying the office of the Director of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in Darwin and demanding and succeeding in having Hunter returned to Maningrida, he said that "he thought the dust had gone up and that it had fallen back ultimately into the same place" (Gillespie, 1982, 7).
ENDNOTES

1. This quotation, forming part of the Uniting Church Archives, was hand-written and attributed to John Burton in an article published in Missionary Review (November, 1934).

2. MOM was administered by a Board of Directors based in Sydney. The organisation's General-Secretary was Reverend Gribble who would play a pivotal role in determining the Church's relationship with the Commonwealth throughout most of the period covered by this dissertation. The Methodist's also maintained a Northern Synod answerable to the Board of Directors but it retained considerable autonomy. Reverend Ellermore and later Reverend Symons were secretaries of the Northern Synod and would play important roles in the post 1953 relationship between the Methodists and the NTA.

3. The Northern Territory had been "administered" by New South Wales until 1863 and by South Australia until 1911. An excellent general account of this period and the principal reasons underlying South Australia relinquishing its control to the Commonwealth is found in Powell (1982).

4. A good account of the in-fighting between missionaries in the Kimberley may be found in Durak (1969).

5. See Review Reports (1949-53) in AA, Fl 54/80. In 1949 government grants amounted to £2835.0.0 of the mission's budget of £4432.2.2 for Galiwinku. They maintained this level of subsidy at approximately 60% of their total budget throughout the following four years. The remainder of their budgets consisted of revenue generated within the community and "top up" finance from the Sydney based Board of Directors.


7. Quoted from Dr. H C Coombs, Cohen Memorial Lecture, 18th October 1972.
Chapter 3

Protected but not dependent - Bapa Shepherdson, the patrol officers and their "trusty boys".

In Maningrida and Galiwinku, the period between 1939 and 1957 was characterised by varying forms of interaction between dominant individuals from two distinct cultures which some have chosen to call the "blackfella" and the "whitefella". It must be stressed that this dichotomy should be applied with great caution. While the cultures are sufficiently disparate to be described as distinct, each contained varying cultural forms, in reality, it would be more correct to refer to Aboriginal cultures and European cultures. For the Yolngu of Galiwinku, the interaction between dominant individuals assumed a more permanent form, the product of functional interdependence between senior Methodist missionary staff (particularly Shepherdson) and a select group Yolngu go-betweens. The situation, with reference to cross-cultural contact for Aboriginal people in the Liverpool and Blyth Rivers was different. Maningrida was yet to be established as a permanent government settlement, consequently Aboriginal contact with Europeans was more fleeting. Before the Administration was able to institutionalise its power fully, these individuals interacted to lay the basis for future power relationships in both communities.

In 1939, Gordon Sweeney undertook an extensive patrol of the
Liverpool and Tomkinson Rivers. Employed by the Department of Native Affairs (the forerunner of the Welfare Branch), he found the tribal groups of this region to be largely intact and unaffected by European culture apart from "poaching crocodile hunters entering the Liverpool and Blyth Rivers and RAAF units during the war salvaging planes brought down on the extensive plains of these Rivers" (AA, Fl 55/394). For many Aboriginal people, their first glimpses of a European person were patrol officers like Gordon Sweeney or later Sid Kyle-Little and assistant patrol officer Jack Doolan whose patrols were invariably mounted with the aid of patrol assistants. These were usually Aboriginal men from the patrol area who acted as guides and interpreters. Their presence often meant not only the success of the patrol but the very life of the patrol officer.

Each patrol officer was far from base, isolated, alone and reliant largely on their own initiative; they were necessarily self-contained individuals but characterised by differences in personality. For example, Sweeney was fairly reserved and unobtrusive, perhaps a product of his dual role of Methodist missionary and patrol officer. His reports reflect a compassionate man, strong and forthright but hardly bombastic. On the other hand, patrol officer Kyle-Little was quite the opposite. He has left us with a remarkable account of his patrols into Arnhem Land, between 1946 and 1949, in the autobiographical work, Whispering Wind. Marlebar, as he liked to describe himself, was the name given to Kyle-Little by the
Aboriginal ceremonial leader Mahrdei. Meaning "whispering wind", it represented a subtle triumph of humour by Mahrdei over Kyle-Little for there was nothing quiet or "whispering" about him; rather, he was loud, self-opinionated and egocentric. The son of a Queensland policeman and fresh from military service in World War Two, he claimed to have acquired "intimate" knowledge of Aboriginal culture gained at his uncle's property at Humpty Doo (near Darwin). His first patrol saw him in Milingimbi quelling a "tribal riot". Barely having arrived in the community, Kyle-Little became involved in characteristic manner. Hastening to the physical defence of the mission's Superintendent, Arthur Ellermore, he jumped forward and informed the conflicting parties that there would be "no rough play". His remarkable self confidence, perhaps assisted by some degree of poetic licence, has been captured fully in the following quotation:

'If you want a fight, you can have a fight', I said. 'But this won't be a one sided fight. I have a new rifle,' and I patted the .303 that had arrived for me on the Kuru. 'You have spears and I have a good rifle. If you want to fight without spears, I'm prepared for that, too'. Deliberately trying to insult, I turned to one boy and asked, 'You like to fight, huh?'

He made no reply.

'You no like to fight, huh? You speak like men when you have a handful of spears. You act like lubras without them.'

There was a growl at this. But I went on: 'You got away with a lot of trouble in the past. It's going to stop now. It's my job to stop it. It's up to you to make your choice. Fight - then fight me, too' (Kyle-Little, 1957, 44-45).
A solitary man against the threatening "natives" and an equally hostile environment, Kyle-Little portrayed himself as indomitable and superior to his misguided foes. Soon to be accompanied by his "trusty boys", the Gunavidji patrol assistants Oondabund and Narlebar, and aided with his supply of trade tobacco as well as his impressive physical size, no one object or person in the Liverpool River District seemed insurmountable. No one, that was, until he met Mahrdei. From the onset of their meeting, Kyle-Little found his adversary "disturbing" and seemingly radiating "malice and evil". Mahrdei was treated with considerable respect by Oondabund and Narlebar who confided to Kyle-Little, "Him properly number one medicine man, Boss" (Kyle-Little, 95).

Mahrdei made it quite clear to Kyle-Little that he had no time for missionaries or government men nor the presence of any Balanda on his land. When Kyle-Little protested that it was his land too, Mahrdei only sneered at him. Mahrdei was not impressed by Kyle-Little. On a later patrol, the two adversaries met again and, on this occasion, Mahrdei was conducting an important ceremony in the upper reaches of the Liverpool River; the ceremony was described by Kyle-Little as the Crocodile Corroboree. Camped nearby the ceremony, Kyle-Little was woken late at night by "hysterical shrills" and ventured to the outskirts of the ceremony which was reaching a climax. Shimmering with sweat and gesticulating like a "demented soul", Mahrdei exhorted his assembly to follow him. They rushed to a lagoon on the periphery of the ceremonia
ground; there, dozens of large crocodiles lay on its banks amid the putrid remains of wallaby carcasses. Mahrdei stepped into the water and Kyle-Little was aghast. The "evil old man" talked to the crocodiles as they swam around him, he then disappeared fully for a minute. Kyle-Little has provided a riveting account of the event:

The deep brown billabong parted and Mahrdei came from the water. He literally burst out. He gripped the bank and sprang forward and to his feet. Ochre streamed in white rivulets down his body. His eyes were yellow and he gulped down the fresh air like a runner at the end of a mile race.

He filled his lungs and raised his arms in triumph. The tribesmen caught his cry and amplified it into a bellow of joy. They shook their spears in the air. They stamped, they jumped, they danced, they yelled. It was a magnificent, unforgettable scene; it was victory, not war; jubilation, not hate or anger.

When they were nearly spent, Mahrdei turned to me. He pointed to the water from which he had just come and spoke. I caught the words 'yindy bahru'(big crocodile) and 'balander'[sic].

But before I could properly understand his question, Oondabund had answered, 'The balander [sic] does not swim with crocodiles.'

Mahrdei threw back his head and laughed. He shouted his question and the answer to the tribesmen. 'The balander [sic] does not swim with crocodiles'.

They laughed. How they laughed. Piccaninnies rolled in the dirt and the lubras howled and men along the banks and sitting in the forks of the trees rocked and roared at the greatest joke ever heard in the upper reaches of the Liverpool River (Kyle-Little, 95-96).

Kyle-Little's rifle and trade tobacco were no match for Mahrdei's entry and powerful exit from the crocodile pool. Mahrdei's rhetorical question was meant to hold the material
domain in check. Kyle-Little's importance as a provider and perhaps a harbinger of change was recognised but his power to control everything was placed in question. In doing so, Mahrdei's prestige as "boss" of the ceremony was retained and the only thing that really suffered was Kyle-Little's massive ego.

In 1949, several years after his humiliating encounter with Mahrdei, Kyle-Little undertook the last of his Arnhem Land patrols. Accompanied by the recently appointed assistant patrol officer Jack Doolan, they ventured from Darwin in a dilapidated twenty-one foot cutter; both were lucky to arrive at Gabulgu (Entrance Island) on the mouth of the Liverpool River, alive. A blocked bilge pump, high seas and lack of nautical experience all conspired to make a most arduous voyage. Kyle-Little knew the location of a fresh water spring, five kilometres down the Liverpool River. The Gunavidji informed him this was "the place of the young girl dreaming" which they called Maningrida. Kyle-Little had managed to gain Department of Native Affairs support for the creation of a trading post. Admittedly, the support was of the most marginal variety, comprising of the cutter which had already almost killed them, several thousand rounds of ammunition for his rifle and assorted trade goods.

The plan was to develop a trade centre where items of value like crocodile skins, turtle shells, bêche-de-mer and other commodities would be collected by Aboriginal people in return...
for trade goods. It was reasoned that this system of barter would lay the foundation for "a spirit of enterprise" and any profit made would be reinvested in the scheme. The establishment of the trading post was a significant event. This strategy was quite distinct from the institutionalised settlement life soon to follow. It allowed some degree of equality, in terms of economic and social relationships between Europeans and Aborigines but, ultimately, the strategy's intention was assimilation. As Gordon Sweeney (then District Superintendent) noted in a letter to the Director of Native Affairs in October, 1952: "The system of trading depots assists progress towards assimilation on sound lines, based on stable social and family life which is gradually being adapted to the basic requirements of our Australian way of life" (AA, Fl 54/80). The patrol officers were no longer the "protectors" but initiators of change, although this was very much change on their own terms without an institutionalised structure to control them. The entire concept was based on the success of a reciprocal arrangement between the patrol officers and Aborigines in the Liverpool River area and environs. Similar trading posts had been developed in Central Australia where dingo scalps formed the medium of exchange and the success of the trading posts involving the Yolngu and the Methodists was well known to the Department of Native Affairs.

Much to Marlebar's surprise, a larger number of Aboriginal people than he had expected responded. The Gunavidji were not
particularly pleased because substantial numbers of Blyth River people (their traditional foes) were congregating in large numbers on their estates. Still Oondabund and Narlebar spoke in defence of "their man" and their Gunavidji countrymen suppressed their anger but remained stubborn and largely uncooperative. This element of "ownership", as Oondabund and Narlebar demonstrated, was one of the by-products of the bonding that occurred between some Aboriginal go-betweens and various European authority figures throughout the history of Maningrida and Galiwinku.

There was a considerable amount of historical evidence to support the Gunavidji reaction towards the arrival of both indigenous and European "aliens". They had never attempted to pursue a cooperative, adaptive strategy towards other cultures (for example, the Macassans) unlike the Yolngu at Galiwinku. John Godowa quoted in Gabalgu Jurra (undated September, 1977) referred to one incident in which the Gunavidji slaughtered two Macassan boys in retaliation of the murder of some "countrymen" the previous year. In addition, three more were killed at about the same time in the area now termed the "bottom camp".

According to D., W........, a formidable Gunavidji cross-cultural intermediary, now deceased, the old man D........(a deceased senior Gunavidji elder) and his father had refused to trade with the Macassans and "they started a battle of fierce fighting and this same old man (D........), alongside his father
fought very strongly for their land until they had defeated the intruders" (Gabalgu Jurra, undated September, 1977). To wound Gunavidji sensitivity further, the vacuum left when the Macassans were barred entry into Arnhem Land (1906) was filled by the Japanese pearling fleets. One of their main haunts was Entrance Island where up to ten could be seen at any one time, and, unlike the Macassans, the Japanese were not interested in developing reciprocal work relationships with the local Aboriginal groups. They were "self-contained work units" and appear to have been interested in Aborigines only in so far as they could acquire Aboriginal women for their sexual gratification. The success of their pursuit could be gauged by the increased levels of leprosy and sexually transmitted diseases in the region as well as a number of Aboriginal families showing signs of mixed Aboriginal and Japanese ancestry.

Although the Gunavidji remained stubborn and resolute, the trading post proved to be successful over the next six months but, owing to scarcity of staff within the Department of Native Affairs, Kyle-Little and Doolan were transferred to other regions. It is difficult to evaluate the success of the venture. Certainly, in material terms, it produced little in the way of product destined to be exported to Darwin. Some turtle shell and crocodile skins were exported but the records are incomplete and fragmentary. Perhaps, the most significant feature of the trading post was to expose a large number of Aboriginal people to an early assimilationist economic
activity which treated them as participants in a reciprocal arrangement and not as inmates in an institution. As Sweeney observed in a report in 1955, "it was unfortunate that owing to shortage of staff and urgent requirements in other parts of the Territory that the Branch was unable to follow up Mr. Kyle-Little's work" (AA, Fl 55/394). The abandoning of the trading post saw Aborigines, not associated with the Gunavidji estates, return to their homelands, much to the collective sigh of relief of the Gunavidji who, eight years later, would be confronted by an administration far more resolved (and materially capable) of pursuing a more "directed" approach to the policy of assimilation.

As Kyle-Little and Doolan departed the trading post at Maningrida and Oondabund and Narlebar rested their skills as embryonic cross-cultural intermediaries, the Reverend Shepherdson was contemplating the construction of more houses from locally milled timber for the small but steadily growing Methodist mission at Galiwinku. Bapa Shepherdson became a living legend but from the onset he spurned notoriety. Shepherdson had many other names such as "Sheppy the builder" but most of those who knew him referred to him affectionately as "Sheppy". He was universally respected by all those who come in contact with him and was awarded an MBE in 1958. Throughout this research, there are neither acrimonious, slanderous or even negative comments made either by him or about him. Shepherdson and his wife spent fifty years in Arnhem Land; twenty-five of them were at Galiwinku. He
"hastened slowly", to use a favourite expression of his, believing fervently that leadership was best performed by example.

To understand Shepherson's leadership qualities and the comparatively integrated state of cross-cultural politics which evolved in Galiwinku, it will be necessary to regress seven years and return to Milingimbi (the base mission for the MOM missions). In 1942, Shepherdson managed the community's timber mill, a job he had performed for many years and for which he was eminently qualified owing to his family involvement's in milling timber in South Australia since 1849. He had developed a strong rapport with his Yolngu mill workers among whom were Badanga and Burrumarra. The part-Macassan Willi Walalipa, originally occupying the role of the Shepherdsons' "house boy" but then the skipper of the mission barge (the Larrapan), was another close friend of the Shepherdsons. Badanga, Walalipa (spelt also Walipa and Wolili) and Burrumarra were important custodians of traditional Yolngu law and ceremonies as well as converts, at that stage and in varying degrees, to Christianity. All three would play pivotal roles in Galiwinku's future development.

Archival records from that period indicated that the cypress pine resource around Milingimbi was dwindling and there was a consequent need to relocate the mill but it was mainly the bombing of Milingimbi by the Japanese in 1942 that forced the mill's relocation. The Methodist missionaries were obviously
concerned about the safety of their "flock" but the notion of losing valuable machinery, due to Japanese air raids, was not acceptable to them. What was not generally recorded and which was undoubtedly an additional factor underlying the relocation (and subsequent continuation) of Galiwinku mission was that a considerable amount of tension existed between Milingimbi's manager (Reverend Ellermore) and Shepherdson as mill manager. When Shepherdson and his wife arrived by mission barge at Galiwinku late in 1942, they were surrounded by a small, select group of Aborigines who had consciously decided to accompany them. All the Yolngu had traditional tribal associations with either Galiwinku (and adjacent localities) or the coastal country (and partly inland) between Milingimbi and the new settlement. In later reminiscences, Shepherdson made it clear that even though the original intention was for their stay to only be temporary, as far as he (and the Yolngu who accompanied him) were concerned, they were there to stay.

In 1942 Milingimbi then became an operational base for the R.A.A.F. and as we thought the machinery may be damaged by bombing, we applied to the Board for permission to move to Elcho Island which was granted with the condition that it be reviewed after the war, but by then we had dug in, and it was never mentioned again (NTRS. 41 A7244-16.16).

On his own "patch", surrounded by a small, integrated Aboriginal population and in an infinitely more physically comfortable environment, Shepherdson commenced to "hasten slowly". With very limited resources, especially between
1942-6, he used his not inconsiderable skills of invention and engineering to overcome a host of physical handicaps that would have proved insurmountable to lesser mortals. There are numerous records concerning his innovative approach to engineering. One related to the problem of sand incursion in the community's water bore. Shepherdson overcame the problem with the use of water pipe and a pressurised water jet. Attached to the side of the water drill's casing, the device made it possible to top the bore effectively and secure Galiwinku's precarious underground water supply.

Shepherdson's response to the mission's physical isolation from the base mission located at Milingimbi was solved by the acquisition of his own aeroplane and teaching himself to fly it. His first was purchased from America in kit form. He assembled it without any formal training and, with two and a half hours of flying instruction, managed to get it airborne, only to crash it beyond repair soon afterwards. He persevered with his obsession for flying eventually to own a Miles Hawk, a war surplus Tiger Moth, an Auster and finally a Cessna. A significant consequence of Shepherson's eventual mastery of the airspace around north-east Arnhem Land was his pioneering of satellite communities or outstations long before they developed in other parts of the Northern Territory (see chapter 5).

By 1953, Galiwinku was not only an established mission supporting several hundred Yolngu, it also possessed an
expanding social and physical infrastructure which gradually gained the attention of the recently formed Welfare Branch. Although Galiwinku was more remote than the Liverpool and Blyth River region, it was exposed increasingly to external influences making the missionaries' task of "protection" difficult. The winds of change manifested themselves in various ways, mining activity about the Wessel Islands and later the Gove Peninsula, more frequent visits from government officers and the presence of greater numbers of crocodile shooters and professional fishermen. Furthermore, some Yolngu became more cosmopolitan in outlook (although it should be noted that they had been to Macassar and back for generations before) venturing as far afield as Darwin in order to determine whether there was any validity in the notion that European culture existed outside the narrow confines of mission life. The social consequences of this activity were felt within the community in both a negative and positive manner. In Clem Gullick's view (a Methodist missionary based at Galiwinku), one of the more negative aspects of this change was reflected in an incident in 1959 when Shepherdson was assaulted by "an angry Aboriginal man" (Gullick interview, 1991). The unruffable Shepherdson continued as usual but the event, according to Gullick, "left a sour taste in our mouths". This isolated incident was atypical, for the main Yolngu response to social change was positive and adaptive in nature, as demonstrated by the Elcho Island Adjustment Movement (1957).
The Movement manifested itself in the form of a memorial consisting of objects (ranga) of great ceremonial significance. Over several months, they were constructed secretly and rapidly deployed in the centre of the settlement before the missionaries and the startled eyes of Yolngu women. Thus presented, the Memorial became a focus and rallying point for those Yolngu intent upon redefining their relationship with their traditional peers and Europeans. It was a sophisticated political statement steeped in symbolism, not a cargo cult, for its leaders possessed no extra supernatural power other than that "deriving from traditional sources". The leaders were, not surprisingly, Badanga, Willi Walalipa and Burrumarra who were all close friends of Shepherdson and converts to Christianity. Inscriptions on the ranga praised Shepherson and Badanga's close relationship with him and spoke of the need for all Yolngu to unite under the collective banner of the leaders, a heady ambition given the decentralised nature of Yolngu politics. Badanga's statement on one of the ranga was particularly significant:

I believe in both ways - our own and the Christian. If we had taken both ways and thought of them separately we would become confused. We believe in the old law and we want it: and we believe in the Bible too. So we have selected the good laws from both and put them together (Berndt, 1962, 59).

The response of the Movement's leaders to the missionary presence was very pragmatic. Not content to accept a position of inferiority, "they wanted a greater measure of control over
their affairs, politically and religiously, and especially in relation to education and employment" (Berndt, 84). By exposing their most sacred ceremonial objects publicly, the Movement's leaders believed the missionaries (and other Europeans) would reciprocate in kind by providing greater access to the material domain. Berndt has also stressed the importance of previous alien contact to the Movement explaining the resilience and adaptable nature of the Yolngu in the presence of intensive European contact. But the Movement has been interpreted in various ways by others. The missionaries' saw it, in large, as an affirmation of Christianity and a rejection of traditional values by their "wayward" flock. Morphy (1983), in a more recent analysis, extended Berndt's original thesis by linking the exposed items to the Yolngu belief in the fundamental importance of "country".

