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A Report on Research Project 18/1989—'Aborigines: the Relationship between Sport and Delinquency'—to the Criminology Research Council

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Abstract

Project 18/89 'Aborigines: the Relationship between Sport and Delinquency' began as a small-scale study of forty-five communities over six months. The aim was to see whether or not sports facilities and competition reduced growing rates of adult and juvenile delinquency. In the end it became a five-year study of eighty communities involving in-depth interviews with 520 Aboriginal men and women, government officers of various specialisations, sports officials, police and correctional service officers.

The Criminology Research Council's initial grant resulted in numerous public lectures, radio and television broadcasts, photographic exhibitions, a journal article, feature newspaper articles and two books, the major one being *Obstacle Race: Aborigines in Sport*, published by the University of NSW Press in 1994.

This Report concludes that:

- sport plays a more significant role in the lives of Aborigines than in any other sector of Australian society;
- sport provides a centrality, a sense of loyalty and cohesion that has replaced some of the 'lost' structures in communities that so recently operated as Christian missions and government settlements;
- sport has become a vital force in the very survival of several communities now in danger of social disintegration;
- sport has helped reduce the considerable internalised violence—homicide, suicide, attempted suicide, rape, self-mutilation, serious assault—prevalent in some disordered communities;
- sport is a cheap enough option in the way it assists in reducing the second-highest cause of Aboriginal deaths, namely, from external or non-natural causes;

- sport has been effective in keeping youth out of serious (and mischievous) trouble during football and basketball seasons;
- sport has given several communities and regions an opportunity for some autonomy and sovereignty when they organise sport and culture carnivals—such as at Yuendumu and Barunga in the Northern Territory;
- sport takes place despite the absence of facilities, equipment, money for travel, discrimination against teams and/or access to regular competition;
- sport takes place in circumstances and environs that resemble Afghanistan in wartime and Somalia in drought time;
- sport is *essential* to counter the morale and moral despair of many Aborigines.

This Report recommends:

1. Sport in urban, peri-urban, rural and remote communities requires immediate financial boost in this twice-blessed land of Olympism—if for no other reason than that the year 2000 visitors should not see the present conditions.
2. A National Aboriginal Sports Commission—not solely dependent on government funding, and independent of other sports institutes— be established to provide grants, advice, staff and equipment *directly* to communities in need and not through regional agencies.
3. This Commission should establish special programs, through existing tertiary institutions and distance courses, to train Aboriginal and Islander sports administrators.
4. This Commission should work closely with the new initiatives in Aboriginal health, and oversee some expenditure on sport, leisure and recreation facilities as part of health rehabilitation, especially for diabetics.

5. This Commission should help alleviate the sports tax burden on Aborigines, people who pay more per capita for their sport than any other groups in Australian society.

6. While sport is not, and cannot be, the sole solution to the multitude of problems in Aboriginal and Islander society—because it cannot be played or practised 365 days in the year—it can be a 30 to 40 per cent solution for those communities now literally in peril.

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1. Introduction

In 1989 the Criminology Research Council provided funds for a study entitled 'Aborigines: the Relationship between Sport and Delinquency'. The research request was phrased as follows:

> To distinguish the variables that may be involved in juvenile and adult delinquent behaviour; and, in particular, to concentrate on the presence or absence of sport, recreation and leisure (SRL) facilities as a key factor. There is an apparent correlation between SRL facilities and delinquency. The task is to see whether there is a *causal connection* and whether it is correct to conclude that such facilities and participation in them inhibit or reduce delinquency.

I expected to visit forty-five communities. In the end, with the help of the Council grant and through self-funding, visits were made to eighty Aboriginal communities across mainland Australia over an initial period of six months between July and December 1989, followed by a further two months early in 1990. Subsequent fieldwork was undertaken at my expense during 1991, 1992 and 1993. In all I interviewed 520 people.

The starting point of this research was the completion and publication of my short book *Aborigines in Sport* in December 1987.[1] Simply a sketch in 150 pages, the work dealt with Aboriginal sporting achievements in their historical, political and social contexts. The book touched on the paucity of facilities for sport in most communities, but did not examine the role of sport in relation to social cohesion and social breakdown. Research Project 18/89 was funded to fill that gap.

The Criminology Research Council's grant has given birth to a number of public lectures, conference papers, exhibitions, radio and television programs, feature articles, a journal article and a major book. Public lectures on the theme of violence within Aboriginal communities were given at Flinders University in Adelaide in October 1989 and at Macquarie University in May 1992. Unable to attend a Police-Aboriginal Summit at Dubbo (NSW) in September 1989 because of an air strike, a video presentation was sent from Alice Springs to the conference on 'Aborigines, Sport and Delinquency'. The relationship between racism, sport, violence and delinquency was the theme of the keynote address

presented to the 'Bradman, Barellan, Balmain and Bocce: the Culture of Australian Sport' conference at the Australian Sports Commission in October 1993. A paper on similar themes was presented as a keynote address to a conference on 'Racism and Sport' organised by the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, Adelaide, in October 1993 and held at the Adelaide Football Stadium. I gave the principal address on Aboriginal Health—which discussed the role and place of sport, leisure and recreation—to the National Conference of the Australian Medical Association in Canberra in May 1993, followed by a further plenary paper to the emergency Aboriginal Health Summit conference called by the AMA in Canberra in March 1994.

Photographic exhibitions aimed at presenting positive images of Aboriginal achievement, with explanations on the role of sport in rescuing many achievers' lives, were displayed at Darling Harbour for the National Aboriginal Sports Awards in 1992, the Australian Sports Commission and the State Department of Aboriginal Affairs conferences in 1993, and at the Aboriginal Sports Achievers gala presentation in Darwin in November 1993. The importance of sporting role models was expressed by so many Aboriginal officials, elders and youth that I decided to publish Chapter 15 of *Obstacle Race* as a separate and inexpensive pictorial book under the title *Black and Gold: the Aboriginal and Islander Sports Hall of Fame*. This will appear in 1994, published by the University of NSW Press, presented by Colin and Paul Tatz.

Feature articles on the subject were published in 1992,1993 and 1994 in the *West Australian News, Age, Sydney Morning Herald* and *Australian.*. The *Australian Journal of Social Issues* published my major paper 'Aboriginal Violence: A Return to Pessimism'.[2] Apart from regular radio interviews on the topic, two television films were made on the matter of sport, racism and violence: one segment for the Aboriginal Studies curriculum in the Open Learning program, and the other for a 'Racism and Sport' program made by the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

In October 1994 the University of New South Wales Press will publish my major book *Obstacle Race: Aborigines in Sport.* This is a long and detailed research exposition on the historical, philosophical, political and sociological experience of Aborigines between 1850 and 1994, as mirrored by the lives of Aboriginal and Islander sports men and women. The introduction to that work expresses gratitude to the Criminology

Research Council for facilitating something much more than a study of the relationship between sport and delinquency. The Council's grant for fieldwork allowed me to reconsider many of the broader issues in contemporary Aboriginal life, and to realise just how vital sport is to Aboriginal *survival as such*. My conclusion is that sport has ramifications well beyond the matter of delinquency, and has a far greater significance in Aboriginal life than in that of any other sector of Australian society.

This report is a much elaborated and expanded version of the longest and most important chapter in the book, Chapter 13 on *Sport and Survival*. This Report has taken longer than usual to present to Council. For that I apologise. However, rather than submit a narrow focus and statistical account of arrests, offences, outcomes—of which we now have a considerable number in the literature—I have produced a reflective and considered essay based on many years of fieldwork and research, years enhanced enormously by the Council's support for what may well be my most definitive overview of contemporary Aboriginal life, as exemplified by these eighty Aboriginal communities.

Appendix I lists the 520 Aboriginal men and women, department officers, community and welfare officers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, sports officials and police officers interviewed during this long project. Their co-operation was essential, and very giving. To them I offer my sincere thanks. I hope that the various publications arising from our meetings will give them something in return. Appendix II (included in the master copy only) shows something of the appalling facilities for Aboriginal sport in many communities.

2. The present climate of Aboriginal affairs

Before examining propositions about the relationship of sport to deviant behaviour, something must be said of the general context of Aboriginal matters today. The pendulum swing is both wide and long. At one end of the arc we have committees and programs for reconciliation, a reasonably fair outcome in legislation to give some effect to the High Court's ruling in the Mabo case, and a Prime Ministerial admission about the depredations of the past and the need for rectification. At the other end, we have hysteria about Aboriginal claims to back yards, outcries

about wasteful expenditure on anything Aboriginal, and efforts to reintroduce the discredited and vexatious race classificatory laws as to who is, or is not, Aboriginal for purposes of special rights.

In my essay 'A Question of Rights and Wrongs', the positives and negatives of these past thirty years were summarised.[3] Most discriminatory laws have been abolished and most of the bureaucratic dinosaurs in Aboriginal administrations are extinct. There is much more money from public budgets, more money for social service benefits and more actual employment. Work skills programs proliferate. There is more housing. There is language salvation in several centres and indigenous language maintenance in several schools. Aboriginal royalties are paid in a handful of areas and two or three communities have substantial financial investments. There is now the reality of land rights, in one form or another, in all States except Western Australia. There are just over 5000 Aborigines in tertiary courses and five or six Aboriginal-run community schools. Legal aid and medical services operate, albeit frantically.

In the Northern Territory, Aborigines own a television station, Imparja, and run a radio station in Central Australia. Aboriginal studies is meant to be taught in most State school systems. Aboriginality, as an assertion of identity, as a flag, as a force commanding respect, has arrived. For the most part the press is sympathetic and gives generous space to Aboriginal material. Artists, poets, musicians, cloth-makers and dancers are celebrated and revered in some quarters. Aboriginal motifs are common and in demand.

Aborigines have discovered the High Court as a place to recover rights, land councils are an organisational force to be reckoned with, Mabo is now part of the vocabulary of politics and politicians (with a few idiosyncratic exceptions) concede not only prior occupation of the land but the genocide as well. A politically adept Aboriginal leadership has emerged out of the Mabo decision (which recognised the validity of native title to certain lands), one respected by the federal government and the media (but not the federal Liberal opposition). In the last decade of this century the playing fields have become a little (but only a little) more level, there are greater numbers in mainstream sports and Aborigines now play sports that were once either closed or inaccessible to them.

On the wrong side, too many babies still die unnecessarily and the life expectation of adult Aborigines is truly tragic: at under 50 in statistical theory and in reality. Trachoma, despite our conscience being salved by the late Dr Fred Hollows, is still rampant. Deafness needs a similar hero. Thousands are not housed adequately: in 1990 the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs ordered $232 million spent over five years on 'health and infrastructure' — 'short', he said, of the $2.5 billion needed for housing, water, sewerage and electricity! Children still leave school far too young; and legal aid often fails to defend, pleading guilty where guilt may be absent. Aborigines are arrested and incarcerated in great numbers, often for offences that would not attract police attention if committed by whites. Custody is too common and the deaths therein are infinitely greater than the limited number of cases studied with such care by the Royal Commission. At the same time as the surreal film *Black River* received an international award in Paris for its depiction of deaths in custody, real black deaths continued at a rate of 11 per cent of all such deaths. Violence within communities reflects a total breakdown among social groupings. Unemployment is rife and so is boredom. Two-thirds of the men and women who are employed earn less than $12,000 per annum. Two thirds of all Aborigines live in rented accommodation. Alcohol remains an enormous problem in some areas, unaided by some astonishing licensing laws that encourage greed and exploitation.

Attacks on hard-won Aboriginal achievements increase. In 1993 we saw the spectacle of the Western Australian government devoting $2 million specifically in its budget to fight the Mabo decision (because it wants to sustain the myth, overturned by the High Court, that Australia was an empty land in 1788) and we saw the federal government willing, at one low point in the debate, to suspend the pillar of its human rights laws, the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, in order to pass legislation that would place virtually all land beyond the reach of Aborigines through the principles established by the High Court in the Mabo case. Some intelligent last-minute legal advice deflected the federal government from that course: but the reality remains that the protagonists of human rights and reconciliation were prepared to abandon every bloody and battle-scarred gain in response to the fear-mongering generated by the farming and mining industries and by State governments. Alan Ramsay, in the conservative *Sydney Morning Herald*, was moved to write that the Coalition's behaviour about Mabo was 'the most miserably negative

exercise to reinforce fear, anxiety, doubt and misunderstanding': 'it was leadership of the worst kind, and there's been no more degrading and demeaning behaviour by an Opposition in recent memory.[4]

In 1850 imperial Britain did not trust the Western Australian government to deal fairly with the natives, and insisted that all pastoral leases give Aborigines the right to be on their land and to take therefrom all natural waters and animals. In 1890 Britain insisted that 1 per cent of the colony's gross revenue be set aside for Aboriginal welfare. This 'outrageous' provision was overturned in 1898. Nearly a century later Western Australia seeks to give Aborigines not rights to own land, as in all other States of the Commonwealth, but rights only to use land, and then on conditions set by white society.[5]

Many non-Aborigines attack schemes such as grants for secondary and tertiary study: rather than seek similar grants for their own children, which would be logical, they try irrationally to abolish that which has been given to Aborigines so belatedly. Racism in sport is not confined to lower-division rural football competition: it is alive and well at the great Melbourne Cricket Ground, with black rules men from the West ever the target for virulent vilification from middle-class Victoria. In a country imbued with a sporting obsession, the majority of Aborigines have almost nothing in the way of facilities.

Others seek to rewrite history or abolish it: thus Gerard Henderson, ironically, in an article attacking revisionist Australian history, claims that Aborigines suffered appalling treatment at the hands of free settlers and convicts—'but not, as a rule, by government'.[6] Aborigines remain the poorest, sickest, most homeless, least literate and hungriest of people. Generally they are the most oppressed, repressed and depressed community. In a country that takes pride in its 'multiculturalism', Aborigines are often relegated as a subspecies of ethnicity, as a subset of the migrant population.

The Aboriginal world is in something of a nightmare. In 1987 we saw the lucky country—with all its resources, brains, technology, and commitment to a social welfare philosophy—appoint a royal commission into the (proportionately) astronomic number of black deaths in police custody.[7] Since then we have seen a continuing spate of Aboriginal suicides, in and out of custody. In 1987 we listened as a federal court

judge of the Human Rights Commission described the Toomelah Reserve in New South Wales as 'a concentration camp, both psychological and physical'.[8] In 1987 we heard the New South Wales Director of the Bureau of Crime and Statistics portray 'a culture harassed and beaten down for decades', a 'wholesale destruction of their entire social fabric' akin to Germany after the war in 1945.[9] There is no evidence to change that view. In 1987 we read that the Director of the (British) Anti-Slavery Society was 'particularly disturbed by allegations of police brutality against Aboriginal children', and perturbed enough to tell the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Vancouver that 'Australia's good reputation abroad is undeserved'.[10] The same year heard the New South Wales Ombudsman describe the Police Department as having an attitude bankrupt of common sense and good faith in its procedures when dealing with Aborigines.[11] Australia watched the eruption of frustration into a fracas at Brewarrina. Police attitudes and behaviours have hardly changed: the ABC's 'Cop it Sweet' program on policing in Redfern, the inquest into the police killing of David Gundy, the lamentable failure of the dawn raids in Redfern—failure in finding crime, securing arrests but hugely successful in terrorising the raided—and the New South Wales policemen's video mockery of Lloyd Boney's death in custody hardly sustain the monotonous (and ludicrous) ministerial cliché that New South Wales has the world's best police force. In 1994 we heard the president of the Australian Medical Association deplore the fact that Aboriginal women were thirty times more likely to die in childbirth, and young men ten times more likely to die than their white counterparts.[12] In the same month, the National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People revealed that black children have alarming literacy and numeracy problems and leave school much earlier than others.[13] In the same month the Australian Institute of Criminology found that Aborigines were fourteen times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Aborigines.[14] The most recent Toomelah Report states that 'sport is the major thing that holds the community together'.[15]

There is no need to traverse any further the social indicators that locate Aborigines at the bottom of almost every conceivable scale. Yet one more point needs to be made. In mid-1993, Melbourne's *Age* (in my view the best newspaper in Australia) somehow managed to arrive at an editorial conclusion that 'modern Australia has demonstrated that it is not a racist society', and added, 'the occasional ill-advised and inflammatory remarks

of a few notwithstanding'.[16] I do not believe I have invented or that Aborigines have imagined the historical and contemporary experiences described here and in the now vast literature available.

3. A different ethos

Sport is essential to contemporary Aboriginal life. But this hinges on Aborigines having the means to engage in sport. Most do not have money, transport, equipment, arenas, instructors and access to organised competition. Certainly there are non-Aboriginal rural communities with less facilities and opportunities than their city brothers and sisters, but like so many other facets of life, the Aboriginal less than is greater than anyone else's less than. Leaving aside all other considerations, inequality of access in this sports-conscious democracy is ground enough for harsh criticism.