Badanga, Burrumarra and Walalipa were undoubtedly emissaries of change, not so much interested in their own elevation as "big men" but by stating the importance of their mala to cope with social change. Belonging to the Yirritja moiety (clan affiliation amongst the Yolngu in Arnhem Land was based on the duality of Yirritja and Dhuwa), they were traditionally associated with finding a place for the new or unexplained. They were asserting the power of their own mala through their importance as political power-brokers in Galiwinku cross-cultural politics. They appeared to have adjusted successfully not only to the physical presence of the
Methodist missionaries and their religion but also their technology. Asked to pose for a photograph for Berndt, Walalipa was seated with a typewriter and Burrumarra was dressed in a pressurised diving suit. Burrumarra and Walalipa may have been unable to use either object but they knew their importance as symbols. It was quite predictable that many of the more conservative Dhuwa clans around Yirrkala were aghast at the antics of their Galiwinku counterparts. Nevertheless, one cannot help but pose the question, if the Movement had not employed traditional symbols so blatantly, would the Bark Petition (1963) have ever been sent to federal parliament? Their close association with the missionaries in general and Shepherdson in particular would present problems for them later - with the exception of Badanga who died in 1960 - and after the community were "free to decide" but, during the "decade of adjustment", they remained the Superintendent's principal advisers and cross-cultural intermediaries.

While the "leading" Yolngu of Galiwinku showed all of the signs of adapting a successful strategy to avoid the worst consequences of social change, the Welfare Branch were becoming increasingly concerned about the "drift of Aboriginals" to Darwin. As Gordon Sweeney observed:

Since 1949 there has been an increasing drift of Aboriginals into Darwin. From the preliminary census made in Darwin and environs early in 1955 there were approximately 200 natives from Northern Arnhem Land in Darwin. Of these 90 came from the Blyth River Area, 25 came from the Liverpool River Area and 80 came from the Milingimbi Mission
Owing to his intimate knowledge of the area and his close contacts with the Methodist missionaries, Sweeney had been instructed to conduct a population census in the area "owing to the serious drift from these areas and the census requirements in connection with the Register of Wards" (AA, Fl 55/394). Previous mention has been made of the Welfare Ordinance (1953) and the Wards Employment Ordinance (1958); the Register of Wards, the so called "stud book", represented a data-base of traditional Aborigines in remote areas. The compilation of this document was essential to enact the proposed legislation. The task proved to be a time-consuming one owing to the scarcity of patrol officers and the isolated nature of the client group thus delaying the implementation of the legislation.

The impact of the drifting population on Darwin was placing considerable pressure on resources of the Welfare Branch. Attempts to persuade the Methodist missionaries at Goulburn Island - even to the point of purchasing the MV Derna - enticing them to have more contact with the Liverpool/Blyth River Aborigines, had proved fruitless. The missionaries argued officially that their resources were already stretched to the limit. As Sweeney's statistics demonstrated, the inhabitants of the Blyth River were represented in Darwin in numbers three times greater than those from the Liverpool River. Many of the former had made their first associations
with Europeans when they had drifted into Milingimbi to help
the air force as unskilled labourers in World War Two. The
military life introduced them to an entire array of
experiences not found in the more austere missionary life.
Their eyes opened to another Balanda world; Darwin's "bright
lights" beckoned. Most walked overland; the journey was long
and dangerous but Darwin exerted a strong magnetic attraction.
The anthropologist Hiatt, aided by the acute observations of
the late Ted Evans, demonstrated clearly that the European
Darwin-based population made no distinction between Aborigines
coming from the Blyth or Liverpool Rivers. Burarra, Anbara,
Jinang and Gunavidji were all unceremoniously lumped into the
category of "Liverpool River Natives". Besides population
pressure being exerted on Darwin, Sweeney had also observed a
number of cases of leprosy and other communicable diseases.
It had not been possible to relocate those affected persons as
they associated the Channel island Leprosarium with death.
Many contemporaries relate this as the most significant reason
underlying the establishment of Maningrida in 1957.

The establishment of Maningrida has been well documented (for
example, see Drysdale and Durack [1958], *The End of the
Dreaming*) but there was one critical point which tended to be
glossed over by contemporaries. Unfortunately, the Gunavidji
had not exerted the strong control over their estates that
they had done in the past. The presence of Japanese luggers
had caused many of them to develop associations with the
Goulburn Island missionaries. Consequently, a partial
territorial vacuum had been created and the footprints of Blyth River inhabitants were being found with increasing frequency in places where they would not have been traditionally tolerated. This was a significant point and it should not be understated. The recognition of the Gunavidjis' secondary political position explained their subsequent despondency (at least until 1970) and some of the inter-tribal conflict experienced in Maningrida from 1957 onwards. When the Drysdale patrol officers Trevor Milikins and Ted Egan as well as thirty tons of goods arrived in Maningrida in 1957, they were accompanied by a dozen "native" assistants. All were from the Blyth River region and made it patently clear to the Gunavidji that their association with the bunggawa meant that Maningrida and the area surrounding it was their "country" now.

The situation was further reinforced by the case of Robert, a 26 year old Blyth River man who was a member of the Wanderers football team in 1958. The team won that year's premiership and the young footballer became a cult hero overnight. Arriving back in Maningrida and waving a written permit of entry (the mechanism put in place by the Administration to control the entry of "undesirable" people onto reserves), he told the Gunavidji that he was "boss now". The Gunavidji had other ideas and a great deal of the patrol officers' time was spent reconciling this inter-tribal tension. The Gunavidji remained despondent and unco-operative, although patrol officer Egan was able to re-direct some of the tension into
the recently constructed football ground where spirited battles between contending teams were fought with equal ferocity on the field among players as on the perimeter by observers.

The late Trevor Milikins was quite scathing about the Gunavidji: "They were a sullen mob. Real large chips on their shoulders. Work...they didn't want to work at all, no they wouldn't work not even in a bloody iron lung" (Milikins interview, 1991). An entirely different perspective was provided by Mungudja (then the second most senior Gunavidji elder). When questioned about this early period in Maningrida's development, his views towards the Europeans were those shared by most of the Aboriginal community: "They lived like us. They had tents and we had our bush shelters. They were all right...only big problems later on. The Balanda changed, not us" (Mungudja interview, 1987).

Originally, Maningrida had been conceived as a control and medical supply point:

The concept of the settlement was not that of a compound into which all the natives of the area would move. On the contrary, the natives were to be left in their tribal areas with a minimum of disruption, initially of their tribal patterns. The function of the settlement at this early stage was primarily to provide trading and medical services for the area as a whole (Welfare Branch Report, December 1959, 8).

Powerful externally driven forces, however, were coalescing to
develop the social and economic fabric of the community at a speed the original settlers would have considered unfathomable. The initial period of stability provided by Drysdale was supplanted by a succession of superintendents' each surrounding themselves with their advisers in the form of the Village Council. Oondabund and Narlebar drifted more into the background, to be supplanted by more articulate go-betweens. Hiatt maintained that, in 1958, the settlement's officers relied on six men to interpret - three Gidjingali, two Gunavidji and one Nakara "all of whom had been in contact with Europeans since 1940 and spoke fairly good broken English" (Hiatt, 1962, 15).

The Superintendent's interpreters came from differing tribal and experiential backgrounds and possessed varied personalities. They represent a transition from the highly individualised knowledge represented in Oondabund and Narlebar as embryonic cross-cultural intermediaries. Knowledge about European culture and the ability to communicate that knowledge to Aboriginal people was no longer the province of a few. This second group of intermediaries - individuals like Jack Maritji, Tommy Yiberarr, Jack R...., and Joseph Munjudja - had gained their understanding of Balanda ways in the rapidly changing socio-economic climate of World War Two. Europeans were no longer viewed as distant unapproachable creatures, as demi-gods. Japanese bombs, K rations and petroleum had introduced an element of equality, albeit transitory, between the cultures. World War Two, more than any one event, created
a bridge between the cultures over which a greater number of Aborigines traversed. Unfortunately, in the context of Maningrida, the traffic of popular cultural exchange was very much one-way and short-lived. The Administration dictated that Maningrida become one of the "jewels in the crown of assimilation" (see chapter 2) and the speed and mono-directed nature of this change created political turmoil, the effects of which are still manifest today.

Like Maningrida, Galiwinku's infrastructure and population expanded rapidly between 1960 and 1973. Changes in government policy and the availability of additional finance meant expansion was inevitable. Tensions and conflicts occurred more frequently among the population but the community's structure remained largely unchanged. The relative stability of the Superintendent and the mission staff had been one of the outstanding features of life at Galiwinku. Even today many informants remember those years with affection, especially Bäpa Shepherdson. Among all of the Methodist missions, Galiwinku was the most stable in terms of its staff. In 1965, the combined years of service of the mission appointed staff of seven was seventy-five years, an individual average of ten and a half years. On the other Methodist missions, the average years of service was slightly over two.

The Methodists were at pains to demonstrate the human side of Christianity. Shepherdson, following in the footsteps of Theodor Webb (the first Superintendent of Goulburn Island
mission and a radical for his time), rejected the notion of dormitories and mass communal feeding. Although the Church did not encourage polygamy, it did not actively set about stopping it. The success of their efforts to curb the excesses of this practice were seen in Gandhuwuy’s reply to the author’s question, “How many wives can a Galiwinku man have?”. “As many as he likes”, said Gandhuwuy, “so long as it is okay with the other wives”. There are many other examples. Traditional funerals were often accompanied by slashing and cutting with knives by distraught relatives. The missionaries’ introduced moderation; today the knife has been replaced by the metal pannikin. It was the Methodists’ slavish and routinised insistence on work which created the major point of conflict between the missionaries and the Yolngu. This issue has been discussed in more depth in the next chapter but it was clearly the single most significant factor separating the “Shepherd” from his flock.

Although conflict increased in Galiwinku between 1960 and 1973, there was no basic shift in power until 1973 when the United Church withdrew most of its support and Shepherdson faded more into the background. He made no attempt to resist the change. As the late Di Buchanan (a lay missionary who worked with Shepherdson) observed, “Sheppy was a self contained person, very uncritical...he agreed to self-determination” (Buccannan interview, 1991). By 1977, he had decided to depart Galiwinku but not with bitterness or rancour, having experienced protectionism, assimilation and
now self-determination he felt his time had come and he left with all the dignity, fatalism and acceptance of his Yolngu counterparts. Similarly Walalipa and Burrumarra faded into the background; their power had been eroded but not negated. Younger go-betweens like Wesley Lanhupuy assumed positions of importance and control on the Galiwinku Council and other community-based organisations. The missionaries maintained a presence on the community but it was low key, aimed more at a supporting rather than a controlling role.

The social dislocation and conflict experienced by the inhabitants of Galiwinku was dwarfed by the events about to unfold in Maningrida. Between 1965 and 1973, Maningrida's inhabitants underwent an intensity of change that many found bewildering. The succession of Superintendents, the heightened expectations of the Welfare Branch (and later the Social Welfare Division), increasing numbers of Europeans with differing beliefs and political agendas came together to form a political "time bomb". The lack of unity (and direction) among the community's European population must be seen within the context of the traditional conflicts between the Liverpool and Blyth River people(s). Cross-cultural intermediaries from both groups lobbied for support as the beleaguered Superintendent's power was continually reduced. No longer possessing power and authority similar to that of a medieval lord, he had to contend with other government departments, radical changes in policy and Aboriginal people who increasingly questioned his legitimate authority. These
pressures and contradictions built up to explosive proportions; like a pressure cooker without a relief valve, they would explode not once but twice between 1974-78. The consequences of these explosions would involve a Prime Minister, federal cabinet ministers, senior departmental heads and many others. Unfortunately, the contents of the exploding pressure cooker did not discriminate between people. Whilst most Europeans left soon after the first explosion, they would soon be back to be the principal agents in triggering the next one. Those who were most affected by this period of crisis were Aborigines who were left confused and uncertain. The most cogent summation of this period has been provided by a senior Burarra leader: "You Balanda", said ex council chairman Yiberarr, shrugging his shoulders, "say one thing then do another... funny thing that" (Yiberarr interview, 1986).
ENDNOTES

1. These were pseudonyms, the patrol officers assistants were actually Jacky Bunda Bunda and his brother Johnny Naliva both Gunavidji men from Juda Point near Entrance Island.

2. This little known aspect of Shepherson's background has been dealt with in some depth by D Mack, The Shepherdsons - Timber Milling in Australia (Hyde Park Press, SA, 1986). The Shepherdson family had been in the forefront of engineering innovation in mid-nineteenth century South Australia, particularly in milling river red gum which until their involvement had not been considered a commercial resource.

3. See AA, F1 54/80.

4. According to the late Ted Evans, (July, 1990) the two "just did not see things eye to eye". This assessment was supported by the late Di Buchanan (May, 1991) who responded to the question about tension by saying "let's just say that they were happy to see the end of each other."


6. See Hiatt, L R, Conflict in Arnhem Land (Ph.D, ANU, 1962) for a more extensive account.

7. The following were the Superintendents of Maningrida between 1957-73:

   D Drysdale  - (1957-61)
   B Ivory     - (1961-63)
   B McGill    - (later part of 1963)
   H Sedgewick - (1963-1964)
   T Harvey    - (1964-1965)
   J Hunter    - (1965-1967)
   I Pitman    - (1967-1969)

In 1977, J Hunter worked for six weeks as the community adviser. His combined length of stay in Maningrida was seven years.
Chapter 4

The Superintendent's councillors and the "development push".

'Who is that man', demanded Prime Minister Whitlam of his senior Department of Aboriginal Affairs officer. 'That's John Hunter. He used to be a superintendent here. He's a senior project officer for us now.' 'Is that so, well he had better shut up otherwise he will find himself without a job!' (Bond interview, 1991).

Away from the gaze of public scrutiny and, to a large measure, official sanction, the relationship between patrol officers and mission superintendents and those they "protected" was uncomplicated, based as it was on clearly defined roles and limited social interaction between forceful personalities from both Aboriginal and European cultures. As the Superintendents of Maningrida and Galiwinku were about to learn, however, applying the policy of assimilation and overseeing its transition to self-determination would be a far more complex and arduous task.

The following chapter supports the view held by Jeremy Long in his recently published manuscript The Go-Betweens, that "the settlement strategy tended to increase government control and government responsibility and diminish Aboriginal self-reliance and independence" (Long, 1992, 167). The principal outcome of this increase in government control during the second phase of assimilation (post 1964 in the aftermath of
the Social Welfare Ordinance) was rapid societal change accompanied by increased tensions between European and Aboriginal cultures and "dramatic" acts by particular individuals partly transcending their usual cultural allegiances. The period was described, in retrospect, by John Hunter as one characterised by the "push for development". Throughout the subsequent discussion, Hunter's description has been employed and "development" has been defined in general terms, focusing on the economic, political and cultural domains in Maningrida and Galiwinku within the context of greater external government influence and imposition of policy.

The Star picture theatre was featuring the "Last Sunset", when the Maningrida Mirage announced that there had been a "momentous council meeting" with Prime Minister Whitlam and other senior ministers of the Whitlam government. When ex-Superintendent Hunter had badgered and harassed the Prime Minister at this fateful meeting in June 1974, narrowly avoiding the loss of his job, he had done so with a deliberate purpose. In his own manner, he was attempting to expose the vast discrepancy between the Commonwealth government's stated policy of Aboriginal self-determination and the reality of European political and economic control in Maningrida. Hunter was not a political idealist but rather a seasoned political campaigner who had "his high place in Aboriginal estimation at Maningrida because of a mixture of his leadership, cajoling - even bullying - and his own indefatigable labour....What made
Maningrida somewhat [sic] unique was that it had a superintendent who knew what was going on" (Gillespie, 1982, 2). Hunter's political pragmatism was matched by an equally emotional commitment to "his" settlement, expressed eloquently in this extract from *A Confession*:

> It was my good fortune to be first associated with Maningrida...when the "development" push was just commencing. The physical aspects of the settlement were not so different then, but the jarring discord generated by the side by side placement of wealth, and poverty grated on the mind. The poverty was real enough, but it cloaked riches; riches of the human spirit. Here was a philosophy based not on material acquisition and the cult of the individual, but on the cementing of human relationships and mutuality....Maningrida re-visited was, again, not so different in the external aspects. It was bigger, and the relationships more superficial, the need for development seemed more urgent *(The Maningrida Mirage, 14 December 1973)*

The "development push" provides the main focus for this chapter. In many respects, it represented a turning-point in both the political and economic organisation of Maningrida and Galiwinku. It was a turning-point because, in the period after the implementation of the *Social Welfare Ordinance*, government policy supported the rapid expansion of externally imposed human and economic resources rather than attempting to capitalise on existing community resources, projects and initiatives. This situation could be partly explained by the increase in funding, principally from Commonwealth sources, but the emphasis on rapid development must also be attributed to the desire of the NTA to produce results (that is material advancement) amid an environment of increased hostility
towards the policy of assimilation. It would not be unreasonable to conclude that this substantial increase in human and physical resources should have helped to alleviate the "jarring discord generated by the side by side placement of wealth and poverty". That assessment, however, would fail to take into account inner-community political dynamics. It was the qualitative nature of the "development push" which many viewed as the main source of community conflict. They saw it as yet another imposition, its application being too rapid and containing no consultative element. Moreover, the analysis of the "development push" has been made more complex because it did not emanate from a particular branch within the NTA (for instance the Forestry Branch's view of development was far more extreme than that held by the Welfare Branch). It was, however, indicative of a growing political trend in the NT, a trend that favoured an increased emphasis on economic (rather than social) development and greater independence from the Commonwealth.

Politically, prior to 1965 in the remote community context, the role of Superintendent as an elevated authority figure was clearly defined, especially in Maningrida where Aborigines had no formal and only marginal input into the decisions that affected their everyday lives. According to Eddy Carey (who was employed by the NTA and worked at Maningrida during this period), "the matter was simple; at that early stage they were not considered to be part of the political decision-making process" (Carey interview, 1991). The early Superintendents
(including Hunter) surrounded themselves with a loose amalgam of Aboriginal advisers. Hiatt (1962) refers to them as "interpreters"; they were, in fact, cross-cultural intermediaries and, in the period prior to 1965, they possessed very little political power. Superintendents tended to use them more as sounding boards, as a mechanism to communicate instructions in a highly institutionalised and controlled environment. This imposed and quite artificial situation began to change from 1965 when the Welfare Branch began to support a modified policy of assimilation emphasising the importance of education and training, civics and the "virtues" of pluralism in the democratic process.

In 1964, Bagot community formed its own village council and became the first Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory to do so. The Welfare Branch encouraged this development knowing that the relative sophistication of the inhabitants of Bagot could adjust to this new institution. Moreover, the Administration knew that Bagot acted as a migratory centre for many "Top End" Aboriginal communities. Within a comparatively short time frame, many communities (including Maningrida and Galiwinku) heard about more formal council meetings where they sat with the Superintendent, around a table, observing Balanda business and meeting procedures rather than congregating informally under coconut trees just to rubber-stamp decisions made by an often aloof superintendent.
Late in 1965 (the precise date is uncertain), John Hunter became the first Maningrida Superintendent to move in the direction of formal council meetings. He elevated those who had acted as his interpreters into positions as councillors and in doing so partly legitimised their roles as power-brokers. The "trusty boys" Narlebar and Oondabund were not among this embryonic council but a significant contribution was about to be made by Jack Maritji, a man with a similar background as a patrol officer's assistant. The Council met regularly with the Superintendent and the Councillors, still without any elected mandate, began to acquire a more intimate understanding of European political processes. Maritji is worthy of further analysis because he provided a clear link between the era of the patrol officers and the Superintendents and would figure prominently in The Maningrida Mirage as an apologist, in the eyes of Dan Gillespie the newspaper's second editor, for assimilation. A close friend of the patrol officer Ted Evans (then a senior member of the Welfare Branch), Maritji was neither Gunavidji nor a Blyth River "man" but Jinang. His "country" was inland from Cape Stewart on the boundary which traditionally separated the eastern and western cultural blocks. Like the significant Nakara figure, Charlie Yirrawalla who would both play a pivotal role in future Maningrida Councils, Maritji's strength in cross-cultural facilitation lay in his ability to transcend the traditional rivalry between the Liverpool River and the Blyth River people(s). In a powerful series of articles published in The Maningrida Mirage entitled, "This is my thinking", Maritji
communicated the difficulties and life-threatening dangers associated with power brokerage as a cross-cultural intermediary in the tribal context of Maningrida:

When I was a patrol officer's guide in Darwin, I was a good guide doing a good job, gathering many tribes to missions and settlements...Before I was a patrol officer's guide, I did not know what the job was or much about the European's way....Later I became a teaching assistant...I tried to tell my people that we could not live in our old way forever, that we had to learn European way. This time I was winning and nobody from my people pushed me....So I started the Village Council to help teach the changing law when Aboriginals had the right to vote....[I]t was my idea that I could teach my people European ways. I was living with the Europeans and I thought because I could live that way, I could help my people to live the Europeans way. I knew we could not live in our old ways forever (The Maningrida Mirage, 8 June 1973).

Ironically, it was Maritji's desire to keep alive "memories of old days" in the form of a museum that almost resulted in his death. Under Welfare Branch "guidance", he sold artefacts at the Winnellie Show; his intention was to use the money to finish building the museum. The presence of a "girl" who had accompanied him to the show was misinterpreted by his countrymen who chased him back to Darwin and "had a fight with me". Maritji survived but his younger brother was killed soon afterwards "because of my trouble". Maritji gave away the money to his pursuers because he "was frightened...they wanted to kill me but...the village council...blamed me for all the trouble and wanted me to pay back all the money I gave away" (The Maningrida Mirage, 8 June 1973).
In describing the final days of his village council involvement, Maritji was scathing in his description of the self-seeking motives of his countrymen:

They started to push me to get things from the European people. I did this for a while but then I decided to live my own way. I like my people but they don't like me because I think too much European's way. When Europeans help me they are not pushing thoughts on me. They are helping me use English to show everyone what and how I think (The Maningrida Mirage, 8 June 1973).

Given the increased factionalism beginning to emerge in Maningrida politics, it was understandable that some (mainly Europeans) would consider Maritji an apologist for assimilation. Others, however, viewed him as a natural leader ideally suited to steer the Council through difficult times. Seen less dispassionately, Maritji was a strong-willed individual who was able to exert his personality because he was Jinang and less likely to be influenced by pressure from the Liverpool or Blyth River people(s). One should not be judgemental about Maritji for his strength of character, consistency and purpose were impressive and, with hindsight, should be accorded respect.

Maritji relinquished his leading role on the Village Council as John Hunter returned from a superintendent's conference in December, 1969, the "tone of which was hardly optimistic and strengthening the belief that any gains to be made must come from within each community" (The Maningrida Mirage, 19 December 1969). Hunter had very good reasons to be concerned
about the need for "gains". As Maningrida's first formally elected council was about to be constituted, there were still over a hundred whurlies in the township and the community's physical infrastructure had been unable to keep pace with its population explosion. The provision of such a basic commodity as water provided an excellent example of the inability of administrators to predict the rapid population expansion. Early planners had estimated Maningrida's population at around 300 people but, by March 1970, it had risen almost four fold to 1200. The water supply had failed twice and the community had almost been evacuated in 1966 and 1967. In 1970, two bores and an emergency alluvial water supply barely produced half the town's water needs, estimated by the Superintendent to equal 200 gallons per day per person and there was no certainty that the government would, or was able to, rectify the situation even though at that time Maningrida was the fifth largest town in the Northern Territory.

Matters were made worse by the lack of understanding exhibited by Hunter's superior, Harry Giese, about the gravity of Maningrida's shortage of water and services. In one memorable exchange, Giese had noted that one of the community's fire hydrants had been leaking. Observing that this had been the case on several of his previous visits, he chided Hunter to have it fixed. Hunter's response was laconic and contained a deep, underlying frustration: "You did not see a leaking fire hydrant", he wrote to Giese, "there are none. You saw a water point which services about 200 people. It is not leaking but
it is certainly overworked" (AA, E460/T4 76/466). Hunter proposed a number of solutions consistent with changes in government policy to address the inequities and attendant polarisation that was occurring in "his" community. He saw that a political solution, to soften the worst effects of the "development push", lay in reconstituting "the Maningrida Council in order that the body might exercise greater influence over local affairs" and that "it is particularly important that all the people in Maningrida know and support their councillors" (The Maningrida Mirage, 2 January 1970). This pluralistic approach to political representation was endorsed by the NTA and it was highly unlikely that Hunter would have supported the more radical notion of a Gunavidji dominated-council. Whilst Hunter may have considered this option, he was essentially a political realist aware that a Gunavidji-dominated council (early in 1970) would have increased community conflict considerably. Moreover, the NTA would not have favoured this development and Hunter would have been reprimanded or relocated.

The new Council was finally constituted on February 6, 1970 and comprised three "elected" representatives from each of the seven major "groups" in the community: Burarra (Blyth River people principally Gidjingali), Rembarrnga, Gunavidji, Nakara, Gunwinggu, Jinang and Gunardba. The emphasis on equal tribal representation was galling to the Liverpool River and the Blyth River people(s). Both groups constituted the main Aboriginal power-brokers in Maningrida and expressed their
displeasure by being the last to elect their representatives while the Jinang and Nakara were among the first. The Council provided a forum for the elected representatives to express their increasing frustration about the inequalities existing between Aboriginal and European people and the difficulty of reconciling the old and the new ways among themselves. The depth of this internal cultural conflict was caught brilliantly in this conversation between the Council President and the Burarra Councillor R....

Councillor Yiberarr said:

'Too many things are happening here lately, too many fights, in the kitchen, at the basketball and at the pictures. We got everything from the white people and we didn't trust them yet. We swear at him. We should be ashamed. What are we going to do now? Are we going to make war and make rubbish of ourselves. We have good superintendents but if we still do wrong things they will go away. All we will get is more police and other white people who will not help us...if you want to fight do it at your own place, not at the pictures.'

Councillor Riala said: 'Everything has trouble even birds and trees, but we are men and must change and live a better way' (The Maningrida Mirage, 6 November 1970).

Paralleling this new found political expression were the development of two major centres of economic activity, one very much an extension of the Council's existing economic functions, the Maningrida Progress Association (MPA) and, on the other extremity, the new forestry mill. MPA had its origins in a store which had been operated haphazardly during the first few years of settlement. In 1963, again consistent
with the government's policy of more rapid socio-economic development, the store was formed into a community cooperative called the Arafura C Store. By 1969, owing to the lack of tax incentives, it was formed into an incorporated body employing a full-time manager and having Superintendent Hunter as president. The Progress Association had serious economic ambitions and made a big impact of the economic fabric of the community. With a massive increase in its turnover, made possible by the introduction of training allowances and later award wages, MPA prospered. By late 1970, its achievements included the building of an impressive community hall (at less than half the price quoted by Darwin-based contractors) and the construction of the "Hasty Tasty", a community fast food outlet which had replaced the Welfare Branch's mass feeding program. Additionally, it supported the exploration of minerals with the FAMCO (FAMCO was the acronym for the First Aboriginal Mining Company Organisation, an association of a number of Aboriginal people, organisations and communities within Arnhem Land which aimed to foster the exploration and possible exploitation of the region's mineral resources) and had actively encouraged the Gunardba Gardens Company, a wholly-owned Aboriginal enterprise employing a full-time European horticulturalist, Bob Collins (his subsequent political involvement as the ALP candidate for Arnhem is touched upon in chapter 6).

With the increased demands on housing for Aborigines and having already employed a professional builder, it was
consistent that MPA become involved heavily in the construction of "self-help" houses, especially as the Administration sponsored mobile works team had proved notoriously inefficient constructing houses for Aboriginal people. "Self-help" housing was a community-based scheme whereby Aboriginal men participated in the construction of their houses. The scheme used timber milled at Maningrida's timber mill, at that stage controlled by the Welfare Branch, and the dwellings were constructed from cypress pine near the timber mill and sledged by tractor to their respective town sites. "The houses", according to The Maningrida Mirage, "were to be of such design as to be erected by local Aboriginal carpenters...and to cost as little as possible to suit local pockets" (2 January 1970). The structures were small and of the most rudimentary design; most of the cost went into fitting out the house and the corrugated iron for the roof. The scheme required that the occupant needed to find the capital before the construction of the dwelling commenced. Initially, MPA was successful in meeting the demands for this housing but, by 1970, this commitment proved too great an economic burden for the MPA and within a year the Maningrida Housing Association (MHA) was formed. This organisation became a major employer of Europeans and tended to identify with the "pro-development" stance of the Forestry Branch. Later, they would be identified as a part of the "right" conservative enclave (prior to Viner's intervention and the dismissal of the "Maningrida Eight"). In 1981, the organisation was disbanded and their activities became
incorporated as Maningrida Council-Housing Section. MPA's withdrawal from housing construction had not been assisted by the Forestry Branch. Prior to its destruction by fire in 1967, Maningrida's timber mill had been controlled by the Welfare Branch but the new mill (completed in 1970) would come under the direct control of the "pro-development" Forestry Branch. The Forestry Branch saw the exploitation of the timber resource principally in terms of export and not in the context of an overall plan of development for the community, a view taken by the now politically weakened Social Welfare Division. The Forestry's export mentality was matched by a preference to employ more specialist European staff at the expense of the less skilled Aboriginal work force. They actively thwarted some community economic initiatives, such as the building and operation of a timber truss factory, arguing that the enterprise would require specialist knowledge far greater than that already existing in Maningrida'. Furthermore, on the 18 April 1969, the Acting Director of the Forestry Branch (M V Evans) made it abundantly clear to the Acting Administrator (M R Finger) that a number of factors were inhibiting the role of the expanding Forestry Branch in Maningrida. He was concerned about the inefficiency involved in liaising on several inter-branch levels with regard to "even routine matters such as stores procurement" and that

existing terms of reference do not provide this branch with any function in the day to day operation of the mill...particularly infuriating was the...intrusion of Welfare Branch officers on technical matters concerning the mill's operation (AA, F1 68/3581).
The position adopted by the Forestry Branch was actively opposed by senior officers within the Social Welfare Division, especially by Director Giese, who argued that the new mill should be incorporated and owned by Aborigines. It is suggested that incorporation was a tactic employed by the NTA to retain control of the mill rather than a sincere desire to empower the indigenous population of Maningrida. This matter of disputed control was finally resolved by the Assistant Administrator who transferred the responsibility for the Maningrida saw mill from the Social Welfare Division to the Forestry Branch from the 1st July 1969.

It was the new timber mill more than any other government or community initiative that contributed to the increase in the European population of eighty in 1969 to approximately two hundred and eighty in 1974 and resulted in the political polarisation and social dislocation that would become endemic over the following two years. The reconstituted Council made clear its attitude in March 1972, observing that too much timber was being exported and not enough used in the community. Councillor R.... observed that "government people" [a]sk all the time the same questions but nothing happens afterwards. It's time now that the government helps us with materials and money and not with words (The Maningrida Mirage, 12 May 1972).

The observation was followed by another interesting observation by R.... and an exchange between himself and the
Burarra President, Yiberarr:

Cr. R....: There is nothing left for Aborigines. They take our timber so let them cut it; we don’t get any of it.

President: I think one thing is important and that is that the boys at the sawmill should work all the time.

Cr. R....: Money is not important all the time, but your home is. What will happen to my children and your children when they grow up. Where are they going to live?

President: But work is very important.

Adviser: Would the men work harder if some of the timber stayed here for your use?

Cr. R....: Many of the boys in the sawmill work hard and they should give us at least half the timber (The Maningrida Mirage, 12 May 1972).

The provision of basic shelter and services became the Council’s major priority as it considered its "5 year plan". Councillor R.... had recently visited Galiwinku and noted that in that community there was no apparent separation between houses for the Yolngu or the Balanda people in either their design or placement whereas Aboriginal and European housing in Maningrida contrasted starkly. The rate of construction of shelter was another sensitive point causing Council President Yiberarr to observe "that there seemed to be a lot of houses being built for Europeans but very little for Aboriginals at present" (The Maningrida Mirage, 10 December 1971). Hunter observed, in June the following year, that "Maningrida needed 120 houses to catch up and a further 50 over the next 5 year period to keep in front" (The Maningrida Mirage, 23 June
1972). Besides problems with the community's water supply and the supply of timber, the provision of electrical services to individual dwellings was an additional problem. These developments only confirmed the Council minutes of May 5, 1971 which noted:

Councillors discussed the lack of toilets, power and water. White people got all these things, but not Aborigines. It was no use writing to Mr Giese any more. Council would write to another government, somewhere else (The Maningrida Mirage, 14 May 1971).

The anger and resentment which characterised the contemporary council minutes was not restricted to the provision of shelter and services to Aboriginal people but also the increased cost of living:

Yiberarr (wife and six children) and J R.... had a spirited discussion on the increasing demands made on them by the rising costs of living while the training allowance remained the same. 'Where are we going to get the money to pay for everything?' and 'We just spend our money and we haven't got enough' (The Maningrida Mirage, 20 August 1971).

As the Gunavidji councillor Billy Yirrijin cryptically commented about the increase of gambling in the community "maybe people play cards because they haven't got enough money" (The Maningrida Mirage, 11 August 1972).

The conflict between the traditional and the new European ways was becoming more manifest in council meetings. The Council's early role as community policemen (councillors wore uniforms
and carried out night patrols) was under extreme pressure. These cross-cultural intermediaries had the unenviable role of attempting to reconcile these two disparate cultures. As Jimmy Pasco Matjerrri observed of those still subscribing to their Madayin:

I tell you this. If you go to one or two old people and ask them to change their way, they only say "yes" but deep inside there are feelings you don't know about. The old people of the old generation who can not understand the European way of life find it difficult to change their ways and to leave the Madayin (The Maningrida Mirage, 5 May 1972).

Younger Aboriginal leaders were attacking the traditional system of promised marriages and accusing the Council of not "helping to change the law". Increasingly, the Council was unable to maintain its momentum; attendances were reduced dramatically and, throughout 1972, there are a number of references in the Council minutes that the Council was composed of "dead people".

As the Council fragmented, so the importance of the Gunavidji was augmented. As early as August 14 1971, Councillor Wuridjal complained that there were not any houses for the Gunavidji who were "hard workers and lived ordinary lives but only had a few houses" (The Maningrida Mirage, 13 August 1971). Applying a consensual approach, President Yiberarr suggested it was the "same all around" and "things moved slowly". In the past, the Gunavidji had tended to be uncooperative but, as government policy changed, so the
importance of the traditional owners of Maningrida increased. They received a greater focus of attention within the community involving themselves in the recently elected committee for the MPA, developing several clan-based economic enterprises and assuming a more dominant role on Maningrida Council.

Under the policy of assimilation, the Gunavidji had been partly dispossessed of their traditional homelands and became embittered and resentful towards Europeans and many other Aborigines. With the ascendancy of the Labor Party in December 1972 and the policy of self-determination, however, the Gunavidji were catapulted into a position of prominence. Although the Woodward Inquiry into "land rights" was yet to be undertaken, Aboriginal people had recognised the traditional ownership of the Gunavidji over Maningrida and adjacent areas. The change in government policy confirmed a "social fact" and vindicated a political position - "we are the bosses of this land" - that the Gunavidji had maintained since the first European presence. Community Adviser5 Hunter provided a cogent picture of their plight in a letter supporting the movement of Gunavidji people to Juda Point:

The Gunavidji group at Maningrida are having more than their share of cultural breakdown problems being experienced at Maningrida....I am not suggesting that this sort of deviant behaviour is confined to the Gunavidjis but I am afraid that the group are suffering at an accelerated rate of breakdown because of the impingement on their own area by other Aboriginals and Europeans. They cannot reject, if they want to, the development of
western urban society simply because it is taking place in their area and they are stuck with it. I feel a great deal of sympathy for them, they are very conscious of the loss of social control but I think they feel defeated (and bitter) towards all the groups, who have taken over their area (AA, E460/T4 76/1108).

There was little doubt that the Gunavidji were embittered, perhaps socially dislocated, but their ability to fight back politically was impressive. The shift in government policy from assimilation to self-determination struck the death-knell of the "democratically elected reconstituted council" and it was consistent with the dynamics of the traditional Aboriginal concept of "country" that the Gunavidji should "wrest control" of council as they did in April 1973. Billy Yirrijin (a Gunavidji from Juda Point) became the Council president.

Gracious in defeat, out-going President Yiberarr said it was the "right thing" that Gunavidji people should lead the Council and that he would help the new leaders "learn their jobs". As they ascended to power, the Gunavidji brought an increased element of intensity into an already socially and economically fragmented society. While the policy of self-determination suited some sections of the community, it did not sit comfortably with the views of many Europeans and some Aboriginal people. For the Blyth River people(s) in particular, it was a severe blow to their political power within Maningrida. Many of the more conservative European employees in the area of forestry and other government employees servicing Maningrida were unable to reconcile
themselves to the new policy. They strengthened existing relationships seeking new allies among those Aboriginal people who felt similarly disgruntled. W Luff (OIC of Forestry at Maningrida) felt so concerned about the "current events threatening the stability of Maningrida community" that he reported to the First Assistant Secretary on 17 September, 1974:

The police arrived in a van and by this time approximately 59 Aboriginals were fighting. The police got out of the van and were surrounded and a couple of attempts were made to strike them with a club and a pipe. They climbed into the back of the truck and threats were made to 'wipe out' Europeans....There is general concern among Europeans about the quantity of firearms entering Maningrida. I saw a parcel of 24 .22 rifles being traded in the Progress Association Store. The rifles were addressed to P. Cooke, C/- Progress Association Store....Mr. Marshall had just returned from the Mann River crossing where the Gunwinggu tribe is camped. Aborigines there stated that they did not like what the Gunavidji people were doing to Maningrida and that they would be coming down the river to fight them....They were particularly hostile to recent attempts to remove European forestry personnel. He also visited the Kapunga camp at the mouth of the Blyth River. Whilst there he saw Mr. Hunter confronted with spears because the people were unhappy with the role he had played in the recent events at Maningrida (AA, F1 74/6182).

It was in this emotionally charged atmosphere, that a particularly heated exchange between Dan Gillespie (editor of The Maningrida Mirage) and Jack Maritji (and his allies) took place. Prior to examining this exchange, it is necessary to explore further the origin, function, readership and legitimacy of The Maningrida Mirage because it represented a significant political institution within the community.
The Maningrida Mirage had commenced publication under the editorship of Gowan Armstrong, a Methodist missionary, in 1969. Armstrong was a popular identity who held moderate political views. For example, when Sir Paul Hasluck visited Maningrida in July 1970, Armstrong wrote, "his [Hasluck's] detachment and non-partisan approach to politics and his refusal to canvass his supporters at crucial moments no doubt left him prey to less scrupulous colleagues" (The Maningrida Mirage, 17 July 1970). In marked contrast to Armstrong were the forthright and more radical views held by the paper's second editor, Dan Gillespie, a school teacher. He had become disillusioned with successive conservative governments and the manner in which they had imposed the policy of assimilation. Subsequently, he expressed his views (and those of the political enclave later described as the "left") using the paper as a mouth-piece. It should be noted that numerous attempts by the paper's editors to interest Aboriginal people in providing it with a less European name all failed. The paper's readership was overwhelmingly European and, in Gillespie's quite accurate words, it was not a "great newspaper" but "a relevant contemporary journal as well as a highly significant historical one" (The Maningrida Mirage, 7th February 1974). The paper ceased publication in 1973. It was republished (for a short time) in 1977 as Gabalgu Jurra.

Maritji's attitudes, already described as pro-assimilationist, were certainly out of step with the stridency of The Maningrida Mirage. He had spoken in glowing terms
about eliciting government help to develop mineral deposits, to "find out" and to "build up a big forestry". To make matters worse, he had come to these realisations whilst picnicking with some European friends and being "a hard headed pragmatist" had even asked a European to help write his article. The matter had incensed the newspaper's editor:

You and I know that you didn't write very much of this story. Balanda people often help you with your stories for the Mirage. Some of them try to write your thinking as much as they can. Others do most of your thinking and writing for you. When they do your stories come out like the bulldust in this story (The Maningrida Mirage, 11 June 1973).

C H Prince's reply to the editor was typical of those expressing an opposing view and supporting Maritji:

In regard to Mr Maritji's story, this writer at least can find little to take exception to. Therefore we must assume that the Editorial comment was reserved solely for the social and political thoughts at the end of it. Therefore, although the phrase 'up you Daniel' springs to mind, I feel I should be more specific (The Maningrida Mirage, 25 May 1973).

The exchange precipitated a considerable amount of venom from the individuals that would later coalesce into two major political enclaves: the "left" and the "right". Both would contribute their martyrs to the "Maningrida eight". Unfortunately, it failed to release the political tensions building up among the European residents of Maningrida, tensions that were reaching near-violent proportions. The
Gunavidji-controlled Council, assisted by some brilliant tactical advice from Hunter, acted to defuse this potentially explosive situation. The catalyst for change was provided by the Council's "momentous meeting" with bunggawa Whitlam. Several days later, the Council requested that the DAA staff leave Maningrida, with the exception of a few selected individuals, Hunter included. The Department responded immediately by recalling Hunter to Darwin. The Superintendent's councillors did not hesitate in their response. Contemporary estimates varied but at least twelve of them flew to Darwin in a DC3 aeroplane, hired by council, to demand the return of "their" adviser. Hunter was one of those rare individuals, in the context of Maningrida politics, who was able to bridge the gap between conflicting tribal interests. Among the twelve were Gunavidji, Nakara and Burarra. Their purpose was clear and involved staging a "sit-in" in the office of the Director of Aboriginal Affairs for twelve hours, "spitting ash and erinmore all over the shagpile carpet" (Bond, June 91). They were successful, however, in extracting a guarantee for Hunter's return. The ex-Superintendent was quite unrepentant and made no attempt to conceal his views as they were reported in a Darwin-based newspaper:

Mr Hunter explained that he had stood down the Europeans because at Maningrida, 'like many settlements in the Territory, Aboriginals were being smothered. A dramatic act had been necessary to reverse this trend...[T]he policy is for Aboriginals to be given self-determination...[but] the department of Aboriginal Affairs seems to say,
Yes we believe in self determination, but we won’t help in any way’ (NT News, 11 July 1974).