There is an added dimension. It is not simply that there is inequality in sport. I believe sport can be a means of survival of communities that are in disarray and disorder. Psychological, sociological and political needs give Aboriginal sport a centrality that rarely occurs in other societies.

In 1983 the late Ron Pickering made a BBC television documentary on 'South Africa, Sport and the Boycott'. He defined the universal philosophy of sport : 'sport is based on the ethos of play, of competition being fair and equal for all . . . of opportunities having to be fair and equal'.[17] But a different ethos has applied to black Australians. In this land of the fair go there has been exclusion from competition and discrimination within it; there is also gross inequality of chances, choices and facilities.

Denial of competition takes two forms. One is structural denial where because of their place in the political, legal, economic and social system Aborigines cannot and do not go to the ski lodges, riding clubs and A-grade golf courses (with very few exceptions). The other is institutional denial: the facilities do not exist within their domains and lifestyles. Where most Aborigines have lived—on settlements, missions and pastoral properties—there has been, literally, no grass. Pools, gyms, courts, tracks, ranges, nets, tours, coaches, physios and scholarships have not been part of their lives.

Sport has hardly been fair. There has been discrimination in motive, in behaviour and in attitude even among some who are enlightened and well disposed. The list is long, real and dismal, as described in great detail in *Obstacle Race* : for example, the treatment of the 1868 cricket team, possibly apart from Johnny Mullagh; the separate initials of 'a's' ['aborigines'] and 'h.c.'s ['half-castes'] for all the dark runners; the Queensland Amateur Athletic Association's attempted banning of all Aborigines; cricket's dismissal of cricketer Jack Marsh and the court's sanction of his murder; the removal and isolation of cricketer Alec Henry; the hounding of boxer Jerry Jerome; the Carlton Football Club's rejection of Doug Nicholls; the Queensland Cricket Association's treatment of Eddie Gilbert; the exploitation of boxer Ron Richards; the athletic world's attitude to Wally McArthur and Percy Hobson; the campaigns to prevent Aboriginal teams entering Australian rules and rugby league competitions; the exclusion or expulsion of Aboriginal rules teams from local leagues; the Brisbane press treatment of cricketer Ian King; the insults to Australian rules players like Syd Jackson, the Krakouer brothers, Nicky Winmar and umpire Glenn James.

These episodes were and are abhorrent and demeaning. They affected dozens of individuals. Institutional denial, however, affects whole communities. There is a *conscious denial* of the barest facilities necessary to a civilised society, such as adequate water, electricity, sewerage, sufficient food, medical help, a living wage and permission to live with (let alone keep) one's children. Toomelah, in northern New South Wales, is a supreme example.

An equally serious problem is the attempt to provide facilities *in communities that are not communities*. Let me explain.

In the protection-segregation and wardship eras, settlements and missions were designed as institutions, with the residents termed inmates. There were locks and keys of a legal, administrative and physical kind. With the changes that came after 1972 these nineteenth- and early twentieth-century institutions were euphemistically termed 'communities', and superintendents and managers were transformed by administrative pen into 'community development officers'. No one defined the characteristics of community, no one trained the officers in 'development', and no one consulted the black populations about their notions of a civil order, an organised society, a polity. Born out of sheer political expedience, and a

laziness to do any homework about these groupings and their common or uncommon character, these prison-like total institutions were 'freed', given a budget and autonomy of a limited kind. Nobody gave thought as to how one de-institutionalised an institution; no one gave lessons in autonomy and, importantly, nobody remembered, or wanted to remember, that the inmates-turned-citizens were often people moved or exiled to these places, or people rounded up by desert patrols and simply placed there for the great 'social engineering' experiment of assimilation in the deserts and monsoon lands. Most places were not peopled by groups with a common tribal or linguistic membership, with a common historical and cultural heritage, groups communalistic in their membership, integrated and socially coherent.

Infrastructure was artificial. It was the authoritarian and draconian laws and regulations under special legislation, and those powers together with mission evangelism that gave these institutions 'viability'. The struts propping the institutions began to be removed only in the 1970s and in Queensland even later. There is, in effect, a vacuum in many of these places, an absence of an overarching or binding philosophy. The rallying call for land rights, especially since 1969, and the protracted legal hearings, have filled a very small part of that vacuum.

Sport is not a philosophy, but it is a set of disciplined, ritualised activities that attracts loyalties and contractual obligations. Later I stress the importance of sport for Aboriginal survival and development. For the moment there is need of a short but representative tour of the remote centres to see who plays and who doesn't, who can afford to play and who can't.

Sports Facilities Available to Selected Aboriginal Communities, 1989–90

Access to town facilities	*Reserves with no facilities*	*Reserves with adequate facilities*
New South Wales		
Armidale	Barwon Four	Erambie
Boggabilla	Cummeragunja	Stanley Village
Bourke	Gingie	Willow Bend
Brewarrina	Murrin Bridge	Coomealla (Dareton)
Condobolin	Toomelah	
Cowra	Wallaga Lake	
Dubbo		
Lake Cargelligo		
Moree		
Nowra		
Walgett		
Queensland		
Goondiwindi	Doomadgee	Cherbourg
Mt Isa	Gungarde (Cooktown)	Laura
	Hopevale	Palm Island
	Mornington Is (Gunana)	Woorabinda
	Wujal Wujal	Yarrabah
Northern Territory		
Alice Springs	Hermannsburg (Ntaria)	Barunga (Bamyili)
Darwin	Kintore	Nguiu (Bathurst Island)
	Mt Liebig	
	Oenpelli	
	Papunya	
	Port Keats (Wadeye)	
	Pularumpi	
	Santa Teresa	
	Yuendumu	
Western Australia		
Broome	Coonana	Kurrawang
Derby	Geraldton	Fitzroy Crossing
Halls Creek	Kalumburu	
Kalgoorlie	Lagrange (Bidyadanga)	
Kununurra	Lombadina & Djarindjin	
Perth	Mowanjum	
	Turkey Creek (Warmun)	
South Australia		
Ceduna	Davenport	Gerard
Murray Bridge	Point Pearce	Koonibba
Port Augusta	Raukkun (Point McLeay)	
Port Lincoln	Yalata	
Victoria		
Drouin	Lake Tyers	
Echuca		
Mildura		
Morwell		
Robinvale		
Shepparton		
Swan Hill		
Warragul		

4. The success stories

There is greater morale, a greater sense of purpose and joy in living—and less crime at times—when or where sport is organised, competitive and successful. It enhances the homogeneous Tiwi communities at Nguiu and Milikiparti and it promotes coherence in the diverse groups at Port Lincoln in South Australia.. Of the eighty distinct communities I visited over seven months between 1989 and 1993 (and/or over extensive periods in earlier years), thirty-four were urban populations with access to whatever was available in the towns; four were reserve communities very close to town and ten were communities on reserves which had facilities at least comparable to white rural towns or the disadvantaged end of large cities; thirty-two were communities on remote or isolated reserves which had no facilities whatsoever. The sample was large and as representative as could be devised in conjunction with the then Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA), State police forces and local Aboriginal councils.

Twenty minutes' flying time north of Darwin lie Bathurst and Melville Islands, home of the Tiwi people. The football competition and the canteens are probably the most potent forces in the lives of the people at Nguiu, Pularumpi and Milikiparti. Both activities appear to have lessened interest in traditional ceremonies and in formal Catholicism. At least $1 million has been spent on the sports facility (two ovals, basketball and handball courts) at Nguiu, and the canteen profits ensure continued funding. Money is available to send primary school children to mainland carnivals. There are frequent visitors from champion football players such as the Rioli brothers and Ted Whitten. Talent scouts from the Australian Football League, South Australian National Football League and West Australian Football Commission are fully aware of this nursery.

Quality players are recruited to play in the Northern Territory Football League (NTFL). Aboriginal over-representation in this sport is spectacular: They are only 22 per cent of the Territory population yet form 70 per cent of the players in A and B divisions in the seven league teams—Darwin, North Darwin, Nightcliff, St Marys, Wanderers, Waratahs and Southern Districts—the most outstanding such statistic in Australian sport; and six of the eight dual Nichols Medals winners are Aborigines.

There is a parallel competition on the islands. Eight teams—Imalu, Taracumbie, Tuyu, Tapalinga, Pumaralli, Irrimaru, Wurankuwu and

Nguiu—represent the communities. The play is fierce but rarely violent, the atmosphere tense, tribal flags flutter and the earth is moved by the events. Some of the players, when off duty on some Saturdays, go across to play for NTFL teams in Darwin. This is the world of the early Kantilla, Rioli, Vigona, Lew Fatt and Long clans.