Two months after the expulsion of most of the DAA staff, Maningrida Council revoked the permits of European forestry staff and their dependants and “demanded their immediate removal from the settlement...rejecting the double talk and directive approach of forestry senior officers” (AA, Fl 74/6182). It was the expulsion of “the forestry” by Maningrida Council, more than any other event, that became enshrined in the political folk-law of Maningrida. The respective European enclaves within that community developed their own interpretations. Some saw it as a victory over the forces of repression in which the valiant Council was empowered and "stood up to" its oppressors whilst others blamed "evil" individuals like John Hunter, Chris Haynes (a forestry officer with a lengthy association with the community who later became a council employee) and Dan Gillespie for manipulating the Council for their own political ends.

One immediate consequence of the expulsion was that there were barely enough skilled personnel to run the community’s essential services, let alone develop its enterprises. A brave attempt to resurrect the forestry mill by the Council, assisted by Chris Haynes, failed after eighteen months. As will be seen in the following chapters, the political vacuum created by the removal of so many Europeans, in the later part of 1974, would be replaced by an equal number of disparate and ideologically divided individuals who quickly amalgamated into
factions. This heady mixture of conflicting enclaves would culminate in another ideological battle, of even more fierce proportions, three years later.

In comparison to Maningrida, Galiwinku's push for development was a far less turbulent affair but not without its pressures and problems. As early as 1952, the annual review report had noted the formation of a council of

[n]ative leaders...who are leaders of their own tribal groups or are men of influence and integrity, about half are mission trained and the other half were traditionally important....Already the council is handling matters of discipline in the camp and have imposed penalties on law breakers. The Superintendent does not meet with them, but a report of the discussions and decisions is taken to him by the two leading mission natives (AA, Fl, 54/81).

The two "leading mission natives" were, almost certainly, Willi Walalipa and Burrumarra who had formed close personal ties with Superintendent Shepherdson (see chapter 3) in reciprocal relationships best described as ones of mutual interdependence. Throughout the next decade, both men skilfully worked through the "Native Council" (later it would be called the Village Council) to cement their positions as Galiwinku's main cross-cultural intermediaries. This comfortable reciprocal relationship was only made possible, in the depth that it existed, while the prevailing missionary ideology remained dominant. By 1965, the Church's role as a missionary society was very much under question; Galiwinku was no longer a numerically small, comparatively well-integrated
mission with a stable staff of missionaries "leading their flock". Like Maningrida, the community's physical size, population and the complexity of its infrastructure had expanded dramatically over the preceding seven years and the days of the missionary "protectors" and Shepherdson's unifying leadership role were limited. It should be noted that it was difficult to estimate the populations of either Galiwinku or Maningrida accurately. During the "wet", large numbers of outstation people migrated to these centralised communities and population figures are also influenced by cultural factors (mainly ceremonies and funerals). Gullick estimated the population of Galiwinku in 1949 to have been 275. By 1959, it had increased only marginally. In 1962 the District Commission Report estimated a population of 520 with an additional 700 on the outstations. Exact figures for 1965 are unobtainable but it would not be unreasonable to suggest a population of about 700.

Lay missionaries with specific skills tended to replace the original, long serving generalist missionaries. The community now employed a town manager and Shepherdson's role as a minister became separated from the activities normally associated with running a town and the political effectiveness of his relationship between Walalipa and Burrumarra was seriously diminished. It was in this context of changing social relations in Galiwinku that the Town Council evolved, not in opposition to the Village Council but rather concurrent with it. The Town Council saw its functions directly related
to concerns of a local government nature and made no attempt to interfere with the Village Council which tended to concern itself with single issues often containing a cross-cultural dimension. For example, the Village Council would mediate disputes between conflicting clans and sanction individuals who had transgressed aspects of the community's code of morality. The sophistication of political decision-making in Galiwinku was made even more complex by the existence of the Church Council and the Council of Mala Leaders. The Mala Leaders were shadowy figures who met irregularly to consider traditional matters. They were charged with the responsibility of maintaining ceremony which, for the Yolngu of Galiwinku, was achievable given the comparatively united nature of the numerous clans that comprised the community. It was this political separation of functions that constituted a major factor contributing to Galiwinkus less traumatic transition from assimilation to self-determination. MOM did not resist this political transition but assisted increased Aboriginal political control from 1965 onwards but certain aspects of their ideology were far more difficult for them to compromise. The "cautious gradualism" which characterised their missionary approach emerged throughout their records; control and particularly control over community finances was never far removed from their consciousness. Additionally, the District Commission Report (1966) observed: "The Commission believes that the neatness, tidiness and the beautification of the Missions, though perhaps not rating an A.1 priority, or always possible should be kept in mind" (NTRS, 53-7485
As late as 1970, the staid Elcho Island News and Views proclaimed to the indigenous the dual importance of prayers and "proper" work practices:

SIRENS, BELLs...DEVOTIONS...WORK

Siren at 6.15am to wake everyone (both staff and Yolgnu) for morning prayers in the Church. Church bell at 6.30 for folk to leave home if they haven't already done so.

Siren at 7.45 to allow work to start at 8.00am

Please note: Staff desiring Devotions on the job with their workers are expected to make arrangements prior to 8.00am as work commences at 8.00am.


In the final issue of the paper, Foreman Yotjin advised that the financially troubled sawmill cut $441 of timber in one day. "It is pleasing to hear this", commented the paper's editorial, "for the sawmill is in jeopardy. The remedy is hard work and cutting down expenses. NO WORK - NO PAY. NO WORK - NO PAY. Correct recording of time sheets. Seeing you get paid for the timber you sell" (Elcho News and Views, 18 November 1976).

The "smell of the oil rag" that had often propelled Shepherdson's plane, pervaded the consciousness of the Methodists and this tradition of thrift and industry was later maintained by the United and later Uniting Churches. The
Methodists created the basis and fostered the growth of a number of successful community based industries. The sewing, fishing and Galiwinku furniture industries were all financially-viable concerns and helped to support the flagging timber industry until its demise in 1978. The Church's activities through its economic arms - CEDAR and later ALPA - and the subsequent inability for the Galiwinku community to run its own progress association effectively, however, in the author's view, do the Church far less credit. Council for the Civil and Economic Development of Arnhem Land (CEDAR) would later become the Aboriginal Advisory and Development Service (AADS). Its most recent name change has been to the Aboriginal Resource and Development Services (ARDS). The Arnhem Land Progress Association (ALPA) was set up by the Synod of the UCNT in 1971 as a retail stores association originally to act as a "central buying organisation" for their Arnhem Land missions. During ALPA'S first year of operation it recorded a turnover of $800,000; however, the existence of the new organisation thwarted community control of the retail outlet through the Progress Association and the store became "just another European activity...[arousing] no feeling of proprietorship among Aboriginal people" (NTRS 41, 7417 13.2.1).

It is important to stress the economic viability of these industries. Not only did Aboriginal people acquire the skills to work within them and manage them, they identified with them as had been noted on a covering letter to the Galiwinku
Manufacturing Company Memorandum of Association:

The Aboriginal people, from Willi Walalipa, to the youngest worker, all regard this as their company, Kevin Rurrrambu recently told a meeting of shareholders that it is a: 'company belong you and me'....The problem of motivating the Aboriginals to work to expected Australian standards should therefore not arise, and indeed will not if present experience in this venture is any indication (NTRS, A7421 16.3).

The Methodists had unconsciously built upon an existing tradition established by the Macassans. The Yolngu were familiar with reciprocal work relationships, the barter economy and money. They tended to conform to the expectations of the newer bunggawa; after all, they had no fundamental objection to work or to the acquisition of rrupiya. Rather, it was the slavish, obsessive adherence to a rigid work routine that angered many Yolngu. It represented a way of life simply outside their experience or any previous cultural contact.

The level of animosity experienced at Maningrida between cultures failed to materialise at Galiwinku. As one author succinctly described the success of the Methodist's mission to Arnhem Land prior to World War Two, "Education and industry were to the MMS [MOM] what building was to the CMS" (Dewar, 1989, 77). It would appear that the Methodists had more than a moderate degree of success in both of these principal objectives. Certainly this view is shared by Kevin Rurrrambu (1983) in relation to the effectiveness of the education
provided by the Methodists. He singled the Shepherdsons out for special praise and cites a number of Galiwinku success stories (especially Wesley Lanhupuy and the Reverend Terry Djininyini). In referring to the contemporary educational standards Rurrambu observed: "their academic ability in the classroom somehow, I don't know what is happening, but it is much lower than it used to be" (NTRS, A7241 16.22).

The Church's decision to empower those at Galiwinku gradually had its origins in the 1965 Committee of Inquiry and came to fruition with the Commission of Enquiry (1974) resulting in the Free to Decide report. The Church believed that the previous nine years had witnessed an effective transfer of skills and knowledge, making it possible for the community to be effectively managed (at least politically) by Aboriginal people. Unfortunately, it was unable to prepare the new managers fully for the proliferation of government backed enterprises, imposed concepts like incorporation and the destabilising impact created by the uncertainty of government and policy during the Whitlam and post-Whitlam eras. Such developments had inspired the senior Yolngu elder quoted in the Free to Decide report to observe "but who will rule the rules" and provide the basis of analysis for the final chapter of this thesis.
1. There appears to have been some confusion in the minds of the editorial staff of *The Maningrida Mirage* between the number and volume of the issue. The confusion was rectified in later editions. The author has transcribed the references as they appear in the original text; the paper's date of issue provides the best reference point.

2. A "whurlie" is a rough bush shelter of traditional design constructed from any available material.

3. The relationship between the Welfare Branch and the Forestry Branch is covered in far more detail in AA, F1 67/2912, F1 74/6182, F1 75/2181 (inc 59/2973, 63/1135, 67/947, 71/1646).

4. These were somewhat different priorities to those of the pro-development lobby embodied in their projected town plan (1972). The proposed plan was presented in the image of an European tourist resort replete with supermarket, landscaped gardens, yacht club, service station, civic centre and hospital. (See AA, F1, 75-2181)

5. After December 1972, the description of superintendent became redundant and was replaced by community adviser. Similarly the word settlement was deemed inappropriate and was replaced by the more neutral community.
The "non-directive" approach and the Decentralisation movement.

[T]he history of Aboriginal contact with Europeans has shown, force and threat are not the only means of changing a culture. The same end can be achieved through transactions in a low key without obvious intent. The line between 'influencing' and 'directing' is quite thin, and in advising people on how to go about making their own decisions the distinction can be thoroughly blurred (C Berndt, 1977, 418).

Outstations, decentralised communities, homeland centres and, to a lesser extent, satellite or scatter communities all describe a phenomenon which became so prevalent after 1972, principally in Arnhem Land, that it became known as a movement involving numerous groups of Aboriginal people returning to their traditional homelands to establish more permanent ties with their "country". The movement tended to have its strongest support in the remote, monsoonal areas of the Northern Territory (particularly north-east Arnhem Land) where approximately 1200 people lived permanently on outstations. It was estimated that 3000 aborigines in the Northern region of the Territory lived permanently on outstations by 1979 (DAA brochure, 1979). In the central region of the NT, the movement started to gather impetus after 1973 and, by 1979, the number of outstations fluctuated around sixty-five with approximately 2,700 permanent occupants (DAA brochure). Outstations were also located in the Warburton area and the Central Desert of WA and the Cape York Peninsula (especially
the Aurukun region). Although outstations were generally situated in remote areas involving traditional Aborigines, they also developed in areas that had long experienced European contact. For example, the Yarrabah community about forty-five kilometres south of Cairns (Qld), sustained one outstation, Buddabatu. As the process of decentralisation intensified, previously centralised settlements (particularly government settlements like Maningrida) became service or resource centres providing outstations with an administrative and socio-economic base to allow Aboriginal people to "re-establish communities along more traditional lines and under traditional leadership" (DAA brochure).

Scholars have been varied in their interpretation of the phenomenon. Coombs (1974), Gray (1975, 1977) and Meehan and Jones (1980) tended to emphasise its reactive nature. In their view, the most popular explanation of the movement's origin and development, Aboriginal people were portrayed as returning to their traditional estates because they had tired of institutionalised settlement life characterised as it was by "too many Balanda" or identified with Jack Maritji's observation about Maningrida that "this place him grow too quickly" (The Maningrida Mirage, 6th September 1974). A more pragmatic, less dogmatic and idealised viewpoint has been presented by Bagshaw (1977, 1980) and Altman (1982) who analysed the phenomenon in the less idealised and more pragmatic terms of "push" and "pull" conceding that the major settlement like Maningrida still exerted considerable
influence and attraction to those wishing to pursue a more traditional life; it was something more than just a resource which attracted and repelled depending on the circumstance. A few others, such as Gerritsen, adopted a more extreme position. His "revisionist" perspective maintained that the explanation provided by Coombs, Gray and Meehan and Jones was eurocentric and

[n]ot based on an analysis of the internal social and political dynamics of the Aboriginal village....The struggle for access to resources is as important in explaining the Outstation Movement as the land, religion and other factors of the conventional explanation of the movement (Gerritsen, 1982b, 60).

Besides the reaction against settlement life and the struggle for "access to goods and services", a number of factors concerning the movement's origins and development have received scant attention from scholars. The radical shift in government policy to self-determination after 1972 and its partial support by the DAA bureaucracy coupled with the evolution of the Land Rights Movement, provided powerful reasons for people to return to "country", especially as the desire to maintain contact with their respective homelands had not been extinguished for many of them by settlement life'. Perhaps of even greater significance were the existence of historical precedents in both Maningrida and Galiwinku which provided a foundation for the large-scale development of the Outstation movement, the seeds of which had been nurtured by Shepherdson and to a lesser extent John Hunter for over twenty
years. Indeed many contemporaries (Evans, Penhall, Milikins and Milliken) described Shepherdson as the "father of outstations". Hunter's involvement in their development around Maningrida had occurred at a much later stage but it was this very aspect that had most impressed David Glasgow in the development of Gotjanjinjirra (Cadell Gardens, established 1966). Glasgow remembered that Hunter's approach was "new; previous Superintendents had wanted everybody centralised in one community not dispersed" (Glasgow interview, June 1990). Hunter's attitude to decentralisation was based on practical considerations. In 1966, it was unfashionable to talk about "cultural maintenance" or "return to country", but Hunter was inclined to the concept of decentralisation as Maningrida's saviour. The community's existing resources were stretched to the limit and serious water shortages had almost caused evacuation on two previous occasions. In Hunter's view:

If the community is to prosper, there must be industry, and a steady supply of primary produce. How to supply these needs? The answer is quite clear. Go to Cadell River. Here is a magnificent body of water continuously recharged by springs and possessing a terrific natural storage. The Problems? It is 25 miles away from Maningrida and would be an expensive undertaking to say the least. The alternatives? In the long term there are clearly none (The Maningrida Mirage, 17 April 1970).

Decentralise or perish was Hunter's message. This was not a popular position to assume in the height of the period of assimilation - especially by a NTA-appointed Superintendent. Nonetheless, it was a strategy that had been practised by Shepherdson; with MOM endorsement, since 1950. Shepherdson's
views about the size and structure of an Aboriginal settlement had been shaped by a different set of experiences to the architects of government settlements like Maningrida. He had directly experienced the numerous difficulties associated with inter-tribal conflict at Milingimbi prior to the re-settlement of Galiwinku. He had no desire to duplicate this experience and, consequently, those Aboriginal people who accompanied him to Galiwinku in 1942 had a closer affinity with the estates near to or on Elcho Island. The group was small, integrated and "protected", characteristics which Shepherdson wished to preserve. Trading posts, "spheres of influence", control points, the maximised use of resources and all of the other accoutrements of the late protectionism era (and MOM philosophy) grew under Shepherdson's tutelage. Galiwinku's experience was unlike Maningrida where the first attempt to establish a trading post lasted barely six months, followed by an absence of Europeans for eight years.

The Commonwealth was impressed with Shepherdson's achievements. The "natives" were protected and there "is little drift from Elcho island sphere into Darwin" (AA, F154/80). The review report for 1950 recorded Shepherdson opening an "experimental trading post" near the mouth of Buckingham Bay on the mainland using his aeroplane for "inter-station work and developing trading outposts ...[thus] providing suitable employment in their own area for the natives in their sphere of influence to develop self-supporting communities" (AA, F154/80). This activity was
atypical for the period and led Gordon Sweeney, the Acting District Superintendent to remark:

In the development of the above policy where the medical, educational and industrial activities are concentrated at one institutional centre in the sphere of influence, there is a decided tendency for natives to leave their own areas and concentrate at the centre and the hunting resources of the environs become overtaxed. The development of outstations, with some form of supervision, is sound policy towards encouraging the natives to remain in and develop the resources of their own areas and relieves the concentration of natives at the main centre. Mr. Shepherdson has encouraged some of the outlying natives to remain in their own areas and utilise the hunting and other natural resources. He has formed trading outposts at Buckingham Bay, Wessel Island and on the mainland near English company Islands, where the natives work crocodile skins, turtle and pearl shell (AA, F154/80).

Moreover, although archival material generally described the trading outposts as "his" outstations, they also conceded that [h]is undertaking is appreciated by the natives...[and] is indicated by the fact that at each place so far established the natives have undertaken the clearing and preparation of the landing strip, without any supervision whatsoever. It speaks highly of the confidence Mr. Shepherdson has in the common sense of these bush natives when he leaves them to prepare the strip and then, following an examination from the air makes a landing and then uses them for the purposes of trade and barter (AA, F154/80).

The relative success of Shepherdson's approach to developing trading posts or outstations raises the point, why didn't the NTA emulate it? The Administration had attempted to do so in 1949 with the trading post established by Kyle-Little and Doolan at Maningrida but from the onset the venture was doomed
to failure. A severe lack of material resources and personnel, lack of missionary zeal and a change in government policy all conspired to work against this early form of decentralisation. Future development of communities would be based on more sophisticated infrastructure, the provision of more complex Europeanised services and, although not recognised initially, the increased size of communities. The policy of assimilation suggested one culture, one people, one Australia and had little (or no) place for Aboriginal groups intent on pursuing their own cultural interests.

In some locations, the new policy resulted in the forced concentration of Aboriginal people in government settlements (for example, Papunya) but this did not occur in either Galiwinku or Maningrida. It has been argued that Galiwinku was settled by Aboriginal people who identified with Shepherdson and had a greater affinity with that "country". They were not forced to live there and, wherever possible (or economically viable), decentralised communities were developed. Galiwinku would never experience the rapid expansion of outstations as Maningrida did after 1972 for "scatter communities" had been a part of that community's landscape for many years (see map 2, 165). The majority of the Galiwinku outstations were operating prior to 1960. Other outstations were serviced from the Methodist missions based at Milingimbi or Yirrkala).

Maningrida provided a different case study. Had the founders
MAP 3: THE PRINCIPAL OUTSTATIONS SERVICED FROM GALIWINKU (1976/7)

OUTSTATIONS
1. Nikawu (Howard Island)
2. Gulumangirr
3. Banthula
4. Gital
5. DJurranalpi
6. Dholi
7. Matamata
8. Mirnngaija
9. Ngalyindi
of the second last of the government settlements been more
diligent and carefully searched their records, they would have
discovered that their initial intention to restrict the
settlement to a medical and control point could easily be
thwarted by the "natives" themselves. Kyle-Little had been
surprised to count over 300 of them congregated around the
trading post several months after it had started its
operations and, a decade later, the same rapid, uncontrolled
expansion in the community's population re-occurred. The
attempt to stop the drift to Darwin had become the rush to
Maningrida.

According to Bagshaw (1970), the principal reasons underlying
this exodus from the traditional homelands were "material
novelties, the prospect of participation in the cash economy
and the lack of emphasis placed by staff on fundamental
Christianity" (Bagshaw, 1970, 6). Whilst it was undeniable
that these were important considerations which explained the
rapid increase in Maningrida's population, they did not take
into account another factor of fundamental importance - the
equally important element of curiosity. The desire to
experience Balanda culture had already been partially aroused
by the trading post experience and had been reinforced by
Aborigines returning to their homelands after visiting Darwin.
The bright lights of Darwin, which had moved many to make that
long and arduous journey, were now more conveniently placed.
Jimmy Gulerawina was a case in point. He had previously
walked overland to Darwin in 1950 but returned to his
traditional country near Cape Don because he was "lonely". In a contribution to the Maningrida Mirage he wrote:

I stayed there (near Cape Don) for one year then Tommy Wadaminya came to me and said Jimmy will you come with me to Darwin? I said, 'Yes, when will we leave?' Tommy said 'tomorrow morning'. That day we left Blyth River. We started to walk to Darwin. When we came to Maningrida Creek there was somebody. When I walked over to see, there was a welfare man. His name was Mr. Drysdale. I used to know him before. I said to Tommy 'He is a welfare man'. We were happy that we had met a man from Darwin. Also there were Djuibu, Michael Munbulmore, Allan Marrkiana - 8 men altogether. I want you to help my missus. Will you? I said 'Yes I will' (The Maningrida Mirage, 12 September, 1969).

Besides demonstrating that Maningrida settlement was already helping to halt the drift of Aboriginal people to Darwin and to implement the policy of assimilation, Gulerwina's observations were significant in a number of other ways. Jimmy introduced Mr. Drysdale as a distant, curious figure in much the same way that one might introduce an alien from another world. When he said, we were "happy" that we had met a man from Darwin, one could easily substitute an ally from Darwin. At this juncture, in the above quotation, the reader was acquainted with the fact that Jimmy and Tommy were accompanied by six other men which was a wise precaution as these Blyth River men were journeying through the country of their traditional enemy, the Gunavidji.

Maningrida continued to attract immigrants from distant estates and, by 1960, its Aboriginal population had climbed to 480, just under half coming from the Blyth River region while
the Gunavidji constituted less than 15%. (Hiatt, 1962, 15)

During the same period, the Methodists were actively seeking to decentralise Galiwinku by encouraging the growth of "scatter communities", not in the form of outstations, that would proliferate a decade later, but as larger, more permanent, satellite communities - "outstations more akin to villages". Lake Evella (Gapuwiyak) and Ramingining located to the west and south of Galiwinku respectively both evolved in this manner. The MOM hierarchy supported the development of these newer communities as well as those already existing as outstations from the days of trading posts on a number of grounds. The District Commission report (1961) recognised that outstations had been developed on a large scale by Elcho Island...The services rendered by this medium are invaluable. Christian contact is made through worship, medical care is given, trading is carried out and social welfare work is undertaken. Seeds and general garden materials are supplied to those who wish to garden....It is interesting to see the efforts of Aboriginals in these areas and to note their independent development3 (NTRS 53, A7484 38 4 1).

Recommendation 6 of the report was quite unambiguous about over-populated stations and the need to decentralise:

Where the population of any station has increased to the stage that the station becomes unwieldy, a course of decentralisation be followed by the establishment of outstations and the possibility of new stations be investigated (NTRS 53, A7484).

MOM explained the increase in the number of outstations mainly in terms of increased government financial subsidies but
rejected the notion that loans should be accepted from
government agencies to operate them. They should be
economically self-sustaining, although the report observed:

In time it might be possible when the outstation had
sufficiently developed to have such an outstation
gazetted as a full station and thus be eligible for
such subsidies and capital grants as are available
to stations (NTRS 53, A7484).

Evidence has been presented that shows outstations evolved in
embryonic form prior to 1972; in Galiwinku, this had occurred
two decades previously. In order to understand better the
emerging Outstation movement, it is necessary to view its
evolution not only in terms of Aboriginal disaffection with
institutionalised life but also in the context of changes in
attitude in the administration of Aboriginal affairs and the
manner that this impacted on policy. From 1969 onwards an
increasing element of concern, indeed anger, was being
expressed by Aboriginal people as well as their European
allies at various forums within and outside the community
context. Four years prior to Dr Coomb's seminal paper on the
Outstation movement, in which outstations were given official
recognition and financial support, Jim Downing had delivered a
paper to the ANZAAS Conference (1969) which argued, in strong
terms, about the lack of consultation that had taken place
between government and Aboriginal people. Downing was drawing
on his social work experience and training in attempting to
develop a more humanistic policy towards the treatment of
Aborigines. This new policy drew heavily upon elements of
community development which he perceived as a process involving equal participation between the client and the "agent" of development. Downing was concerned that the overly-directed, institutionalised nature of community life had stifled Aboriginal initiative and caused considerable cultural dislocation and dysfunctional behaviour.

Downing was one of many who were rejecting, with greater frequency, the basic ideology underlying the policy of assimilation. His forthright but polite criticism took on a more trenchant form with Pastor Albrecht (a Lutheran missionary from Hermannsburg near Alice Springs) at the Missions/Administration conference in 1971. Presenting a blistering attack on the NTA's failure to address the plight of Aborigines in the Northern Territory effectively (especially in Central Australia), Albrecht observed:

I believe the policy [assimilation] and its method to be bankrupt and sterile - incapable of fostering the kind of changes needed in Aboriginal Society.... Welfare programs had given the people a higher standard of living yet in the social area it appeared to have achieved little more than hasten the social destruction and disorganisation of an already badly damaged Aboriginal society (AA, Fl 71/4090).

Albrecht continued by isolating four basic structural differences between the NTA and Aboriginal people. He argued that Aborigines constituted an entirely different culture to those who defined policy and programs, possessed different languages which made consultation difficult and lacked an
economic power base to make "themselves felt". Additionally, he maintained Aborigines did not possess the "know how and sophistication to manipulate the political process to press for [their] own ends" (Fl 71/4090). These differences had historically made it "very easy for those working in this situation to inject into policies and programs their own feelings and aspirations and cultural biases" (Fl 71/4090).

Albrecht argued:

[T]he present assimilationist approach is closely wedded to the imposition approach...including too much of our thinking and approach and too little of the Aboriginal approach and thoughts....I am of the opinion that the rates and degrees of change must rest with the Aboriginal people (Fl 71/4090).

Albrecht clearly reflected the growing trend pointing to the need for change in the administration of Aboriginal affairs. Although Albrecht would be less than pleased to be described as an architect of self-determination, he was mounting an argument validating Aboriginal self-determination in 1971, several years before Whitlam translated it into a political platform. Already one was able to detect the use of key words which would become a part of the intellectual armory of the new approach. "Felt needs", the "imposed approach", consultation and the validity of cultural maintenance. These views were not held exclusively by disaffected missionaries like Albrecht and Downing. Government operatives in positions of power and close to the grass roots like John Hunter as well as the emerging brigade of younger ASOPA graduates had developed doubts about both the legitimacy and practical
effectiveness of assimilation. One such person was Bill Gray who applied the ideas and language of the new approach to provide an explanation of the outstation trend.

According to Gray, there were five contributing factors underlying the movement's rapid expansion. These were the strong identification with ancestral homelands by Aboriginal people which had not been "criteria for the establishment of missions and settlements where geographical and administrative factors played the principal roles" (Gray, 1977, 116). Additionally, non-traditional owners had a lack of autonomy in the settlement setting and wished to protect their traditional country from mineral exploitation. Moving "back to country" also reinforced the notion of land rights which had become a topic of general and active debate. Finally, Gray acknowledged that political support from government further supported the movement but acknowledged the existence of "bureaucratic resistance".

Gray viewed the outstation trend as a legitimate, wholly Aboriginal initiative which was entirely consistent with the new policy of self-determination. "I believe", wrote Gray "that decentralisation constitutes one of the most positive steps taken by tribal Aborigines to regain their independence and most importantly re-establish their relationships with land" (Gray, 120). It was an affirmation of Aboriginality and endorsed the legitimacy of the new policy. A trend or movement which, according to the Free to Decide document, was
characterised by a "collective sense that now is the time". Gray argued that this new trend required a "non-directive approach" based on "felt need", "commitment" and "response". If this approach was to operate optimally, more specialists in community development would be needed at a local level to be responsive to the client group. Moreover,

[i]t is considered vital in community development that the different technical services and departments of government operate on the basis of a common approach....By adopting a common approach it is suggested that a high degree of consistency and continuity will be achieved and this will help minimise the negative aspects of...community development (Gray, 1975, 47-48).

The trend, referred to by Gray, commenced in Maningrida in 1972. By 1976, in what John Altman (1982) described as the development stage of the movement, there were fifteen outstations (see map 3, 174). In 1979, that figure had stabilised to twenty occupied outstations with an average population of thirty-three and an extensive population variation; from eight to 109 at Jimarda on the Blyth River (Altman, 7). Providing services to these communities had become the responsibility of the Outstation Resource Centre (ORC) which had been formed in 1975 and was part of Maningrida Council. Although access and provision of resources to Maningrida had increased from 1973, they were still finite and it soon became apparent that the ideological disposition of the Europeans involved in the ORC were at variance with the town's administrators. Maningrida, once highly centralised, was now surrounded by numerous smaller communities making the
MAP 4: OUTSTATIONS SERVICED FROM MANINGRIDA (1976/7)

- Outstations
- Roads
- Townships

Cape Stewart

BOUCAUT

BAY

Milingimbi

To Darwin

To Gove

Liverpool Creek

MARRKÖLIDBAN

Marryolidban

MORMERA

NGANKORLORD

To Darwin

MARRKÖLIDBAN

Marryolidban

MORMERA

NGANKORLORD

To Gove

To Darwin

MARRKÖLIDBAN

Marryolidban

MORMERA

NGANKORLORD

To Gove
identification of its total needs and the setting of priorities for future development extremely difficult, a point which did not escape the observation of Mick Ivory, the Regional Officer for the Northern District (DAA):

By the term Maningrida, I do not mean just the immediate environs of the settlement but extending as far as the Blyth River in the West, Margaliban in the south west, Dugalijaril in the south and any other areas where Aboriginals may identify and establish themselves in the future (AA, Fl 83/487).

The task of reconciling these irreconcilable forces within Maningrida and other communities fell mainly into the hands of what DAA termed the Community Adviser, a vague position occupied by one or more luckless individuals with poorly defined roles and little departmental support. In "Duties of the Community Adviser" (1975), Creed Lovegrove (Director DAA - NT) attempted further clarification:

The importance of the Community Adviser's role is reflected in the fact that he is the senior departmental officer at the local level. This does not mean, however that he is there to make decisions about the administrative details associated with the running of the settlement. This is the responsibility of the Administrative Officer. But where issues affecting policy are in question, the Community Adviser has the responsibility and authority to decide those issues (Lovegrove, 1975).

The difficult nature of the position required extraordinary skills both of a cross-cultural nature and an ability to transcend the ideological infighting between the European enclaves that was characteristic of Maningrida. Advisers
tended to become sacrificial lambs attracting large volumes of criticism that otherwise would have been directed at DAA in Darwin. While DAA prevaricated and tried to reconcile their desire to control in the context of a policy that allowed Aboriginal autonomy, most Aborigines had developed fairly clear ideas about the administration of their own country and development of outstations as well as the aspect of commitment which was one of the preconditions of DAA support.

Bobby Joram, an outstation visitor had reported to Maningrida Council in August 1972 that

[h]e had been working with his private group and wanted people to move into Maragalidban quickly, before the wet. His group were going to build a hospital and school just the same as Maningrida. He would be the Superintendent and would have nothing to do with the Government or mission. He wanted to start now. His father wanted to protect his burial ground and didn't want it knocked about by a bulldozer (The Maningrida Mirage, 4 August 1972).

Joram was not alone in his views about the future development of his estate. Two common themes emerge: no direct Balanda involvement within the community context and outstations presented as smaller, more controllable versions of Maningrida. The attitude of no direct European involvement was expressed quite forcefully by Johnny Bulun Bulun in a letter to DAA asking for assistance to move his Djakaljirapurra group "back to that country". A "core group" were already domiciled and Bulun Bulun stated:
We want to go back there and BUNDALIL will be boss and we young blokes will work for blackfella, helping each other - no balandas. We will have our own secretary....We'll need some tools. We can fix up that road ourselves - no grader, no bulldozer - the old people get wild because they break the country. We want to all work together doing our own work for ourselves - no balandas pushing or telling us jobs (AA, Fl 74/1425).

The notion of duplicating the foundation settlement in smaller, more controllable form was not confined solely to Maningrida. Similar sentiments were expressed by the residents of Matamata (a Galiwinku outstation) to the DAA field officer who reported in June 1974:

This community envisages expansion of the village to a town plan consisting of a church, store, school, single men's hostel, 10 houses, a sports oval, cemetery, garden and water supply with finances coming from a fishing industry, craft wood and possibly a logging industry (AA, Fl 74/801).

A common element linking outstation groups in Maningrida and Galiwinku was not the rejection of European goods and services but rather the qualified manner in which they were to be utilised. This was related directly to these groups' desire for increased autonomy and control. A political climate now existed which allowed them to exploit this desire in a pragmatic manner. A completely opposite response, however, was expressed by Finity, the pseudonym for an Aboriginal teenager from Maningrida interviewed by Peter Williams for a film documentary entitled The Other Side. All of the anger and intensity that underlay the traditional reactive explanation of the Outstation movement's origins was captured
in this following extract:

Finity expressed his dislike for the school, the settlement staff and 'all' white man's things. As his confidence rose his bitterness intensified. His face contorted with hatred as he said 'I would like to kill all the school teachers...no, not hurt them - finish them up for good.' He wants to go 'bush' never to return. All 'white man's things' will be discarded. For food he intends 'singing' buffaloes and crocodiles - 'an old man told me how.' He said he has no need for Maningrida, its people or its material things (The Maningrida Mirage, 15 May 1970).

Finity's reaction to the European presence was expressed in an idealised, negative manner, inconsistent with the positive pragmatic responses shown by Joram or Bulun Bulun. He acted like a sensitive social barometer, indicative of a deeper community unrest, for the three years prior to the rise the Outstation movement were years of disharmony in Maningrida. Many others observed this increased tendency towards social dislocation. For example, Superintendent Hunter had noted in a letter to his Acting Assistant Director in November 1970 that "there has been an increased number of settlement disturbances of late, usually at public gatherings - a place traditionally reserved as a place readily designed as a forum to display aggrievement" (AA, Fl 73/4512). In an attempt to portion the blame for this increase in conflict, it was suggested by the NTA that the "disturbances" were likely to be related to the increased consumption of alcohol. But Hunter found that "it was difficult to establish any definite connection between beer sessions and general disturbances" (Fl 73/4512). A year later, he continued to maintain there was a
continued decrease in law and order and it was especially disturbing "to see council rebuffed in its efforts to maintain peace in the community" (F1 73/4512); he concluded that there was a need for a police station. Late in 1972, Maningrida Council was still unable to develop any "unity of purpose". When the Whitlam government introduced the policy of self-determination, it was not the collective element of pan-aboriginality that was embraced by many of Maningrida's traditionally orientated population but a desire to decentralise. The new policy provided an opportunity to return to the homelands with both community and government support, to return as more separate groups, ridding themselves of the direct control of the Balanda but quite sensibly not many of his material accoutrements. Relocated in such a manner, they would also be largely freed of inter-tribal tensions for the element of curiosity which had originally drawn many of these people to Maningrida had been thoroughly extinguished. Many Europeans had now become figures of derision as well as anger but it was the social aspects of European culture - style, manner and conduct - which were rejected not the material domain. The return would simplify their immediate circumstances, not a return to the pristine nature of the past prior to the Balanda incursion, not an embrace of Finity's distorted world view but rather a recognition of a changed externally-driven policy and a desire to grow in a less artificial environment. It was essentially an effective, pragmatic adaptation.
Few, however, were to consider the fuller implications of this move "back to country" and the inherent contradictions it contained. Jack Maritji was one of those few who were able to expose skillfully to his countrymen some of the dilemmas underlying their move back. Making the point that there were "good" as well as "bad" Balanda, he observed that the "good" Balanda "fight for us...I cant help them but they help me [for] I have to fight for the Gunavidji's tribe to say. What they think about these balanda? For grow this country too big or little" (The Maningrida Mirage, 6 September 1974). Maritji continued by saying he could speak freely because unlike many of his countrymen, "I am lucky. Because I don't work with or for them" (6 September 1974). Although still living in Maningrida, he remained a Jinang man, "I am still thinking as I am a Jinang man. And my father used to live around this place a long time ago....I like to live around in same way....[B]ut this is a different life now" (6 September 1974). In addition, he broached the issue of education. "We need the kids to be the new bunggawa here very soon. And we wanted them to help the old people understand. Are we thinking for this?" (6 September 1974). Although he conceded that "life is different now", he threw the gauntlet down to those considering a more permanent life on the outstations:

For the outstations. What they think about for this plenty balanda at Maningrida? Do you want for some teachers to go to every outstations to teach all this bush children? For depend how long you want them there. So that kids can learn and help that station. More better for own languages known not balanda's own. (6 September 1974)
As Maritji expressed his own carefully considered thinking, the editorial of The Maningrida Mirage observed that, subsequent to early 1973, Aborigines were walking overland between Maningrida and Darwin in greater numbers, showing a new maturity and greater assertiveness by demonstrating their "courage and integrity" rather than the fact that they may well have been less fortunate than their countrymen in securing an appropriate vehicle. The editorial was equally critical about the use of "insipid" Balanda place names like "Navy Landing" and "Rocky Point" and urged Aborigines to use the correct indigenous names to describe these places.

Towards the end of 1973, the newspaper was becoming even more strident and insular as indicated by this report about a meeting between parents of school children and teachers:

The meeting (at school well attended but only one Aboriginal parent) talked about some of the things that had happened in the old days when the Government in Canberra and Darwin had tried to stop the Mirage from talking about things in Maningrida. We give warning that the Government or anyone else will not stop the Mirage from saying what it has to say (The Maningrida Mirage, 15 February 1974).

It was significant that the paper's editor, at that time a school teacher, would soon become an integral part of the ORC (the group created by DAA to service outstations). His views and those of his immediate ORC colleagues constituted the nucleus of the "left" and received considerable ideological sustenance from the expansion of the Outstation movement. By
the commencement of 1975, it had become an established reality in Maningrida and not the "seven-day wonder" some of the more conservative employees of DAA had predicted. It had continued to expand since 1972 and could no longer be ignored from an administrative point of view, especially as one of the main criterion for success, commitment, had repeatedly been demonstrated by the fledgling outstations. Clearly, government needed to consider seriously the delivery of services to these communities. Initially, MPA had fulfilled this role. Fortnightly "tucker runs" by either vehicle, boat and, later, aeroplane had not only provided food but also an avenue for cashing social security payments and a means by which art and craft could be collected for sale. As the number of outstations around Maningrida grew and their distance from the settlement increased, MPS's role as service-provider was placed under additional pressure. Besides the increase in government support as well as support from a small but vocal group of Europeans in Maningrida, social security payments, now more readily available to Aborigines, provided additional income and an economic base for the movement's expansion although this should not be over-estimated as a contributing factor. As Meeham and Jones (1980) argued, although there was an infusion of capital, the per capita income of Aboriginal people in their Blyth River based study was still very low. Perhaps of equal importance was an argument, of practical significance, presented by Chris Haynes (1975) concerning the condition of roads around much of Maningrida. Although the Forestry Branch were no longer
present in Maningrida during this period, they had left behind an enduring legacy. There were now 800 kilometres of forestry roads between the town and Blyth River enclosing about 200,000 acres of forest. This road infrastructure, having only been subjected to several "wets", was still in very good order not yet requiring extensive maintenance as it would in later years.

Increased income, better and more extensive roads, government support through increased subsidies and a Land Rights inquiry was paralleled by the more general use of vehicles among Aborigines. As previously argued, most Aboriginal people were quite pragmatic in their attitude toward the European material domain, none more so than European technology. Motorised transport as well as the more extensive use of other mechanical devices (such as outstation windmills) was, perhaps, the most important factor underlying the creation of the ORC, MPA having neither the expertise or resources to assume responsibility for this aspect of service delivery. The Progress Association, however, continued to maintain the "tucker run" and would later still establish small, independent shops in several of the larger outstations. The ORC (later to become Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation) assumed responsibility for the collection and sale of art and craft, the maintenance and repair of vehicles, the provision of general community services such as banking, social security, grants, loans and fire arms.
The link between MPA and the ORC remained strong. They were both dependent upon one another to service their client groups effectively but the ORC claimed the higher moral ground: their's was purely an outstation affair for, with only one European in the workshop, "it is much more comfortable for people coming into the bush, they can take time to explain their problems and don't feel flustered in the presence of too many hurrying Europeans" (ORC Report, 1976-7, 6). The new organisation experienced problems with cash flow and the need for an outstation council to make rulings about vehicle use was recognised "rather than European ORC workers forced to make awkward decisions which can lead to certain people having access to equipment and others resenting this" (ORC Report, 7). Among the ORC's main concerns was "that the outstations are not subjected to the blitzkrieg European oriented building programs of the MHA (Maningrida Housing Association) which Aboriginal people cannot control" (ORC Report, 40). For the leadership of the ORC the single most important issue was justice for outstation people because "council's funds should be carried out with regular regard for Aboriginal population distribution in the Maningrida area" (ORC Report, 42). This statement alluded to the population distribution statistics for Aborigines. In 1977, these statistics showed that a proportion of 2:1 were living on outstations (ORC Report, 1977). The ORC were outraged that the Council's budget was heavily weighted in the provision of services for the town and not their area. Besides the injustice afforded to Aboriginal people, the reduced effectiveness of services provided by the
ORC to their clients threatened the positions of that organisations predominantly European administration.