Nearly 2300 km away as the crow flies directly to South Australia at the other end of the continent there is more football success in Ceduna, Koonibba and—a further 500 km south—Port Lincoln. Isolated Ceduna (786 km west of Adelaide) has a new sports complex with oval, netball courts, licensed clubhouse—but no indoor toilet/locker rooms for women. Four clubs play rules: Thevenard and Western United FC (from Penong) are both about 30 per cent Aboriginal; Koonibba is all Aboriginal and Ceduna Sports Club is essentially white.

Koonibba, which began as a Lutheran mission in 1897, is 40 km west of Ceduna. I couldn't visit because of mourning and funerals for two teenage lads who had committed suicide. Now a small farming community of 150, still with a strong Lutheran orientation, Koonibba has been one of the most successful rural football teams. They have played in two different leagues since 1906 and in the major competition have won sixteen premierships, the last in 1990. Champion player Maurice Miller explained his philosophy to me: 'The football oval is my world. My opponents are my critics. The ball is the subject of my ambition. If I control the ball I control my destiny'. Maurice died in 1993: he had a long career at Ceduna Area School, a success he attributed solely to sport. The Koonibba men are an interesting microcosm: a small, thriving, farming, sporting, religious group—with a propensity to die very young. Despite a lack of funds, the Ceduna and Koonibba Aborigines sustain two adult and two colts football teams, four junior netball teams and eight basketball teams. All this takes place in the winter season. The vacuum occurs in summer—with consequent social problems.

Port Lincoln is a town of about 12,000 people, 250 km due west from Adelaide across the St Vincent and Spencer Gulfs. The Aboriginal population is between 600 and 700, with close on 200 from Western Australia. Others have come from the Territory and Queensland because 'life is easier' there. The Port Lincoln Aboriginal Organisation (PLAO) is the umbrella body that holds everything together. Associated with PLAO is the Mallee Park FC, which owns 19 acres in town, complete with oval

and licensed restaurant-clubhouse. PLAO has its offices at the sports ground. Four families run this football enterprise—indeed, four families comprise the team. In a community that is beset by jealousy problems, it takes a kin-based operation centred on sport to hold things together. This is possibly the best example of a sporting activity that salvages a cohesion that was almost lost. This is a young community, with unemployment at about 95 per cent, with perhaps two men employed in government service, where male life expectancy is 47 years and female 52. Here is a group that is getting things together, including restoration of 300 acres at Poonindie as a tourist attraction and a sheep project.

Until the advent of the Mallee Park FC men played for local teams. These men 'only wanted to know you for the six months of the football year: they wouldn't come near you, socially or in any other way, for the rest of the year'. Beginning in 1980 and especially since 1985, the team has had resounding success. At one stage they held an Australian record of winning forty-two games without loss as they strode to premierships. They won the district premiership every year from 1985 to 1990, and again in 1993. In that last year they won every pennant there was to win. There are three Aboriginal darts teams and the Mallee Park Nunga Club at PLAO headquarters has pool tables, a gym, boxing and 'drop-in' facilities. 'When sport is on, crime rates drop down'; 'football keeps the younger kids out of trouble . . .without sport, its worse'; 'it takes people's minds off the grog and the drugs'; 'health improves, everything improves'. Such are the comments from Aborigines and experienced police alike. There were no reported suicides or attempted suicides in 1989–90.

Cherbourg, some 280 km north of Brisbane (inland), is the celebrated centre of Aboriginal sports culture. Their extraordinary boxing and rugby league achievements are discussed in *Obstacle Race*. Problems abound in this population of 1500 people, as evidenced by five suicides and five deaths of young people from alcohol-related episodes in a period of six months in 1989. One wonders what would happen without sport. An elder explained it to me: 'Sport is very big. Without sport the place would have nothing. Rugby league is everything. Outside of the season nothing much happens'. At times Cherbourg has had two rugby clubs, in effect fielding six teams in the different divisions. The (now) sole team plays in the South Burnett competition against Kingaroy, Wondai, Nanango and Murgon. All but Murgon have substantial Aboriginal representation. The Jack O'Chin

oval has lights and is well equipped. In season the men train six nights a week. *That* is a discipline and a commitment not found in any other activity. Children's sport is well catered for. Boxing has been a source of great pride and I was fortunate in meeting Joe Button—'King of the People'—the man who trained national amateur champions Jimmy Edwards Jr. Eddie Barney, Jeff Dynevor, Adrian Blair and Dave Landers. Even within the success stories, women miss the most of what there is to miss. They struggle for money and facilities in netball and basketball competition, but touch has come to the rescue, supporting seven men's and five women's teams in outside competition.

Woorabinda is 270 km west of Rockhampton, notorious as a dumping ground and penal colony in the earlier days of Queensland's Aboriginal administration. My first visit was in 1962, the next in 1975. By 1989 I didn't recognise this bustling, thriving, growing, audibly buzzing community. A powerful Council, the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP), sport, and the elders' talent for employing skilled non-Aborigines had transformed the lives of the 1500 residents. There is a magnificent football oval, first-rate lights, a large clubhouse, a clubhouse licence, an Olympic pool; most importantly, Woorabinda is now willingly sought as a venue by teams who earlier spurned it as a competitor.

Throughout the 1980s the local players paid out between $16,000 and $17,000 to play in the Callide Valley competition. At $70 a trip for seventeen away games, each of the Woorabinda Warriors was paying out $1190 a season! Netball and softball began recently, but the competition is in Rockhampton and the transport costs are exorbitant. The netballers were paying $340 a week for a bus to Rockhampton, money raised by raffles and jumble sales rather than given by the dominating football men. It is likely that the turnaround in Woorabinda's fortunes can be attributed essentially to CDEP. Much else changed in the late 1980s. Boxing started in 1988. The pool was built partly by a levy of 20 cents on every can of beer sold in a canteen that made a nett profit of $250,000 in 1989. The football clubhouse was built by joining seven demountable units salvaged from the Burdekin Dam scheme. Quarter horses are bred. There is much ad hoc cleverness in this community, with sharp eyes out for chances to improve facilities, especially the sporting ones. School sport is well

organised by the teaching staff, though I noticed the lack of interest in junior sport on the part of the senior sports controllers.

Barunga is 70 km east of Katherine (NT) by road. Known earlier as Bamyili, and forming part of the former Beswick Creek reserve, this community is well served in sport, apart from travel costs. Gordon Kennedy, the local recreation officer, founded the Barunga Amateur Boxing Club and has taken his teams to success in Darwin, Alice, Brisbane and Sydney tournaments. Sponsorship in all of these communities is a serious problem. Local businesses tend to give sums of $150 or $500 for a season. Mothers sew, bake and run opportunity shops and local councils help out a little. The bulk of needed money comes from individuals and family, whose income (in almost all communities) is social service payment or its work equivalent, CDEP.

The mainstay of women's and junior sport has been Helen Fejo-Frith, now coach of the Barunga Eagles football team. Eight fixtures in the six-team Katherine and Districts League are played on the grass oval at Barunga. Barunga's youth is hardly alone in expressing a *prime desire* in life: 'we're hungry for football'. There is a night basketball competition, eagerly contested, and volleyball has come into its own. Compared to many other Territory youth, the Barunga mob are confident and show self-esteem. The youngsters embrace sport as an essential of life, not as an elective or an optional extra. The Barunga sports festival is discussed below.

Geraldton is 424 km north of Perth, with a population of 22,000, including 1500 Aborigines. Each year the Geraldton Sporting Aboriginal Corporation organises a basketball competition. In 1989 a total of sixty-three teams—senior men's, reserve and women's—attended from as far afield as Kununurra and Kalumburu. Courts are leased, bands play and the event lasts three or four days and nights. Music festivals are highly valued in Aboriginal communities. Whole families congregate and the event is singularly free from trouble and arrests. In both basketball and rules, Aborigines are well represented in town teams.

Kurrawang, just outside Coolgardie in Western Australia, is a small, strictly Christian community. A Pentecostal movement, the Aboriginal Christian Corporation, runs a tight and disciplined community. As in so many of these cases, distance is what puts paid to competition. There is a

great deal of competitive basketball at Kurrawang, especially among the girls. Much of the activity is YMCA and YWCA oriented. There is a plan for a multi-purpose sports complex centred on basketball, volleyball, badminton and rules football. There are enough players for an A and a reserve team to compete in the nearby Kalgoorlie league. A number of Aborigines in this region of the West have begun to re-identify with their earlier missions rather than with regions of origin. 'I'm a Warburton Mission man' is now commonly heard, and it will be interesting to see whether this Christian group—seemingly on the verge of big money through emu farming—will sustain itself and its ideals.