Clearly for a "welfare missionary" (a contemporary term used to describe a community-based European applying the policy of self-determination in a zealous manner) or "adventurer" (Gerritsen's terminology) to be respected by the client group, it was necessary to excel in the provision of goods and services.

There can be little argument that the ideological disposition and political foundations of the Outstation movement and its spokesmen were diametrically opposed to those Europeans living in Maningrida who would soon be called the "right". The latter's perception of the movement was cynical and non-receptive. For them, everything the movement represented existed in a state of dynamic opposition. Aboriginal autonomy, return to their country on their terms, having not to "suffer the work ethic", help from "white experts" - all luxuries denied to the "ordinary Australian" and all at the "taxpayers' expense" were common refrains from the "right". These views were expressed with some force in 1976 but reached their zenith in 1977. They were to be found in their most blatant manifestations in the articles of Davenport and in the slightly more moderate views expressed by Sam Calder (MHR), Phil Brain (Progress Party) and Roger Vale (MLA) during 1977 in the lead-up to the Territory Elections. Even well-known scientists were prone to make somewhat overactive
contributions to the outstation debate. Harry Messel in the article, "Massacre in Arnhem Land", (The Australian, 12 June 1976) claimed that now that the return of Aboriginal groups to their homelands had received government endorsement and "armed and transported by modern technology" they would "wipe out the area's fish and wildlife in perhaps four or five years". Messel continued: "He [the Aboriginal] kills what he sees and what he can kill....[C]onservation as such, with some rare exceptions, has little or no meaning to him" (12 June 1976).

Perhaps Messel should have restricted his comment to matters about which he was expert, for Crocodylus porosus (the estuarine crocodile), bore little resemblance to the social and political organisation of the Aborigines of Arnhem Land. Messel was unable to conceive that traditional Aboriginal people would only exploit a resource to satisfy their immediate needs and social standing. Exploitation for the sake of economic profit or social gain, thus resulting in the decimation of resources in Arnhem Land, did not occur for the very technology that could create this scenario would work against it. A hunter may well have wished to demonstrate his prowess as a hunter - thus securing his social standing among his family and peer group - but, if the thousand magpie geese he shot with his high technology shotgun were not refrigerated and arrived at his relative's camp in a state of advanced decay, he would become a subject of ridicule and possibly anger.
The views expressed by the European "right" of Maningrida, and in their more extreme forms by the "right" ideologues, Messel and Davenport, were characteristic of a "white back-lash" towards Aboriginal groups pursuing the Outstation alternative. After 1978, the movement's expansion stabilised and the intensity of European over-reaction subsided. Meehan and Jones (1980) have made some perceptive observations about this cultural over-reaction. They argued that the notion of Aborigines actually controlling their land "strikes deep into the rural folk memory representing as it does a peril within from without" (Meehan and Jones, 152). They referred to the hypocrisy of the "right" not being able to reconcile themselves to the fact that the most valuable land is always owned by a few; what was so different from a few pastoralists or Aborigines? Both authors found it ironic that Aboriginal reserves were designated as such because they were unproductive and concluded that "by degrading the nature of Aboriginal people you also degrade the value of their culture and thus the moral rights to pursue that culture" (Meehan and Jones, 154).

Whilst one cannot deny the importance of cultural differences underlying the intensity of the backlash reaction towards the Decentralisation movement, a fuller understanding of this complex phenomenon needs to be placed in the broader, economic and political milieux of Northern Territory politics and its relationship with successive Commonwealth governments particularly between 1972 and 1977. The historical origins of
this relationship have been analysed, mainly from a constitutional perspective, by Heatley. He argued that:

Since the 1940's, constitutional advancement has always been associated with concepts of economic growth and financial viability. The nexus between constitutional reform and the territory's capacity to generate internal revenue - or pay its own way - had been the fundamental tenet of Commonwealth policy and a prime argument for slow and incremental change (Heatley, 1990, 52).

In order to "pay its own way", land was seen as an object of exploitation to foster economic growth and power that would eventually lead to statehood and increased independence from the Commonwealth. In its own marginal way, the switch from forestry as an instrument of the Welfare Branch (1967), bolstering the policy of assimilation, to the entrepreneurial and self-contained Forestry Branch provided an excellent example of the importance attached to economic self-sufficiency within sections of the emerging Territory bureaucracy and legislature. This measured incremental change, as it had been reflected in the constitutional and economic empowerment of the Territory until 1972, however, received several serious setbacks. For example, after the Whitlam's government's election victory in December 1972, emphasis moved away from the economic to the social development of the Territory. Far greater emphasis was placed on Aboriginal health and education programs; budget allocations increased by 133% between 1972 and 1973. The mining and pastoral industries became depressed and individual positions and economic security were threatened. Aboriginal
control was particularly threatening to many Europeans not only because of different cultural attitudes embodied within land utilisation but also because jobs traditionally held by Europeans could now be legitimately claimed by Aborigines. Indeed, that had been one of the principal justifications made by Maningrida Council for the removal of European Forestry workers and staff of the DAA.

In this uncertain political and economic environment, perceived by many Europeans as "siege-like", it was not surprising that the elections for the first legislative assembly (1974) resulted in a rout for the Northern Territory Labor Party polling only 30.5% of the vote and unable to record any successful parliamentary representation. Eleven months later, the reforming zeal of Whitlam's Labor administration was permanently ended, replaced by a Coalition government headed by Malcolm Fraser. In his own, quite different manner, Fraser impacted heavily on the politics of the NT de-stabiliising the forces of conservatism and allowing, inadvertently, a resurgence of the NT Labor Party. This matter, and subsequent political developments in the Northern Territory (particularly as they related to the internal politics of Maningrida) are considered in more depth in the following chapter.

In the politically polarised environment of the Territory, which reached a high point towards the end of 1977, it could be expected that a certain amount of distortion would occur
between the opposed perspectives, the "left" idealising some aspects of Aboriginality, especially the Decentralisation movement, and the "right" developing a more cynical perspective viewing the Outstation movement as purely opportunistic. A more balanced viewpoint would represent the movement in terms of "reaction" and "response", largely as a genuine expression of anger and opportunity. Anger, the reactive component, towards an overly artificial, institutionalised community characterised by inappropriate and ineffective political institutions coupled with the responsive element, the opportunity to secure, develop and protect a resource in more culturally acceptable terms.

Finally, it is important to restate the significance of the Methodists' attitudes towards de-centralisation as the Northern Territory moved towards political uncertainty in 1977. They had encouraged the development of outstations (none more so than Shepherdson at Galiwinku), with the qualified support of Aborigines and the NTA, several decades prior to the implementation of the new policy of self-determination. Their actions, based as they were on a policy of gradualism, had reduced greatly the likelihood of severe internal conflict among the Yolngu. In a very real sense, the Yolngu were protected from the immediate political impact of the new policy. The strident desire to right previous injustice or the cynical view that the movement of Aboriginal people to outstations was purely opportunistic, neither encouraged debate among the Yolngu or the few missionaries who
remained at Galiwinku after 1974. The Yolngu did not fight among themselves but rather "hastened slowly", directing their energies towards economic survival and development, adapting to the reduced presence of the Methodists and adjusting to the new presence and policies of DAA.
ENDNOTES

1. For example, Mandarrg, the famous bark painter referred to by Meehan and Jones (1980) as well as some older Matai people continued to live in their estates rather than settle in Maningrida.

2. D Drysdale, a missionary and Maningrida's first superintendent (1957-61).

3. In 1961 the Aboriginal population of Galiwinku was 520 but it serviced outstations with a combined population of 700.

4. ASOPA was the acronym for The Australian School of Pacific Administration. The NTA used this Mosman based training institute to provide its patrol officers and later settlement superintendents with a rudimentary knowledge anthropology, legal studies and organisational theory.

5. Prior to the emergence of MPA, this role was carried out by the settlement Superintendent but he was only able to establish and maintain contact with a limited number of outstation groups.

6. The authors established the per capita income for the Anbara (a Blyth River group) in 1972-3 at $500. Between 1976 and 1977, the per capita income of the various outstation communities around Maningrida ranged from $1,300 to $245; the average was $550.

7. Professor H Messel headed a joint research program centred around the ecology and biology of the salt water crocodile. The program, at the time of "one of the world's largest wildlife studies", had its Arnhem Land headquarters at Maningrida.

8. However, it was quite unclear whether the new management of Northern Territory forests improved their profitability. The Report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Expenditure (May 1978) was scathing in their review of the Northern Territory forestry industry claiming that the total costs of the forestry programs since 1959 were "of the order of $10 million with revenue to date of $150,000" and that "the total expenditure of public funds on, or generated by, the forestry programs would be in excess of $30 million" (May 1978, 4).
Chapter 7

"Who will rule the rules...? The political spokesmen and the conflicting European enclaves.

The Progress Association! The Progress Association! The main one for everything in Galiwinku. The Progress Association will take over everything? Or? This afternoon we thought the Progress Association [would]...be the body for everything in Galiwinku. We squash the council into something smaller. Now we come to the Village Council - the same thing. Now what can we do? Who will rule the rules? Who will be the ruler of ruling the rules? Who will be the real power, Progress Association or Town Council? Who will be the real rudder or compass to show the instructions or guide the rest of the community (A Galiwinku elder quoted in the Uniting Church report, *Free to Decide*, 55).

One cannot help but feel a degree of sympathy for the perceptive and eloquent manner in which the slightly bewildered Galiwinku elder expressed his fears concerning the potential for increased community conflict in the wake of the rapid political changes in Aboriginal affairs, inaugurated by the Whitlam government, after December 1972. Certainly the stakes for confusion, non-direction and community conflict, especially in the arena of political control, had been raised. Opportunities for power brokerage in Maningrida and Galiwinku had increased and the field upon which political interaction took place had become less hierarchial and predictable. That development had not escaped the observation of those directly involved in the *Free to Decide* enquiry.
One of the major problems we will face in the years ahead is one of co-ordination. It is a problem just keeping track of all the organisations being established in towns. We need a register of organisations, together with descriptions of the functions of each organisation and its current activities (NTRS, A 52/53 7484 38.2).

The proliferation of government funded organisations and enterprises was made possible not only by a change in government policy but also by the dramatic increase in DAA's budget. Spending by the Commonwealth on Aboriginal affairs had increased sixfold between 1963/4 and 1972/3 with the greatest rise by 58% to $24.6 million in 1972/3. By 1975/6, Territory expenditure by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs had reached $43.9 million, "a figure that did not include spending by other departments or authorities on behalf of Aboriginals" (Heatley, 1979, 150). In that less restricted economic climate, DAA-funded community-based organisations grew in a non-directed manner, like field mushrooms in a paddock enriched by much bovine activity, not only in Maningrida and Galiwinku but elsewhere. Australian Archives contain testimony to many examples of the often short-lived affairs: rock-crushing at Ngukurr, real estate development in Darwin, B and I Yamma Areyonga musical instruments and even the Pink Pussy Cat Laundry Service in Alice Springs! (AA, E460/T7).

This short-term pump-priming approach towards enterprise development was indicative of a more fundamental problem. The government and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs had been
faced with a number of difficulties in translating the policy of self-determination into an effective tool on a community level, empowering Aboriginal people and encouraging them to be agents actualising the policy. In dismissing the past policy of assimilation as paternalistic and removing superintendents and the authoritarian structures that supported them from communities, a clear political stance had been taken by the Whitlam government. But DAA was either unwilling (or unable) to enact it. The theory of self-determination was far removed from the political reality; the theory that stated that all decisions were to be generated from within the community, with the Department using its powers with great discretion, never occurred. As the General Secretary pointed out in a report to the MOM board in 1972:

[F]or them the [Department] the real meaning of self-determination relates to the area of decision formerly held by their staff imported from outside the community. The decisions they want Aboriginal people to make are almost exclusively decisions required by the external agencies. Therefore, too, they shall control because the power of decision is dependent on control....What they are really talking about is the control of activities introduced and maintained by external agencies (NTRS, 52/53 A 7484 38 2).

The principal mechanism upon which this non-directing control pivoted was the incorporation of community organisations. The importance of this process was made abundantly clear by Prime Minister Whitlam in a press release in April 1973:

The basic object of my Government’s policy is to restore to the Aboriginal people of Australia their
lost power of self determination in economic, social and political affairs. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Bryant, will be introducing into Parliament...legislation to enable Aboriginal groups and communities to incorporate for the conduct of their own affairs. We see these incorporated societies, set up for the purposes chosen by their Aboriginal members, determining their own decision-making processes, choosing their own leaders and executives in ways they themselves decide, as the primary instruments of Aboriginal authority at the local and community level (Australian Government Digest, Vol (2) 1973 696).

In retrospect, it is difficult to comprehend how the widespread encouragement of such a sophisticated concept as incorporation, imposed as it was, could act as a universal salve to alleviate the myriad inequalities and inequities experienced by Aboriginal people in remote communities and elsewhere. Perhaps the semi-legal aura surrounding the institution was enough to disguise the fact that Aboriginal people would still be very much dependent on Europeans for the future operation and development of "their" communities. As Bagshaw (1977), Mowbray (1988) and Thiele (1982) have observed, the basic elements of control and paternalism which underlay assimilation were still very much alive and well within the ranks of DAA.

One useful way to consider further the negative impact of DAA's intervention into community-based organisations and enterprises through the process of incorporation may be gained by the analysis of a particular community organisation. The development and subsequent demise of the once financially-viable Galiwinku fishing industry is provides an apt case
Organised fishing commenced in Galiwinku in much the same way as the exploitation of the timber resource. The use of these local resources was seen as a way of making the community more self-sufficient and less dependent on the constantly scarce resources of the MOM where "the acquisition of a hack saw blade or hammer was seen as a capital item" (Gullick interview, 1991). In 1958, Clem Gullick, who had previously skippered the mission supply boat between the Methodist Arnhem Land communities and later built houses at Galiwinku, initiated a commercial fishing industry based at Galiwinku. He started the operation with "two canoes, half a dozen Yolngu and a fourteen foot timber boat, of [his] own construction, powered by an inboard motor" (Gullick interview). The motor boat was used to tow the canoes to suitable fishing areas.

By 1961, a government capital grant made possible the construction of a twenty-seven foot supply launch which serviced the expanding fleet of seven timber boats each containing fish storage facilities. The boats represented different clans within the community and each possessed its own captain and tribal totem. Gullick was acutely aware of the cultural imperatives underlying this organisation. By marrying the operation into a cultural context, he was able to meet its two principal needs, to supply a constant source of fish to both Galiwinku and external markets as well as occupying most of its work force with employment. The
ceremonial and funeral obligations of particular clans would always affect the operation but never stop it. These pragmatic attitudes, applied gradually to enterprise development, were hallmarks of the missionary approach in Galiwinku and impressed the Yolngu. They were able to see the product of their labour in the form of wages and a supply of fish. Gullick has made some telling observations about this period, especially in relation to the resistance of the Yolngu to rapidly introduced change and improvements in technology. For example, they resisted the change from cord to nylon fishing line for well over a year. Gullick also observed that the ice boxes never arrived back to the mother-ship completely full: "It was as if there was an imaginary line drawn across the ice box about three quarters of the way up. Once the line was reached, they felt they had done their days work so they went off hunting" (Gullick interview).

By July 1967, the weekly catch had risen to two tonnes, a considerable improvement on the catch rate of 150 pounds, nine years earlier. The industry was well established and productive when Gullick left the community. Six years later, the industry still operated but not as effectively as before causing Bariyat Djilpandanwuy to observe, "we want a man to work with the Fishing Co. like the missionary did - like Clem Gullick did - somebody we can trust with the money" (NTRS 41 A7421 16.10). The industry was increasingly placing a financial burden on Galiwinku council. It continued to receive DAA subsidies between 1974 and 1976 and superficially
appeared viable with a mother ship forty-five feet in length able to handle 8000 pounds of seafood per week. Although several of its fibre glass fishing boats were out of commission, the three remaining boats were catching 3000 pounds per week with weekly sales of $1,000 (A7421 16.10).

DAA decided that a fishing expert was required in order to develop a more viable industry. The expert was a professional fisherman, who believed that longer hours, prawning not reef fishing and, finally, separation from the Council as an autonomous organisation were the appropriate responses to achieve the goal of financial viability. His power stemmed mainly from the dominance DAA exerted over the Galiwinku Council. The importance of DAA financially to the Council was clearly recognised by the accountants Wallace, McMullen and Small. Writing to the Galiwinku Town Clerk on 28 March 1977, they observed that:

[Y]our council has to decide what action it takes bearing in mind that if it forces the issue the fishing company could go into liquidation and a substantial source of income lost....[W]e have also been advised that Galiwinku Seafoods Pty Ltd is the only fishing project that will receive government financial assistance and in the event of its failure then on no account will an alternative or future fishing project be funded (A7421 16.10).

The likelihood of liquidation produced significant responses from Djupandawuy and Rronang, recently elected Galiwinku Council Chairman and Vice Chairman and long-time participants in the fishing industry. Djupandawuy admitted to being very
old; it was he who, along with Gullick, had trained all the company's twenty members. He observed:

We don't understand what is happening here. We don't understand how the balanda fisherman gets paid. Does he get paid a little bit when there are a few fish caught and a lot when there are many? We don't know. We don't know what is in this man's heart or what is in his thinking (A7421 16.10).

Rronang's response was more probing. He attacked directly the Department's fishing expert's suggestion that Galiwinku Seafoods Pty Ltd maintained its autonomy from Galiwinku Council:

At the same time, other Europeans came who weren't Christians and they are leading us through a hard way (7 days a week and forget everything else including our cultural responsibilities) because they didn't take the trouble to learn about us and our culture, how we thought about it first (A7421 16.10).

Referring to his adviser's practice of "not looking after freezers and throwing out rotten fish which made us feel very sad", Roonan continued his devastating critique:

He told us that it was our company and that we yolgnu especially the directors would run it. That no one outside could interfere and foul it - that he would help us...but he spoilt it by using his own thinking and going ahead himself ordering things without consulting, the directors. We saw this and were'nt satisfied....An ordinary European is no use to us we want a Christian Missionary to be our adviser because they understand the people's feeling and culture. Ordinary balanda just ok with his mouth but it doesn't come from his heart (A7421 16.10).
Personalising his views even further, Rronang continued:

When we picked him up he said he can work with us go out fishing with us but he just talk words and say he go fishing but no action....[S]ometimes he listens to the direction but mostly just goes on his own way....[N]ow there are only three shareholders left....They lead us too fast...don't take time to advise us slowly. We didn't go to school we only learnt on the job. New Europeans don't know how to work with us. They expect us to know too much and go too fast. We should have this company closed down and make a slow start with a mission fisherman....Not separate from the Council like this but work together with the council and all the people. That company way is no good and I forget everything. My family, the Christian way, everything. This fishing company make me real uninterested and make me feel separate from my people and our way of doing things and our own thinking. This ordinary way of doing things (non-Christian) came here and separates us from our people and it also separates us from our Christian balanda people (A 7421 16.10).

Tragically, Galiwinku Seafoods Pty Ltd ceased to operate in 1978 at about the same time as the demise of the community's timber mill. With the exception of ALPA, which ran the Progress Association, the two economic mainstays of the mission era had ceased to exist. Galiwinku was becoming reliant increasingly on direct government financial assistance but, although it had become economically dependent, it was far from politically servile. Indeed, its adaptation to the changed external political reality was complex, sophisticated and subtle, adaptations lacking in the context of Maningrida especially between 1974-78.

The non-traumatic transition of Galiwinku's principal
political institutions during this period was, in part, attributable to the soothing effect of the missionaries. The Town Council remained under their guidance throughout 1970-72. Some of the vestiges of the mission days remained: Shepherdson attended council meetings in an advisory capacity, benediction occurred at the close of meetings and Burrumarra and Walalipa continued to play dominant leadership roles. Consequently an element of continuity was maintained. The Town Council was, however, placed under considerable pressure by the NTA to become an incorporated institution. Church staff working with Aboriginal councillors in an advisory capacity were particularly suspicious of the motives underlying government interest in incorporation and there is little doubt that this disquiet was transferred to their clients. After debate, lasting almost a year, the Town Council was incorporated under the NT Associations Ordinance (1963) on 14 October 1971. Several years later, the descriptive word "town" was dropped from council and it became known as the Galiwinku Council. Direct involvement in political decision-making by the Church within the Council ceased with the transfer of most church assets to the Galiwinku Council on the 1st July 1975. The Church's biggest fear lay in the question of whether the Yolngu involved in the administration of Galiwinku Council had a sufficient understanding of financial administration and whether they would abuse the system of global grants' favoured by DAA at that time. If abuse to the economic fabric of the community did occur, the archival material did not confirm it. Rather, one was confronted by the comparatively sophisticated
political responses by the Yolngu of Galiwinku between 1975-8. An excellent example of such a response occurred in the months between February and July 1975 when greater moves towards austerity in funding Aboriginal affairs were signalled by the incoming Coalition.