Condobolin on the Lachlan River is 475 km west of Sydney, with a population of 3300. In this little New South Wales domain there is a $1.2 million sports complex, owned and run as a business by the local Aborigines. Chris ('Honky') Clark, the man who suggested the Aboriginal and Islander Sports Hall of Fame idea to me, turned a bicentennial grant of $100,000 to Willow Bend Village—the nearby 'mission'—into collateral for a further grant and loan to establish the complex at Condo. It opened in 1988. It is open six days a week and there is much interracial sporting and social mixing. Discos are run every fortnight, strictly without alcohol, with up to 150 youth attending. For me, the town was most relaxed, friendly, with much social cordiality. There is a good atmosphere generally, and it is clear that the complex has become a focal point of the town. In addition, a multi-purpose court for netball, basketball, volleyball, tennis, badminton and cricket nets has been built at Willow Bend Village. The group already has an excellent gym. Aborigines from all over southern Australia bus in to behold these facilities as models for their dreams.

5. Sports tax

Tax is not simply a compulsory contribution or levy; it is also something that is oppressive and burdensome. One of the canons of income taxation is to take from each according to his or her ability to pay. On this criterion, and if rural playing costs are considered a tax, then Aborigines pay higher taxes than any other group in Australia.

In the list (above) of communities I visited, the first and third columns are those with facilities and access to competition—in varying grades and quality. Two cases must suffice as instances of undue sports taxation.

Moree (NSW) and Palm Island (Qld). In Moree women who play basketball and touch paid $350 a season for use of the oval and the night lights. In addition they paid the sport's affiliation fees, a further $350 (in 1989–90 money terms). These sums caused a marked dropping off in basketball interest. The Taylor Oval costs the Boomerangs footballers between $4000 and $4500 for the season: to play, to train and to use the lights. For communities with the barest minimum subsistence incomes it is a high tax.

Sponsorship is a common feature of all sport—yet it is something that has passed by most Aboriginal sportspeople. There are very few Aboriginal business enterprises to call on. A number of small local businesses donate a season's jumpers or footballs, but this is really peanuts money. A high proportion of these businesses are migrant-owned. Aborigines rarely have the confident salesmen to make the pitch to the big companies. Some, such as Fourex in Queensland, approach teams like Woorabinda with offers of prize-money in return for logo advertising.

The population of Palm Island is just under 3000. Sixteen teams play rugby league, involving 380 registered players. This means that 14 per cent of the population are players—which is indeed a statistic in a special class. There are four clubs: Jets, Raiders, Hurricanes and Skipjacks. Why so many? Because they are internal teams who play each other, not teams on the mainland. One team, the Palm Island Barracudas, plays against teams from the Foley Shield competition from time to time in individually arranged matches. Palm was admitted to the Townsville Rugby League in 1982 and played regularly until 1988. Palm had to pay the cost of the visiting teams—up to $3000 a day for a plane or $2000 for a launch. In seven years the Palm people spent close on $400,000 for their players' away game expenses and the visiting team fares. Over $25,000 was spent on (unsponsored) jerseys, ground equipment, shoulder pads and the like. Naturally, they went broke. Nowadays they have no option but to play each other.

There are, of course, other burdens. Many of the population centres have limited school sport and because of travel costs interschool carnivals are difficult. Palm Island primary, for example, sent 100 children to Townsville for the schools athletics carnival in 1989: the cost was $3200 for the launch round trip. The school's budget from a special schools program fund was $18,000 for the year. Doomadgee, in north Queensland,

has a keen junior sports pool, with some real talent in gymnastics, softball and league. Each child pays $80 to attend competition in nearby Burketown (100 km) and more than double for distant Isa (600 km).

The total absence of qualified instructors is a major problem. In the late 1980s the Department of Aboriginal Affairs constructed about a dozen ill-conceived and poorly thought out sports complexes for remote communities. The one at Yarrabah is a prime example: a monstrous elephant of several colours, it remains isolated from the population and is virtually unused. There are elaborate concrete slabs with intricate markings for a variety of sports. No one can coach, no one knows the rules of these games and no one can referee. Lack of instructors is the hallmark of most of these centres. Day-long visits by boxer Tony Mundine or rules player Barry Cable are inspirational, but only for the heroic moment. There is no aftermath.

Lack of pools is more than just an absence of a swimming facility. A visiting specialist to Doomadgee—Dr Darrell Duncan, who is concerned with health matters relating to water—has stated that there is a dramatic reduction in trachoma where children swim in chlorinated pools. The Doomadgee pool is unusable and a large sum is needed for refurbishment.

There remains the unending burden of discrimination even in the 'good' towns and reserves. There is only one set of basketball courts in Derby, not in good repair. They are used mainly by Aborigines, something some of the town fathers object to. Some want new courts, for whites only. In Dubbo (NSW) there is a powerful Aboriginal rugby league team, the Orana Goo-gars. They play out of the little town Mendooran, 70 km away from Dubbo, because the Dubbo teams insist that Orana's presence in town would detract from their sponsorship opportunities. At Erambie (NSW) and in the East Gippsland district where Lake Tyers is situated, the local footballers don't want these 'missions' to have separate teams: they only want Aboriginal players in their teams, which is a nice twist to the whole racism 'thing'.

The facilities at Toomelah are poor, yet the community has produced outstanding sportspeople. I watched Aborigines outperform all others at the Macintyre Cluster Primary State Schools Athletics carnival at Goondiwindi High School in July 1989. Goondiwindi in Queensland is 22 km away from Tooomelah in New South Wales. The tensions have been

enormous these past thirty years, erupting in a major fracas in the Victoria Hotel in 1987. In 1989 the New South Wales Supreme Court refused extradition to Queensland of sixteen Toomelah/Boggabilla men on the grounds that they would not receive a fair trial in Goondiwindi and if convicted they would face 'intolerable, oppressive and unjust' prison treatment.[18] One Goondiwindi response to this 'outrageous slur' was to ban Aboriginal touch teams from Toomelah/Boggabilla on the grounds that the competition was for Queenslanders only.[19] The Boggabilla police sergeant deplored the fact that he and his friends were still allowed to play in the competition. This situation is one which is, fortunately, rare: that sport exacerbates the tensions and animosities and the determination of the youth to revenge themselves on the 'system'. In 1993, however, there was an element of reconciliation through sport: despite all charges being dismissed against the Toomelah men for the 1987 episode, an event that will doubtless 'fester', the New South Wales Aborigines were invited to join Goondiwindi football and touch teams.

Despite the success of the Geraldton sports carnivals, there is a strong antipathy to all things Aboriginal in that city. The town and shire councils have proved difficult about the number of nights that bands can play at carnival time. The local press never misses an opportunity to engage in scare mongering, a matter the police have complained of, and positive Aboriginal achievements, such as the carnivals, don't rate a mention.

Facilities in the major towns and in the small and large cities vary, as one would expect. There are a number of reports of Aboriginal groups being denied access to public parks and playing fields, even in the suburbs of Perth. Another phenomenon is for white youth to move into other sports rather than stay in games where Aborigines predominate or shine. Bourke is an example: the white boys have moved to rugby union, but have now been 'followed' by Aboriginal lads.

An underrated but highly significant feature of large and city and small city life has been the work of Police Boys' Clubs. As facilities and places of interaction for Aboriginal youth, clubs like Broome and Kalgoorlie have been outstanding, even though a little outdated in their thinking and in their disco programs. Police may have good strategy and manpower reasons for closing so many of these centres; nevertheless their articulation of why they close them has been poor, especially in the light of

constant police speech making about the need to improve relations with Aborigines.

6. Unequal access

The thirty-three 'no facilities' communities are not all bereft of sport. Most make the most of what little there is—and the little is very little. All have some form of school program, however small in scale and competition. Most simply cannot get to competition. Kalumburu in northern Western Australia is a ten-hour and a twelve-hour four-wheel drive to Kununurra and Derby respectively. The air fare to Kununurra was $70 return in the regular flight but a nine-seater charter cost $1500.