It was symptomatic of Galiwinku's greater community cohesion that, when faced with the perceived outside threat of a change of government and threatened funding cuts, the various community factions acted in union against a perceived common enemy, rather than in the orgy of intra-community fighting which characterised Maningrida a year later. Burrumarra, no longer dominant in the Galiwinku Council but still powerful politically, met with other clan leaders to fabricate a political address. The outcome was termed Mayali and was the product of three recorded meetings on 17 February 1976, 6 May and 17 May 1976. Mayali sought to make the reader confront the deeper meaning behind black-white relations and to consider Burrumarra's suggestion for greater cultural acceptance by means of suitable Yolngu art displayed in public institutions within Australia. This response was remarkably similar to that a quarter of a century earlier, embodied in the Arnhem Land Adjustment Movement, described in chapter 3. The importance of symbolism was paramount for Burrumarra:

This time we have two laws: Balanda Law and Yolngu Law: up comes blackness, up comes smoke, up come shadow. We don't like it that way. We don't want to see Aboriginal law changing all the time. The first government is changing the Aboriginal way of
life. The Second Government is getting into the House of Parliament in Canberra and changing the law, because of changing the Prime Minister and the Governor General of Australia. Aboriginal law and order are one, not changing right throughout the ages, People die out, the law never dies (NTRS 41, A7417 13.2.1).

Adopting a more conventional European stance, Galiwinku Council, through its Chairman and Aboriginal Council Clerk, addressed a hard-hitting open letter to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

On 30th June 1976 there were 227 people employed at Galiwinku by a total of seven employing bodies, the largest of these being the council which employed 156 people. Due to the dramatic cut of 63% in our budget council has found it necessary to terminate 77 people or 48% of our workers....This figure may look alarming but let me assure you that the true picture is much bleaker....We have an unemployment rate of 75%....Sir, no community irrespective of race, colour or creed can tolerate such a rate of unemployment (A7417 13.2.1).

Both responses to the threatened changes were viewed as legitimate by the Yolngu. The older cross-cultural intermediaries represented by Burrumarra's poignant Mualali, sought to evoke powerful imagery and symbolism to change the political stance of the "Second Government". Conversely, their younger equivalents, having acquired excellent Balanda literacy skills confronted their adversaries with hard empirical data accompanied by moral outrage. Yolngu support for these multi-faceted, sophisticated responses indicated a greater degree of political continuity and community cohesion during a period of federal Aboriginal policy characterised by
confusion and non-direction. It was epitomised nowhere more clearly than in the political fragmentation, polarisation and in-fighting which occurred in Maningrida during this period.

At Maningrida in April 1973, the era of Gunavidji self-determination had seemed finally to have arrived. The Gunavidji had wrested control of council and their legitimacy as the community's real power-brokers had been finally, if not belatedly, recognised. These were halcyon days for the Gunavidji who played pivotal roles in the removal of the DAA and forestry branch employees. In the aftermath of the removal of most Europeans from the community, the Gunavidji and their allies tried to reinforce and consolidate their power base further.

On October 6, 1974, Billy Yirrigin (the Gunavidji Council President) sent a plan of action for the future development and management of Maningrida to Prime Minister Whitlam and the Northern Territory Director for Aboriginal Affairs, Creed Lovegrove. The plan contained seventeen points and was rather controversial suggesting that the "incorporated bodies of the MPA be dissolved if this was deemed necessary and assist the Council in the incorporation of these bodies within its structure" (AA, E468/T4 76/460 Pt1). The plan left no doubt that the Gunavidji-dominated Council would represent the primary political focus in Maningrida, as can been seen by the diagrammatic representation below.
Perhaps of equal significance was the suggested role of the Community Development Office, second only to Council in terms of political power. The matter was pursued in more depth a month later in a communication between Community Adviser Wilders and the federal Minister for the Environment, Dr Moss Cass. John "Skip" Wilders was not new to Maningrida politics. He had spent several years assisting John Hunter as community superintendent and had acquired his nickname owing to his role as scoutmaster in the 1st Maningrida Boy Scout Troop. Later, he resigned from the DAA as community adviser and was employed
Wilders suggested that the Community Adviser is primarily an adviser while the Community Development Office can exercise more directive powers and hence limit the possibility of wrong decisions by the people or Council....[T]he Community Development Officer must be an outstanding man, first and foremost a manager also humanistic and of high principles. We do realise the danger of too much power in the one body but hope to counteract that with a strong council, also we would rather face the danger of over-action than passivity which hasn't helped us much in the past (E468/T4 76/460 Pt1).

Wilders's suggestion had been considered carefully and was based on a clear pragmatic response to a complex political situation. The transition between assimilation and self-determination had been very traumatic in Maningrida unlike in Galiwinku where the Church and community social structure fostered an element of continuity. Wilders was concerned that without strong leadership - he does not state it openly but he meant without another Superintendent Hunter - the community would experience more catharsis. His main fear centred on

[t]he splintering of hereto seemingly homogenous groups each of whom is going back to their country. While they set out as rather large groups, they slowly disintegrate into family units, each one jealously guarding his own (land) and watching the other (AA, E468/T4 76/460 Pt2).

The development of the Outstation movement certainly acted as a de-stabilising element in Maningrida politics and has been analysed in more detail in the preceding chapter but more disturbing was the interventionalist role of DAA, and later
still, the increase in conflict among Europeans within the community.

DAA opposed the Wilders/Yirrigin plan for Maningrida's political and economic development vehemently. The Department was displeased by the direct channels of contact which had been formed between many of Maningrida's power-brokers and senior Labor party ministers since the visit of bunggawa Whitlam; rarely had the corridors of power been so readily accessed by a remote Aboriginal community. Institutionalised Gunavidji control and a community-based political rival in the form of the Community Development Office were not an acceptable political outcome for the Department. DAA, still smarting over the dismissal of most of their community-based staff several years previously, wished to remain in control of a situation which had proved, historically, to be very volatile. Their principal mechanism for exerting this control lay in actively supporting the incorporation of Maningrida Council. Concurrently, they supported the incorporation of other organisations within the community (for example, the Maningrida Housing Association and the Maningrida Progress Association). In doing so, they tended to fragment any concentration of political power, concerned as they were with the negative rather than the positive attributes of such a concentration.

In March 1975, a nominal community council was set up as a prelude to adopting a formal constitution. The Council's
election was based on a pro-rata clan population covering nine "tribes" with twenty councillors representing Maningrida's permanent population of 900 Aborigines. As the Council was "democratically" constituted, it tended to diminish the importance of the Gunavidji. Described by Bagshaw (1977) as the "first council", in its initial stages it proved to be a highly fertile ground of activity for Aboriginal cross-cultural intermediaries. The Council met regularly, was characterised by active debate, encouraged community participation and arrived at coherent decisions. Such outcomes, no doubt, pleased the DAA as the Department had made it clear that it would only consider funding a community if it possessed "a nominal local council or representative body" (Bagshaw, 25). The speed, however, by which DAA was striving to unload financial responsibility to the Council was ill-advised given the lack of preparedness of the Councillors. For example, in August 1975, Dr "Nugget" Coombs approved the transfer of $940,000, in the form of a global (untied) grant, to Maningrida Council only a week after the organisation had made application for incorporation!

The Gunavidji were soon to learn that, although the federal government approved their control over "traditional land", this control did not extend to community politics and local government, at least as far as the Department was concerned. In a surprisingly short period of time, the Gunavidjis' new found political euphoria evaporated. They became aware that they were living in a most contradictory situation, torn by
two seemingly disparate laws. For instance, there was one law that would allow them to refuse entry permits to undesirable visitors wishing to enter their land and another law that would not allow them to stop the importation of alcohol into their community.

DAA was not concerned about the sensibilities of the Gunavidji. Their agenda dictated that the Council was incorporated and, on February 1976, the Council was formally incorporated under Part 17 of the Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act (1976). This legislation was meant to complement the Northern Territory Land Rights Act (1976). In theory, it gave Aborigines political autonomy (that is the right to be self-determining) but in reality, it increased DAA control over local government politics. Very few remote communities in the Northern Territory were then incorporated under the Council component of the Act, particularly Part 17 which gave the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs direct power to grant incorporation pending an application from "the existing council". After the intervention of Minister Viner and the removal of "the Maningrida Eight", Maningrida Council ceased to be an incorporated body and it was not until 1981 that the Council was incorporated under the Northern Territory Associations Act (1979)⁴. After February 1976, the new Council's membership was expanded from twenty to thirty councillors, then and included ten representatives from the outstations. The Gunavidji were angered that their traditional enemies should be so heavily represented. Within
months, their anger had turned to disillusionment. They saw the Council standing in the way of their political autonomy; consequently, they rejected its legitimacy. Within three months, the previously active Council had become moribund. It met thereafter on a number of occasions but the meetings were informal because a quorum could not be reached.

In a report to DAA, in December 1976, Viddy Jermaccans, the Community Adviser, noted the "indifference" of councillors to the business of council. Jermaccans was one of the many Community Advisers who worked in Maningrida between 1973 and 1978. He was a graduate of ASOPA and was one of the younger members of the Welfare Branch (later the Social Welfare Division) who had become disillusioned with the policy of assimilation and held the new policy of self-determination in high esteem. He was identified by the "right" as one of the key players in the "left" enclave. Jermaccans was one of two DAA-appointed community advisers during this period; Silas Roberts had been appointed as the Aboriginal Community Adviser. Both men were confused about their respective roles as advisers within the community but they avoided coming into conflict with one another. After having attended a council meeting, Jermaccans observed that:

[A]lthough many points were raised, only 4 people did the talking. The remaining 9 councillors would have not said a word between them. There was no general discussion on points raised or any attempt to reach general consensus....[T]his situation without Aboriginal reciprocity is insane. What is lacking is the feeling that the people are working for their own society (AA, E468/T4 76/460 Pt 2).
The lethargy of the Council had so incensed Glen Bagshaw (Manager of MPA and previously a community adviser) that he had written to the Assistant Secretary of DAA, Jeremy Long. He explained that the Gunavidji had chosen not to participate in the Council thus "avoiding any confrontation with people they do not like". He continued:

The local council...has been established chiefly because of a need to have an organisation that can be funded by your department to conduct a number of civic undertakings....[I]t has been brought into existence with no training and little guidance coming from a superintendent era to a decision making one, this has inevitably led to a situation wherein European employees have become the power and decision makers.... Maningrida has always suffered the burden of a surfeit of Europeans, prohibiting a climate of Aboriginal participation at a meaningful level (E468/T4 76/460 Pt2).

Somewhat ironically, the European population had increased dramatically since their almost complete expulsion in 1974. By November 1975, 169 Europeans lived in Maningrida. The Housing Association employed fifteen permanent staff as distinct from the fifteen to twenty European building contractors permanently living in the community. Twenty-six school teachers taught to a student population of two hundred. All of the senior positions within Maningrida Council were controlled by Europeans, a Council composed of councillors who had become indifferent to their leadership roles. The detachment of councillors was matched by a general desire among Aboriginal cross-cultural intermediaries to retreat more
to the background of community politics and let the Balanda engage in intense ideological battles, particularly in 1977. During this period, however, Aborigines continued to evolve as cross-cultural spokesmen. Indeed, younger members, people like Don W........, Gilbert W..... and Milark Wununguj learned valuable political lessons between 1976 and 1978 and applied them after 1978 but in 1977 without the "real rudder or compass" - to quote the Galiwinku elder referred to at the commencement of this chapter - the community's political direction was erratic and prone to increased tensions and rivalry.

Comments like "too many Balanda" and "they are supposed to be here to help us not to fight among themselves" were common observations made by Aboriginal people in Maningrida during the early months of 1977. DAA, unable to acknowledge that its lack of direction (predicated as it was by the tactics of divide and rule) may have contributed to the increased conflict, searched for scapegoats and found them in the Council appointed Town Clerk (Peter O'Connor) and Council Works Supervisor (Phil Brain). Consequently, they made a number of unsuccessful attempts to remove them from the community. At the heart of these early skirmishes were the external events that would coalesce Maningrida's European community into two embattled enclaves. The Northern Territory Election (13 August 1977), the National Aboriginal Council Election (November 1977) and the federal Election (December 10, 1977) all combined to factionalise the European community
into two groups, largely upon party political lines. Contemporary sources referred to one faction as the "left" and the other as the "right". In general terms, the numerically stronger "right" - Bagshaw estimated their number at thirty-five - was conservative in disposition. If they possessed a figurehead, for they were far less united than the "left", it would have been the Council Clerk, Peter O'Connor. He had previously worked for the Methodists at Goulburn Island and had played a dominant role in FAMCO. Grey haired and tallish, he was a "classic Baptist missionary type" (Cooke interview, 1993). He revered order and authority and, in his own way, was a caring person, indicated by his appointment to the Queensland Branch of Lifeline after his dismissal by Minister Viner; an appointment which the "left" greeted with sighs of disbelief and mutterings like "god help the distressed". The "right" drew many of their supporters from the Council Administration, Housing Association and Maningrida School. Ideologically, they opposed the concept of outstations, the notion of a separate Aboriginal culture and were quite content to embrace the idea of a centralised township in which Aborigines were not the principal decision-makers. Conversely, the "left" held more radical political beliefs. They firmly supported the idea of decentralisation and the Whitlam government's policy of Aboriginal self-determination. Numerically they were a far smaller group (about eleven and, excluding Glen Bagshaw, all were under thirty-five years of age) but what they lacked in number they made up with political fervour and organisational skill's, attributes which
appeared to be symptomatic of the Northern Territory Labor Party, led by Jon Isaacs, in the lead-up to the Legislative Assembly elections.

The political volatility and polarisation becoming apparent in Maningrida during this period was reflected, in a less intense form, throughout the Territory. The Legislative Assembly elections (August 1977) resulted in a success for the Labor Party which increased its parliamentary representation from none to six. This success had occurred within a wider political milieu and reflected partial CLP disillusionment with the federal Coalition.

Initially, after the success of the federal Coalition in 1975, Prime Minister Fraser had made the rather brash - and politically impossible - promise of "Statehood within five years". The promise, although politically ill-advised, tended to raise the expectations of the recently victorious CLP. Not unreasonably, it was assumed that the federal government would assume a more accommodating stance in relation to the land rights legislation and the Ranger Mining Inquiry initiated by the preceding Labor government. Additionally, it was assumed that the timetable for the political transfer of power, in place since 1976, would be matched by some measure of economic independence from the Commonwealth. By early 1976, Goff Letts and other members of the CLP were becoming increasingly apprehensive about the attitudes demonstrated by the Coalition towards the mining of uranium, Aboriginal affairs and the
issue of land rights. When Aboriginal affairs Minister Viner announced the Land Rights legislation, in March 1977, "in a style not significantly different from the earlier Labor model", the CLP argued that it was "comprehensively flawed". They responded by arguing the decision would "stultify the Territory's economic development, contribute to racial disharmony and dislocate constitutional advancement" (Heatley, 1990, 70). To compound the sense of "betrayal" further and reduce the political unity and direction of leading figures of the CLP (especially Goff Letts) was Justice Fox's recommendation, concerning the Ranger Mining Venture, that the Commonwealth retain ownership of and its power to legislate on uranium.

As the Northern Territory elections drew closer, Maningrida's "left" realised they were without an effective election mouthpiece. Consequently, they re-established The Maningrida Mirage in the form of Gabalgu Jurra (a Gunavidji word meaning Entrance Island paper) and published the comprehensive Outstation Resource Centre Report (1977). In doing so, by April 1977, they were able to create both a focus and forum to express their views. Gabulgu Jurra's editorial staff, consisting of two Europeans and two Aborigines, left no doubt in the reader's mind as to its political persuasion or the consequences of supporting the right:

SOON IT MAY BE TOO LATE!
If people in this area don't speak up and say what is in their mind those balandas who want to go back
to the old days when they controlled the land

[T]he Council here is made to look like a joke because it is weak. The council can't speak for anyone because it has no power.

MANINGRIDA NEEDS A STRONG COUNCIL
MANINGRIDA NEEDS A COUNCIL PEOPLE WILL RESPECT

MANINGRIDA NEEDS THIS COUNCIL NOW BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE (Gabalgu Jurra, 7 October 1977).

The publication invited contributions from both European and Aboriginal people from all political persuasions. One of the first to be so acknowledged was the conservative Sam Calder (MHR) and his increasingly strong attacks on the legitimacy of outstations, distribution of social security cheques and, in his view, the excessive involvement of white political advisers. Calder's views precipitated Ray Munjal (one of Gabalgu Jurra's editors) to write:

You've got an easy job sitting in your office. Outstation people around here work hard from day light to dark hunting and gathering. We're not just spending pensions on grog and tucker. People in the bush are making mats and bark paintings....Righto, Sam Calder, what about you come up here to Maningrida and we'll have a meeting. We'll tell you what goes on in the bush. And by the way, who's giving you these bad stories from Maningrida that's what we'd like to know (Gabalgu Jurra, 5 April 1977).

In his defence, Calder referred to his heavy workload and questioned the relationship between Munjal and his advisers:

I have never and am not now sitting in an easy job in my office....My day starts at 7.00 am and is usually not finished till midnight for at least 6
days a week...may I ask you and your advisers how long they have lived in the Territory and in the manner I have... My advice to you Ray Munjal is to have a really good think who your friends are - especially when you take a look at what is happening to the people who went to live at Maningrida years ago, compared with the present day (Gabalgu Jurra, [undated] May 1977).

This clash of views typified the many highly personalised exchanges that were to follow and reflected the growing chasm between "left" and "right". With the Northern Territory election now only several months away, the ideological positions of other forums was becoming apparent. In June 1977, The Northern Territory News published a series of articles which favoured the conservative position. Headlines like "Maningrida time bomb", "Council being choked" and "Maningrida probe demanded" all tended to focus on the intransigence of the "left" and supported the view that DAA was merely a puppet of the Labor Party, concerned solely with supporting the Outstation movement to the detriment of Maningrida township.

The positions taken by both The Northern Territory News and Gabalgu Jurra were becoming selective and polarised. The key players within Maningrida had chosen their respective sides. The Town Clerk openly campaigned for the CLP and the Council Works Supervisor, Phil Brain was a candidate for the Progress Party. The "left" were united in supporting "their" man, Bob Collins, in his bid to win the Legislative Assembly seat of Arnhem and represent his constituents in "the big Darwin Council". Collins was a popular figure among Aborigines in
the area. He was gregarious and had spent several years employed as a horticulturalist with the Gunardba Gardens Company managing a market garden at Cadell. Moreover, he was progressive and adaptive in his political style favouring a consensus rather than a confrontationalist approach. Equally important, he had the support of a highly organised and politically committed group who had witnessed the diminution of the policies of self-determination, feared a conservative backlash and were still disturbed about the dismissal of the Whitlam government.

Besides a strong political unity, the "left" possessed excellent ties with Aborigines especially those outside Maningrida and within the electorate of Arnhem. Many of these outstation people had never registered to vote and the Outstation Resource Centre (ORC) staff, believing in direct action, undertook the task of enrolling those who wished to apply for postal votes. This approach drew a great deal of negative reaction from Darwin, especially from R J Kentish and Sam Calder. Kentish from the CLP had represented the predominantly Aboriginal electorate of Arnhem since 1968. He had won the election on preferences, against the Goulburn Island craft worker, George Winunguj who stood as an Independent. Kentish had been re-elected in the 1974 Northern Territory elections as a CLP candidate. He would be opposed in the forth-coming Territory election by Bob Collins, the ALP-endorsed candidate for Arnhem. Both Kentish and Calder made various observations about the impropriety of direct
involvement by "influencing" Aborigines in the completion of postal votes, tampering with social security cheques and the accusation that the DAA Community Adviser had denied social security cheques and food unless voters cast a ballot for the ALP candidate. The issue of registering postal votes and, later still, their collection from the Council-controlled post office as well as their impartial completion became a cause célèbre for both "left" and "right". It formed the basis of a Federal Police investigation and an investigation by Australia Post. Both authorities were unable to find sufficient grounds to lay criminal charges; however, all elections subsequent to those held in August 1977 have been carried out under the scrutiny of the Electoral Commission aided by the process of mobile polling.

Less than a month before the Northern Territory election, the debate grew fiercer. Articles in The National Times by Graham Gifford - he wrote under the pseudonym of Michael Davenport, lived in Maningrida and was employed by Harry Messell at the Crocodile Research Facility - introduced an unprecedented level of distortion into the conflict. Rather than confront the political differences between the "left" and the "right", he chose to undermine the legitimacy of the "left" by portraying Aborigines in "less than complementary terms". In "Tales of Modern Tribalism", one of his most denigrating articles, he wrote:

There have been all sorts of answers put forward for
what we call the Aboriginal problem. The simplest, and for a long time the most popular, was to shoot the lot. The latest is to set them up in separate little communities called outstations....The life of the tribal Aboriginal is not that of a noble savage: it is one of dirt, squalor, brutality and drunkenness. It contains the absolute denial of all human rights (The National Times, 6-11 June 1977).

Attitudes hardened, polarisation increased and any semblance of balance and objectivity evaporated completely at the onset of the election. DAA had made their first unsuccessful attempt to remove O'Connor and Brain and, on August 19 1977, an exasperated Ian Pitman, Assistant Director of DAA had written to Dan Gillespie, one of the European editors of Gabalgu Jurrá, castigating the paper for its political bias:

Gabalgu Jurrá appears to have lost any semblance of political neutrality, if indeed it was ever entirely neutral. I realise that you might interpret my remarks as an infringement of free speech and publication, but in fact I am only concerned to see the tensions and conflicts at Maningrida - especially in the white community - are not made worse by your actions or statements...my main objective is to do all I can to assist in the development of harmonious relationships and a more cooperative working atmosphere at Maningrida, and quite frankly, I do not think your publication is helping (Gabalgu Jurrá, undated August 1977).

The successful election of Bob Collins for the seat of Arnhem brought a temporary respite to community tensions, much needed breathing space for the key community combatants and time for DAA to reappraise its position. In response to Ministerial (No 3273), Pitman had concluded that in Maningrida "the problem seems to be not that training cannot be given but that some white staff do not have a genuine commitment to such
training in the programs which are being introduced in all communities this year" (AA, E468/T4 76/460 Pt2). Charles Perkins, then Assistant Secretary of the Department, expressed far more trenchant views. On the question of training he observed:

Until it is considered seriously and implemented in a sincere and a realistic way, Maningrida will fester and cause problems in the future. The only reason that it has simmered down at present is because of the aftermath of the election and the exhaustion of individuals both black and white.... It is inevitable that white people in the community will come into conflict either because of political persuasion or vested interest in the employment and social field if we do not move towards establishing the authority of the Aboriginal Community. At present it is entirely the Department's fault that Maningrida is in the mess it is (E468/T4 76/460 Pt2).

Several months later, Perkin's views were confirmed by renewed conflict in Maningrida centred around the NAC elections. A member of the "right" had lodged an official complaint and photographs which purported interference in the elections by the DAA Community Adviser. It was during this period that the spectre of the "red menace" was evoked by the "right". Various members of the "left" were accused of "communist manipulation, anti-communist pamphlets appeared under the doorsteps of "left" households in Maningrida and The Northern Territory News carried articles with headlines like "Subversive communist activity at Maningrida" (31 October 1977).

Gabalgu Jurra responded by hardening its ideological position
further by supporting an anti-uranium position and providing regular copy for the new parliamentary representative for Arnhem. DAA was again placed under renewed pressure to act decisively. On November 29 1977, Ian Pitman signalled the Department's ultimate intention to Viddy Jermaccans, the European Community Adviser:

We are now convinced that Maningrida will become the first Aboriginal community centre in the Territory where this department has no option but to directly intervene and administer the Commonwealth’s affairs (including its funds). It is obvious that as long as a certain group of staff remain employed by the Council in effective control of its affairs and programs, then the Council will remain a totally ineffective unit (AA, E468/T4 76/460 Pt2).

By mid-December, the situation had deteriorated even further resulting in the Divisional Director of DAA to observe that "the political views at Maningrida have reached the point where O'Connor, Brain and Baker now regard almost anyone who is not an identifiable supporter of the Progress Party or Liberal or Country Parties as necessarily communist" (E468/T4 76/460).

Daisy Baker was a fascinating figure in the jigsaw puzzle of Maningrida politics, particularly in the later stages of the struggle between "left" and "right". She was a powerfully built Aboriginal woman from Milingimbi and a member of Maningrida Council. Her intense opposition to the "left", especially the ORC (Gillespie, Bond and Cooke) became legendary. On one occasion during a heated meeting of
Maningrida Council, she chased - armed with a chair - Peter Cooke and Bob Collins around the Council Chambers. Neither man attempted rational conversation and both moved away with great dexterity; to paraphrase the Shepherdson, they "hastened quickly". Her "up-front" manner was uncharacteristic of the male-dominated nature of Maningrida politics; equally obscure were her motivations for assuming such a position. Perhaps it was a protective reaction; her European husband was identified with the "right" and was employed by the Council as a clerk. An equally plausible explanation might centre around the clash of dominant personalities. Whatever the explanation, DAA decided it was time to resolve the impasse.

On 9 December, they flew the entire Maningrida Council to Darwin and requested that the Council terminate the employment of O'Connor and Brain. The Council was unable to reach a decision. A day later, the federal government was returned and Minister Viner concluded that in the aftermath of his government's success, the negative political fallout from direct intervention in Maningrida politics would be at its least. On 17 January 1978, Maningrida Council was again transported to Darwin to meet with DAA. The Department dictated its terms to the Council President, Tommy Yiberarr. During the course of deliberations, Yiberarr was asked to sign some documents. Non-literate and barely able to write his signature, he had unwittingly signed revocation notices for the European staff employed by the Maningrida Council. The following day a senior officer of DAA arrived in Maningrida to
serve the notices. In an attempt to favour neither "left" nor "right", Minister Viner expressed his views in a taped message which was presented to a public meeting. He argued that the Council had become moribund and victim of sectional infighting among its European staff. His solution, which appeared to be endorsed by DAA, was to remove all of the offending European employees and have them temporarily replaced by officers of DAA.

This "final solution" failed to impress most of Maningrida's Aboriginal residents. The Gunavidji were impressed by the manner of the Minister's forthright action but not by its content. They worked in conjunction with the Maningrida Progress Association and made representations to DAA to retain Cooke, Gillespie and Bond. Additionally, the NLC conducted a meeting with the traditional Gunavidji landowners who now undertook to press their claims not only to retain certain staff but also to reform Maningrida politically. According to Galarrwuy Yunupingu:

The Gunavidji have decided to re-organise and take control of Maningrida Council. Then they will determine the degree of representation which will be given to non-Gunavidji Aboriginals, who either live at Maningrida, or who use the town as a service or supply base. The Gunavidji state their intention is to achieve a majority of representation on all Maningrida based organisations (The Darwin Star, January 26 1978).

Understandably, after having finally achieved the removal of what they considered the principal source of conflict within
Maningrida, DAA was loath to reinstate any of the "Maningrida Eight". Consequently, Gillespie, Cooke, Bond and their wives brought the matter before the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory. The case was heard before His Honour Mr Justice Forster at Darwin on 17 March 1978. In his judgement (delivered 17 April 1978), Justice Forster found that all of the six plaintiffs' authority to remain within a reserve had been wrongfully revoked on two counts: one on the grounds of the denial of natural justice and the other on the Department's incorrect interpretation of various parts of the Social Welfare Ordinance (1964).

Somewhat bemused by the case, Justice Forster made some memorable observations during the course of proceedings. Describing Maningrida and the events surrounding his judgement as a "cookie land situation" in which the Commonwealth had "right and left hand trouble" (his reference being to the fact that Commonwealth grants through DAA assisted the operation of both Maningrida Council and the Progress Association but the Progress Association had been prepared to re-employ three of the six plaintiffs). Similarly, he was totally unimpressed that three of the revoked permits applied to the wives of those dismissed; wives in terms of the Social Welfare Ordinance (1964) being in the dependent situation of "children, dogs, budgies and anything".

Addressing J B Waters (for the plaintiffs), His Honour observed:
I came here in what was thought to be the bad old paternalistic days when you told Aboriginal people what they wanted and that has, in theory at least, changed and I agree with that: that you consult them and ask them what they want. But having consulted them in this case it appears to me that there has been a complete reversal back to the old days saying 'well, this may be what you think you want, but it is not really what you want at all, we're going to take all these white people out' (Transcript of Proceedings No.98 of 1978, Supreme Court of the NT).

Finally, towards the conclusion of the case, Justice Forster expressed the view that, for him, the case was "like being in a sackful of cotton wool. You fight and fight and never get to the real centre of it" (Transcript of Proceedings). Perhaps unwittingly, Justice Forster had perceived a fundamental truth about politics in Maningrida. Devoid of a real centre, prone to intense rivalries between the people(s) of the Blyth and Liverpool Rivers and the ideological conflicts of the European enclaves, it had little chance to "progress" as it forlornly entered the next decade of community development. That was unlike the Yolngu of Galiwinku who were now unfettered politically (but not economically) and comparatively free to pursue their "self-determined" aims in a far more culturally integrated environment.
ENDNOTES

1. The Commission of Enquiry (1973) was solely European in composition, a point which jarred with the Yolngu (understandably in view of Church support for self-determination), who argued that they should have been represented directly on the Commission.

2. In the language of today, a global grant would be described as an untied grant. It meant the community could determine its own priorities in using the grant.

3. Bagshaw (1977) provided a comprehensive account of Gunavidji disillusionment and Maningrida politics during this period as well as the varying stratagems used by the Town Clerk and the Civil Works Supervisor to remain employed by the Council.

4. The evidence is circumstantial, and arguably debatable, but after having had their hands "burnt" at Maningrida and fearing similar incidents in other remote Territory communities, senior officers within the DAA and the Northern Territory bureaucracy agreed, informally and subsequent to self-government (1978), that local government matters should thereafter remain a Territory responsibility.

5. All were regular Labor Party voters and four were financial members of the Labor Party. Furthermore, they were united by strong personal bonds. For instance, Peter Cooke had known Dan Gillespie since he was a teenager.

6. The electorate of Arnhem was replaced by the electorate of Arafura which was created in 1983.

7. Contemporary sources described them as the "Maningrida Eight". Amongst their number were Phil Brain, Peter O'Connor, Dan Gillespie, Peter Cooke and David Bond. The wives of Gillespie, Cooke and Bond were also included in the eight.
CONCLUSION

Readers wishing to be confronted by a series of universal generalisations arising from the previous discussion will be disappointed because the study of cross-cultural politics in the context of remote Aboriginal communities is highly specific and necessarily narrow. It would not have been unreasonable to expect a greater number of similarities between Maningrida and Galiwinku especially in view of their size, geographical proximity and cultural complexity. But, there were many differences. A comparative historical analysis was essential to comprehend the origin and evolution of these differences. Without this perspective, it would be impossible to understand the complex and varied nature of community conflict and cross cultural-politics in either Maningrida or Galiwinku. Moreover, it would be impossible to understand both communities' similar responses to non-Aboriginal domination.

Galiwinku's evolution was cathartic, even epic. Milingimbi had been bombed by the Japanese several weeks earlier when Shepherdson departed the community by boat with a select, small band of Yolngu. Both Yolngu and Shepherdson respected and trusted one another, important attributes for their forthcoming voyage. Their journey may not quite have reached the heroic proportions of Mao Tse Tung's "long march" but the proximity of the Japanese made it decidedly dangerous. The
"bonds of familiarity" already existing between Shepherdson and his "flock" were reinforced and deepened. The Yolngu arrived at Galiwinku spiritually revived for Bäpa Shepherdson had delivered them back to their "country". The community developed slowly between 1942-1955 not only due to the lack of physical resources but also due to the Missionaries' policy of "gradualism". Additionally, Shepherdson had experienced extensive tribal infighting at Milingimbi and he did not wish to see this repeated in Galiwinku. Consequently, he encouraged (assisted by his Yolngu allies) the growth of a small and culturally integrated community thus containing community conflict. Any natural tendency towards centralisation was thwarted by his active support of "scatter communities" or outstations.

Physically isolated and culturally integrated, Galiwinku seemed impregnable to the influence of the outside world. Impregnable until changes in government policy (and administration which reflected a shift in broader societal attitudes and values especially after 1964) rendered the MOM missionary ideology redundant. No longer were "natives" to be protected, now they were to be absorbed into the dominant culture. This decision had lasting consequences for Galiwinku. The seemingly timeless period associated with the missionaries was suddenly replaced by different rules, an influx of staff having more secular motivations, increased population, a dramatically expanded physical infra-structure and far more emphasis on the material domain. While this
rapid shift to a more materially-orientated policy was confusing to some of Galiwinku's Yolngu. The inhabitants of Maningrida had little else to relate to concerning their dealings with the Balanda. Senior administrators viewed Maningrida as the "jewel in the crown" of assimilation and, from their view-point, Maningrida was a social experiment that would succeed regardless of the human and physical resources required to achieve this end. By observing the apparent success of the Methodists in Arnhem Land (especially Galiwinku), the NTA (and later DAA) were unable to perceive any barrier hindering their potential for success in Maningrida. They failed, however, to consider the qualitative aspects of their experiment, particularly in relation to the traditional rivalry which existed between the Blyth River and Liverpool River people(s) and the likelihood of ideological division among the large European population. The Methodists had learnt about the importance of the cultural compatibility of "their natives" and the united, long serving nature of their community staff, experientially. The government, culturally arrogant and eager for results, reasoned that material expansion would solve these social problems and, partly as a consequence, they became obsessed with the "push for development". One consequence of this obsession was the rapid growth of European population (post 1969) and the concurrent expansion of European enclaves of various ideological persuasions. Maningrida would demonstrate this development more clearly as differing groups clashed with one another, no one (least of all the majority of Aboriginals)
benefiting from the ensuing explosions.

Community conflict and pragmatic political adaptation provide the central themes for this dissertation. Conflict was less in Galiwinku because accommodation between the cultures was more complete. Although domain separation existed there so too did a greater degree of cultural respect and tolerance. Not only was an element of continuity achieved through the long term political relationships of the community's main cross-cultural intermediaries but power was dispersed more uniformly between community organisations. For example the Village Council did not intervene directly in local government affairs and the Church Council did not instruct the Council of Mala Leaders about traditional business. But conflict within the community increased with the formal departure of the Church (1974-75) and its substitution by the externally based DAA.

Aboriginal cross-cultural intermediaries demonstrated, most clearly, the pragmatic nature of political adaptation made by Aboriginal people in Galiwinku and Maningrida to two variants of European culture. The origin and composition of the group varied between the communities but their function remained the same. Possessing a well defined understanding of "whitefella" ways, they acted as a bridge between the two cultures not only assessing goods and services but also assisting in the process of cross-cultural facilitation. Largely unrestricted by traditional restraints and relatively free to follow the "song
lines" of the new political order, their's was a chronicle of sophisticated, sometimes courageous, often unpredictable responses in rapidly changing political environments. The existence of the group was not static; rather, it was dynamic, continually evolving and adapting to changed political and community circumstances.

Nor should the adaptive response of Aboriginal go-betweens be viewed purely as a one-way process. Numerous Europeans were influenced by Aboriginal culture long before it was considered politically fashionable. It was in this manner that Superintendent Hunter became "Six-pence"; a nickname given to him by his NTA/DAA colleagues because "he always looked at the ground". Avoiding eye contact was a characteristic one would not expect from such a forthright, strong-willed individual. Was it the "shame" of his forceful removal from Maningrida by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs? That was decidedly not the case. Hunter was mirroring a characteristic common among the more traditional Aborigines, that it was impolite to have direct eye contact, particularly with one's adversaries. Dominant individuals like Hunter, Shepherdson and various Aboriginal power-brokers directly experienced the many, often traumatic, difficulties of communicating between two disparate cultures while simultaneously belonging to one. The environments of conflict within which they operated produced powerful alliances between dominant individuals, a bonding of kindred souls which partly transcended the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures.
The complex, volatile politics and history of Maningrida was reflected in the composition of the community's Aboriginal cross-cultural spokesmen. The evolution of the group has been analysed over three phases: in their early and embryonic form as patrol officer assistants, then as the Superintendents councillors and finally as the political spokesmen. Each change in form, corresponded closely to a change in government policy. Additionally, there was an internal traditional political dynamic in play. As various Aboriginal go-betweens came to the forefront of the political arena (determined by changes in government policy, their interaction with other dominant individuals and their sheer capacity to weather the limelight), the Aboriginal leaders, especially Yiberarr and Maritji, continued to resolve conflict between the Liverpool and Blyth River peoples as their tribal counterparts would have done prior to the European incursion.

In Galiwinku, the development of power brokerage was less complex. In this community, political cross-cultural dynamics were dominated by a small clique of Yolngu with very close personal ties with their long serving Superintendent. Unlike Maningrida, where the Aboriginal go-betweens were more prone to "up-front", direct and more individually-oriented politics, Galiwinku's experts in cross-cultural facilitation were more likely to emphasise symbolism (for example Walalipa's involvement in the Elcho Island Adjustment Movement or Burrumarra's mayali) as an integral part of their political actions. There were never bright lights at Galiwinku and life
was more predictable and dour. Protected in part by its physical isolation and the less devastating and immediate impact of changes in government policy, this cosy reciprocal relationship eventually changed with the Free to Decide Enquiry (1973) and Shepherdson's subsequent retirement. When the "old guard" moved to a less dominant position, they were replaced by extremely competent, and, in the context of remote NT Aboriginal communities, well-educated Aboriginal administrators. Arguably, this outcome confirmed the belief of the Methodists (and several Yolngu respondents) that the Church-educated and-trained Aboriginal people should take over Galiwinku. This argument, however, is more valid in the political rather than the economic sphere (the latter being one of the few areas that the majority of Methodists would not relinquish control).

The Aboriginal inhabitants of Maningrida and Galiwinku responded to changes in government policy as they were interpreted by dominant individuals from both cultures. Policy tended not to be seen as an abstract set of ideals or ideas but became manifest in people, not only on a community level like Superintendents Hunter and Shepherdson but also powerful externally based interpreters of policy. Senior officials of the NTA who visited Maningrida regularly (like the organisation's Director, Harry Giese) assumed demi-god like status, some Aboriginal people being so impressed that they named their children after them. These men were seen as benefactors - humans like themselves - a point of reference
and contact, for people could be influenced, even manipulated and policy was just very far away in conceptual terms.

From this perspective, policy and the political forces which shaped it tended to assume limited importance for Aboriginal people on the community level. It was not so much that one policy was "good" or another "evil" as that was a distinctly European and moral position; in the context of this thesis, Aboriginal cross-cultural intermediaries accepted that a particular policy was in place and then adapted to it. In the Aboriginal world-view, there was no Machiavelli or Socrates, just men, some of whom were "soft" and others who were "hard". If "good" had any meaning, in describing a bunggawa, it meant that he was predictable and consistent in the performance of his duties. This seemingly amoral, opportunistic construction of reality, however, needs to be placed in cultural perspective. It did not mean that Aboriginal people did not have strong cultural/spiritual needs and identification with "country". They may have been traditionally without government (in the "Western" sense) but they were not without politics. While they might be seen to attach themselves opportunistically to power-brokers, for pragmatic reasons, the desire to have fuller political control was never extinguished. Indeed, to use Tonne's apt description again, they were "associated in spite of separation" and "separated in spite of association". When finally given the opportunity to be self-determining (after December 1972), they embraced the policy (and its representatives) only to be confronted
with the resistance of a conservative DAA bureaucracy.

The period of transition between 1964 and 1978 was a particularly significant one for Aboriginal go-betweens as they evolved from Superintendent's councillors to political spokesmen. During this period, they were able to acquire a deeper understanding of the hierarchical nature of Australian government and political decision-making. No longer was the main decision-maker bunggawa Giese, now it was the "biggest" bunggawa, Mr. Whitlam, "that Canberra man". Yet another level of decision-making, another set of political players and, consequently, an even greater need for detailed cross-cultural understanding by Aboriginal power-brokers was necessary, for without this continual adaptation their ability to act as cross-cultural intermediaries would cease to be effective in the community context.

In conclusion, it is necessary to exercise some caution in drawing sweeping conclusions from the material contained in this thesis. The turbulent grey area, the nurturing ground for Aboriginal go-betweens, was not found in many remote Aboriginal communities where the cultural and physical domains between Aboriginal and European communities remained separate (for example Jigalong). In Maningrida and Galiwinku the colonisers were comparatively civilised. By the time both settlements were established the worst racial excesses of the previous and early twentieth centuries were over. Imposition and dominance were culturally bestowed through government
policy not at the end of a gun barrel or in the contents of a poisoned bag of flour. The dreadfully polarised situation that at the same time could produce Pemulwuy and Bennelong (or, in Gerritsen's terms, a Zealot or a Herodian) failed to eventuate in Maningrida or Galiwinku. In these communities, Aboriginal cross-cultural intermediaries were somewhere in the middle of the traditionally-polarised Aboriginal response to colonisation, quite capable of standing on principle but preferring not to die as a consequence. Perhaps individuals like Maritji could be described, most aptly, as "Zerodians"?
1. Gerritsen used the terms Herodian and Zealot in the title of his address to the Australian Political Studies Association, 23rd Annual Conference, in Darwin (1981). He saw a parallel between the Jewish and Australian Aboriginal reaction to domination by another culture. In the context of cross-cultural politics, he viewed a Zealot as an Aboriginal person resisting Europeans both culturally and materially. Conversely, he saw Herodians as Aboriginal people accommodating Europeans and European culture(s) in their daily lifestyles.
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