By 'no facilities' I mean no pools, no ovals, tracks, nets, change rooms, equipment, instructors and regular competitions. Some of the 'sportsgrounds' have to be seen to be believed (see Appendix II for a glimpse of what is much worse in reality). Lombadina and Djarindjin in north-western Western Australia play on a salt pan. The basketball court is old, the surface cracked, the boards broken. It is difficult to imagine the collection of decrepit, unusable courts that exist in these places. Kalumburu has, literally, a paddock that floods for more than half the year. In New South Wales, Gingie reserve has an 'oval' covered in wild bushes. The kids use broken crutches as pogo sticks for want of playthings. Murrin Bridge has a gym that isn't a gym and beautiful Wallaga Lake has nothing apart from a place to swim. Mowanjum, near Derby, has a basketball court of sorts, dominated by the older children; Lake Tyers in East Gippsland has a court in ruins. In north Queensland, Cooktown is virtually bereft of organised sport, for black and white alike. Wujal Wujal—north of Daintree and south of Cooktown—is an isolated community, inward-looking, turning in on itself, except for alcohol excursions to the celebrated Lion's Den pub near Helenvale, the grottiest I have ever visited. There is no football, no basketball or netball. But there is a thirst for sport among the kids who travel to the Bloomfield River primary, 7 km away. Hopevale lacks resources but the community spirit is, in part, due to a high level of sports organisation, noticeably among the women. The famous rock-art township of Laura has literally nothing, except for very limited school sport. Sport in much of Arnhem Land in the Territory is a ghastly joke. Communities like Oenpelli have nothing. Sport in Central Australia is hardly better. Communities like Kintore and Mt Liebig are full of sports

enthusiasm, but what passes for 'ovals' are cleared patches of dusty red earth, with no markings, locker rooms, showers, stands, scoreboards and the like.

Yalata in South Australia has abysmal facilities, all in need of refurbishing, major repair or replacement. Yalata, which needs all the help it can get, almost joined the Ceduna football competition in 1994 but lost some of its key players to other teams. Coonana, as remote as remote can be in Western Australia, has no teams, no games, no fields. Yuendumu, discussed below, is an astonishing exception: it holds an annual sporting event attended by dozens of communities and thousands of spectators—in a domain that looks, and is, a physical disaster.

The saddest story is Mornington Island in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Without instructors, cut off from the mainland by expense, costly (and mostly unsuitable) sports equipment sent up from Canberra is merrily eaten by rats in the inappropriate building set aside for sport. The violent dynamics of that society are discussed later.

Cummeragunja and Lake Tyers have proud sporting achievements. Yet the facilities are poor in the extreme. In far too many places children kick an aimless football or manufacture, as children do, games of the imagination with bits of debris. An honest documentary film would show scenes that appear to be located in Afghanistan in wartime or Somalia in drought time.

7. Funding Aboriginal sport

The poverty of sport and facilities is far too common in this twice-blessed land of Olympism. Since 1969—why not sooner?—federal governments have made efforts to develop sport and recreation programs. In that year the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, W. C. Wentworth, agreed to establish an Aboriginal Sports Foundation to encourage Aborigines in sport, to gain for Aborigines more open access to sport, to arrange tours and competition, and to reward distinguished performances. Prime movers behind the scheme were Ted Egan, then a special project officer with Dr 'Nugget' Coombs's Office of Aboriginal Affairs, and Charles Perkins, then senior research officer with that office. Both had a vision of something better than a 'milking cow'. As Egan

wrote in an internal memo: 'The presentation of a couple of footballs at Maningrida by Polly Farmer would probably have more positive effect than the "let's give them a couple of thousand" approach, where there is a risk of the money being spent on fleecy lined jock straps and Adidas boots all round'.

But the Foundation did have to adopt a handout approach. Of the $50,000 total budget then available, bits and pieces (from $300 to $3000) went, for example, to Numbulwar for a basketball court, to a women's hockey club in South Australia, to Warrabri (now Ali Carung) for a grass oval, to Amoonguna football club for jerseys and insurance, to the Redfern All Blacks for a visit to New Zealand. Looking at the early applications caused me to scrawl in the margins: 'Where the hell are the Aboriginal Affairs Departments?'—the bodies charged with promoting the physical and social advancement of Aborigines.

The original Foundation members were Doug Nicholls (chairman), Michael Ahmatt, Elley Bennett, George Bracken, Bill Dempsey, Evonne Goolagong, Syd Jackson, David Kantilla, Ian King, Wally McArthur, Darby McCarthy, Charles Perkins, Reg Saunders (of military fame), Eric Simms, Faith Thomas and, in association, Lionel Rose.

The National Aboriginal Sports Council (NASC) replaced the Foundation: it represented thirty-two sporting communities in Australia. Between them these two bodies allocated several million dollars to Aboriginal sport. In 1986–87, $3.65 million was given for sport and recreation programs, which included $800,000 for sports grants. In the same year NASC recommended that four national championships be funded—in darts, netball, indoor soccer and golf. The National Aboriginal Golf Association was created in 1987 and in October that year a twelve-man, four-woman team went on a tournament visit to Hawaii. In 1987 ten amateur boxers, accompanied by Trevor Christian and Tony Mundine, were assisted in a visit to the US Olympic Training Centre, with a view to preparation for places in the 1988 Olympic team. An all-Aboriginal indoor soccer team went to Canada on tour. Rugby league, basketball, netball and athletic carnivals were underwritten. Further, fourteen young Aboriginal sports stars were assisted to compete overseas, some at world championship level. In recent years it has become clear that national distribution is *not* working. Since the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) went 'regional', there have been no central.

national funds for Australia-wide carnivals. As a result, some States have developed special Aboriginal sporting bodies, such as the South Australian Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Association. Some State departments of sport and recreation have initiated special Aboriginal units because of the inability of national bodies to appreciate distinct regional needs.

8. Violence—and pessimism

Unequal access to sport is not merely a case of discrimination or neglect. There are serious ramifications for the psychological, sociological and political aspects of contemporary Aboriginal life. My first observations about Aborigines in sport began in 1961. Now, thirty-three years later, my conclusion is that *sport can, and does, have more important functions in Aboriginal societies than it does in the lives of other Australians*. There are at least ten factors that make sport so crucial and central, not only to Aboriginal development but to the very basis of life itself, namely, survival. Dramatic? Yes, but sport, or the absence of it, is a factor in sustaining and nurturing group identity. Sport is a key to several existential issues. Sport present has a number of practical and pragmatic effects; sport absent has a number of serious and deleterious effects. In many Aboriginal communities sport:

- provides, however temporarily, some purpose and meaning in life;
- enhances (diminishing) social cohesion and togetherness;
- emphasises ritual and attracts loyalties;
- demonstrates Aboriginal organisational skills;
- enables a few moments of total empowerment and sovereignty;
- acts, on occasion, to offset alcohol abuse;
- occupies time in the absence of real employment;
- helps overcome, however temporarily, chronic ill health;
- reduces serious internal violence and juvenile delinquency; and
- provides an avenue for successful competition against mainstream society.

Before analysing some of these functions of sport in the remoter communities, something of the social context of violent behaviour must be presented. The picture is not pleasant and some people will doubtless argue that the bad and the ugly should be left out and only the good

reported. There are devastating problems at this time and they cannot be dealt with unless faced head on. We buried trachoma for a quarter of a century—and there are legions of blind to show for it.

The above functions are vital when we look at what is happening in many remote communities. This past decade has seen a marked increase on 'internal breakdown' within communities. There is, regrettably, abundant evidence for these realities:

- the great deal of personal violence within Aboriginal groups, even within families;
- the great deal of child neglect, as in hunger and lack of general care;
- the considerable amount of violence and damage committed in sober states;
- the marked increase in Aboriginal deaths from non-natural causes;
- much destruction of property, both white-supplied and own acquired;
- increasing numbers of attacks, often violent, on white staff who work with the groups;
- the alarming incidence of suicide and attempted suicide (parasuicide) among the youth;
- the vast quantity of alcohol consumed, commonly and generally (but not always correctly) offered as the *sole and total explanation* of the violence; and
- the constancy with which Aborigines now externalise cause, blame and responsibility for all this.

This is not the place to analyse each of these problems in detail, but several must be discussed. As of the 1990s, the second-ranking cause of death among Aborigines (after cardiovascular disease) is death from non-natural or external causes. Violence, in the form of injury or life-taking, is inflicted either on others or on self. That there was, and is, rough, physical injurious treatment within traditional culture is not in dispute. What is under focus here is the 'new violence': the prevalence of deaths from non-natural causes, what official reports call 'violences, accidents and poisonings': the greater prevalence of homicide, suicide, parasuicide and self-mutilation; the even 'newer' phenomena of rape, child-molestation and incest. Ironically, the very violence that traditional elders meted out to

offenders in this last category, such as a spearing in the thigh, is no longer (generally) invoked or used.

Judy Atkinson is not alone in arguing that 'violence is now endemic in contemporary Aboriginal society' and that it is 'created by the processes of dispossession, colonisation and alienation'.[20] Locating the historical causes is important but it is of no help in trying to change the present. A young gambling mother pours petrol on a blanket and places it on her crying infant's face to quieten the child. The crisis lies in what she is doing and what can be done to end such calamities.

Ernest Hunter has dealt with the problem of self-mutilation, particularly among young males.[21] There is also much self-tattooing, usually of one's own name, done in a mutilating fashion. Hunter tells me that this is usually done by alienated adolescents whose social networks are fragile and who need to claim and proclaim their very identity. Inebriated domestic violence and inebriated homicide (which is often domestic violence 'gone wrong') are too common. Child neglect is new. Aborigines have long been highly praised (at least by those who have lived or worked with communities) for their remarkable system of kinship, family reciprocity, care of the aged and the young. In metropolitan Sydney it is estimated that between 200 and 250 children are homeless each night and that Aborigines 'are disproportionately represented among this number'.[22] Yet twenty-five years ago such homelessness would have been out of the question. In remoter areas, neglect, lack of food and certainly the wrong food have caused a further weakening in the already shaky health and strength of young children. Much of the juvenile crime is breaking and entering—to find food!

Suicide is not the sole litmus of societal ills but it is generally accepted as a strong signal that something is seriously amiss. Teenage suicide, especially male suicide, has reached dramatic proportions in most Western societies these past twenty years. But the leap in Aboriginal suicide and attempted suicide rates is staggering—statistically and in its implications about the value Aborigines place upon life today.

Louis Wekstein deals with the vexed problem of classifying the different kinds of completed suicide and parasuicide, both of which he calls 'the human act of self-inflicted, self-intentional cessation of life'.[23] Two of his thirteen classifications interest me. The first is 'chronic

suicide', the masking of a death wish by the excessive use of alcohol or drugs. Intent and method may not be in the same class as the classic (novel and movie) depiction, complete with suicide note and gun. But the common element remains—self-destruction. The second is existential suicide. This is an ending of the unending burden of hypocrisy, the meaninglessness of life, the ennui: it is the lack of motivation to continue to exist—what concentration camp survivor Victor Frankl would call *purposelessness in all things*, especially in future things.

Emanuel Marx has influenced my analysis of what I have seen in black Australia.[24] He was writing about violent behaviour in an Israeli immigrant town, yet his framework is uncannily applicable to many of our communities. He talks about 'appealing suicide'. 'Appealing violence' is very much a cry for help. It is used by someone at the end of his/her tether, when one feels unable to achieve a single social aim without the assistance of others. Such a person tries to shift personal obligations on to others, and/or tries to shift blame for personal failings on to others. The person who cannot persuade his/her family to help, or to share his/her responsibilities, repeatedly attempts suicide as a desperate means of gaining family support. At Raukkun (Point McLeay) in South Australia, an Aboriginal man attacked his brother with an axe early in 1989. Admonished later by the local policeman's wife, he replied: 'Sorry, I'll never do that again: I'll only hurt myself'.

There is also the problem of the life-threatening act that doesn't end in death. Regrettably, in every sense of that word, this includes gestures and ambivalent acts of self-hurt. It is all too easy, as I observed during my research, for all (but the attempter) to say he or she is only attention-seeking. I cannot accept, especially from the healing and helping professions, that young girls swallowing liquid paper or thumb tacks was simply 'being silly' or worse, 'being stupid'.

Hunter's study of twenty-five suicides in the Kimberley, his published papers and his book throws light on essentially young male Aboriginal deaths.[25] In the decade 1959 to 1969 there was one suicide; between 1969 and 1979, there were three; between 1979 and 1989, there were nineteen! The suicides are increasingly younger and male; they are essentially urban-based, characterised by an environment of normative drinking and of violence. The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody presented the wide range of factors involved in the 108 deaths they were

allowed to examine. A 1990 Adelaide study on Aboriginal social health found fifteen parasuicides in a random sample of eighty-eight people: an unusual feature was that fourteen of these were female.[26]

Before the 1960s the research literature reported perhaps no more than twenty instances of conscious acts of self-destruction among Aboriginal people. In the seven days from 16 to 22 October 1989, the (then) Department of Aboriginal Affairs was made aware of eight Aboriginal non-custody suicide attempts in and around Adelaide. Suicide, parasuicide and self-mutilation are, without exaggeration, rampant in black Australia.

My research into Aboriginal violence and delinquency was based on extensive interviews with Aboriginal elders, youth, liaison officers, welfare workers, judicial officers, lawyers and police officers of all ranks. The results have also been presented to several Aboriginal conferences. An alarming picture emerges. About 60 per cent of men aged between 20 and 30 are involved in violence of some kind. Aborigines form between 0.3 and 2.6 per cent of the populations of all States (except the Territory, with 22.3 per cent), yet youth comprise between 7 and 15 per cent of offenders and between 15 and 30 per cent of such youth are in 'secure care'.

The pattern now described is not universal but is very nearly so. There is group violence as well as gang violence, mostly without knives and guns, accomplished by bashing, often in anger and frustration. The gang-groups become smaller and smaller, more clearly defined, more and more on the 'outer'. They paint themselves as an exclusive set of excluded brethren. Yet, paradoxically, there appears to be a less defined sense of non-approval of the gangs. There has always been ritualised or 'pro forma' violence in Aboriginal communities but it was often posturing, with regrets, remorse or apology offered the following day. There was a structure that divided normal behaviour and that which was occasionally, especially with inebriation, over the top. Today, for the most part, there is no longer any structure: there is no predictability and anything can and does happen anywhere. There are no mediators left, people who would intercede in brawls when someone had had enough or when danger loomed. In many classrooms the first reaction of children to tension or teasing is to punch someone. In short, there is now, too often, a sense of chaos. Child-rearing, as Aborigines knew it and as anthropological observers saw it, has been replaced by the phenomenon of video-watching. Many kids in the Kimberleys, for example, will hire between six and ten

videos a day. Early teenage pregnancy is common. So is teenage rape, to the extent that in some Arnhem Land communities it is said that every girl under fourteen has been raped at some time. Child alcoholism is rife and petrol-sniffing more so. Throughout this grim picture there is another universal: invariably, each child in difficulty locates blame and responsibility externally for his or her situation.

When asked the universal question about what they want to be, most youngsters perceive themselves as labourers of some description within their own communities. When asked whether he or she has another self, or whether another sense of self is possible, the answer is yes. But when asked what it is they have to give up or change in order to build another habitat, they can't answer. They appear to have no other reference points. Their lives, says Aboriginal educator Terry Widders, are one-dimensional: 'they are naked individuals without feedback systems'.[27]

9. The alcohol question

White and black Australians cannot legitimately sustain the argument that alcohol is the sole, total or even the most significant explanation of this internal violence. There is no doubt that alcohol lessens restraints about using violence, as witness the Hill or Bay 13 at two of our famous sports stadiums. For me, alcohol is only the agent, the effector of the carnage that is taking place. There are dozens of suggested causes from as many as fifty sources. In 1977 a federal parliamentary committee suggested twenty-four causes.[28] This was a particularly poor exercise since it sought to locate the main cause within the Aborigines themselves. Other theorists suggest genetic sensitivity to alcohol, or psychosocial or environmental or economic factors.

What then can I speculate upon as causal factors in Aboriginal men and women reaching the end of their tethers, crying for help, shifting obligations and responsibility on to others, of existing in a state that anthropologist Colin Turnbull would say is one where human characteristics are often lost, where human society is being replaced by a mere survival system? I suggest this cluster of factors:

1. The legacies of past violations which are now manifesting themselves: institutionalisation; heavy-handed, often authoritarian administration;

prohibition of cultural practices and the forbidding of hunting; the curfews; imprisonments for offences only Aborigines could commit; the ration systems; exiling of people to remote areas; and, of course, *the forced removal of children.*

2. Having survived because they had to—having survived the trading men, the whaler and sealermen, the church men, the beef and cattle men, the welfare men, and now the mining men—there is no longer the challenge to go on, a kind of self-genocide?

3. Aborigines face a potent and debilitating force—ambiguity, whereby the plethora of ideas, ideals and agencies results in uncertainty, unease, ambivalence, a blurring and lack of focus as to who is accountable and responsible for the events in their daily lives.

4. Unlike our ordered societies where educational and technological changes evolve over time, Aborigines have been elided and telescoped across 300 years of industrial and technological revolution in some forty years.

5. The equality and positive discrimination doctrines have given Aborigines an enormous agenda of expectations that they haven't the skills to acquire immediately and so the consequent frustrations, alienations and withdrawals from 'life' are manifested in appealing violence.

Two features of the extensive literature on Aborigines and alcohol stand out: first, alcohol is almost always presented as overweening, primary and causal in their lives; second, excessive drinking is perceived as a present tense phenomenon, a psychological and spiritual damage consequent upon past events, such as (colonial) dispossession of land, destruction of traditional society, and powerlessness in our society. The conventional thinking, including my own, has been that if we address the causes of heavy drinking—past loss of land and culture, present racial discrimination and denial of opportunity—the reasons for such drinking are likely to disappear. If we have the patience to sit out another two decades—the time needed to repair these primal causes and to facilitate self-esteem—then that consequent-upon-the-past heavy grogging will work itself out.

Several explanations of the mechanics or 'bio-mechanics' of this drinking are given: alcoholic behaviour is contagious in communities such as these: even non-drinkers comport themselves as if alcoholic, the so-called 'dry drunks': the white alcohol model is a constant and an extraordinary one, and so on. These are obviously matters for intensive research, especially as we have almost no quantitative studies apart from Hunter's recent Kimberley research. What we don't need is any more research to tell us that things are terribly wrong.

I make two points: first, Aboriginal drinking is almost never treated as individual drinking: it is perceived, regarded, addressed and debated as a collective phenomenon. Some revised thinking is called for if any changes are to occur. Second, if some of my conjectures have any validity, heavy drinking will not stop in the next quarter century. It is a matter of tenses. The impossible or improbable expectations will continue, and so will the problem of ambiguity.

Of immediate concern is that the much-respected Aboriginal values of affection, reverence for family and kin, reciprocity, care of the young and aged, veneration for law, lore and religion, are floundering or have been displaced for now. Tragically, many of these communities are no longer ordered societies.

There can, of course, be no return to the bad old days of authoritarian, repressive structures—whether run by bureaucrats, missionaries or cattlemen. There can be no going back to the well-meant but demeaning and devastating aspects of wardship and welfare. Without indigenous or external structures these centres literally cannot hold together. So with sadness and some permissible despair and irritation, I look at these eighty 'communities' and gloom descends.

Pessimism means an outlook that takes the gloomiest view of things. My pessimism is that (the real, proven) violence will grow within many Aboriginal groupings—and it will escalate towards aspects of white society, such as the spontaneous Aboriginal reaction to the death in police custody of Daniel Yock in Brisbane and in the streets of Armidale (following the cursing of Aboriginal children) late in 1993. The emergence of reckless teenage gangs is another facet of the new violence. Worse is the phenomenon of 8, 9 and 10-year-olds in Ayr (Qld) using street hideouts for drinking bouts in the early hours of the morning. They,

too, are secreting iron bars and assorted weaponry.[29] There is, of course, the 'old' violence at Bourke, Brewarina, Coonamble, Walgett, Wilcannia and Goondiwindi. Yet here there must be a pause about word usage. The point about almost all Aboriginal 'riots' is that they are not riots. They are best described as disturbances, fracas, brawls, fights. Riots occur in Toxteth and Brixton in Britain, in Chicago and Los Angeles, in Soweto in South Africa. Most police would agree, but resort to the utmost word as they articulate the underlying racism prevalent in this society.

10. Sport—and optimism

Optimism is a disposition to look on the bright side, to hope for the best (even when the realities don't quite warrant it). My optimism is that Aboriginal groups will find a religious or political, or religio-political, faith and philosophy that will further bond genuine communities and help create a sense of social cohesion among the 'disparate' ones in the former institutions. The black experience in the United States and South Africa is evidence of the need for such a faith, and the effectiveness of it, whether it be a broad-based black consciousness movement or highly specific faith such as that at the core of the Black Muslims. Sometimes the philosophy is an ethnic-based nationalism. The Zulu Inkatha movement in Natal has an infinitely stronger sense of unity and purpose than the general membership of the African National Congress, one which has assimilation into a 'unified' South Africa as their aim, one in which they draw only on their negative images under apartheid and on vague images of the future. Whether Aborigines can find a leadership to which they all give credence and deference is another matter.

Until such time as Aborigines find that inner faith or philosophy, there is a desperate need for a cement that produces a sense of cohesion. Many would argue that 'land rights' is the key. I disagree—in a very specific sense. Land rights, like 'black power' before it in the United States, is a rallying cry, an umbrella under which people come together in a united cause. Land rights is essentially a politico-economic movement; it is not a daily activity, something to do, a sustaining faith or philosophy. If land was the answer, there should be no disordered communities where rights have been granted. Many of the land-owning groups in Central Australia, like the Pitjantjatjara and the Pintupi, reside more and more in Alice Springs.

At first blush it may seem silly to suggest that sport is an answer. Clearly, it is not a *cure* for what besets many of these groups. But there is evidence to show that a full sporting life is a *partial* answer—perhaps a 30 to 40 per cent answer—to some of the major problems. However, the next difficulty is to get federal and State authorities to recognise that money spent on sport is not money spent on sport as simply play or recreation. Sport is not an adjunct, an addendum to life, something played at the end of the week and funded at the end of the budget after housing, health and education have been attended to. It is not merely a question of funding sport in order to redress inequalities in sports facilities. Sport is a major facet of Aboriginal survival and has to be treated as such.

The pioneering figure in the study of suicide, Emile Durkheim, contended that social cohesion provides the necessary psychological support to group members who are subjected to acute stresses. If there is no basic cohesion there cannot be support for individuals in the group. *That* is my contention: that it is social cohesion itself, the very social cement that holds any community together, that is at risk. 'Togetherness' is perhaps a simplification, but it contains enough of a message to be understood. Togetherness is under attack from dozens of directions: loss of authority by the elders, the growing confidence and forcefulness of Aboriginal women in community affairs, rebellion by youth in all manner of matters, parental fear of disciplining children lest they be taken into 'welfare', the attractions and distractions of modernity, the loss of centrality inherent in distinctive clan groups, faction fighting, poverty, ill health, the horizonless horizons, the perpetual problem of being defined by others, the lack of autonomy in so many aspects of life. Hunter has explained the centrality of alcohol in all this, the role communal drinking plays in strengthening a mutuality that is disintegrating.

Elders have recognised the problems, however different their language is from mine. Thirty years ago they began to make conscious decisions to arrest the disintegration of the very 'things' that constitute their civilisation. At Yuendumu they needed a vehicle for this 'restoration'. Ceremonies were one avenue, ritual occasions when everything extraneous, especially alcohol, was rigidly excluded. These ceremonies were then grafted on to another kind of occasion, one that truly held the attention of youth—sport.

Physically, Yuendumu is in a mess. But a resilient Warlpiri people did meet with a few, rare, talented staff. Ted Egan was superintendent there from 1958 to 1962. He bucked the Darwin orders to 'socially engineer' people by forcing them into impossible aluminium 'transition' huts, into communal feeding programs and into rote-learning exercises of dubious value (like T is for Train and S is for Skyscraper, when neither existed in their lives). He sought, rather, an association of worlds through song, language and sport. He coached and encouraged rules football in the choking bulldust. By 1961 he had regular competitions running between Yuendumu, nearby Papunya, Areyonga and Hermannsburg, and distant Warrabri (now Ali Carung) settlement. He was followed by the non-Aboriginal head teacher George McClure who turned the original football carnival for three communities into what is now a major vehicle of Aboriginal identity for thirty communities—the annual Yuendumu Games, dubbed by Channel 9 in Sydney in 1984 as 'The Black Olympics'. Their television documentary was an important tribute to a unique event in Aboriginal life.

Since 1961 this annual sports and cultural festival has been held on the remote settlement 300 km north-west of Alice Springs. Crowds of between 3000 and 6000 travel enormous distances—even from South and Western Australia—to join the Warlpiri people for the five-day celebration. The major sports are Australian rules, softball, basketball and athletics. Events usually include spear- and boomerang-throwing. The cultural centrepiece is a corroboree, followed by bush band, rock and roll, country and western, and gospel concerts. The carnival atmosphere doesn't take the edge off the seriousness of the sporting competition.

Organised and run by Aborigines for Aborigines, Yuendumu is several triumphs in one: a major sporting event in the continuing absence of any real sports facilities; the creation of a sporting tradition out of literally nothing; the insistence on a carnival of and for Aboriginality in an era (the 1960s) which insisted on their being turned into white folks; the ability to stage, without fuss, what *they* value in their traditions alongside what they like in modern life.

Martin Flanagan, reporting on the 1987 'Aboriginal Olympics' for the *Age*, perceived the essence of this event.[30] It is a focus of contemporary Aboriginal culture, a time for initiation and 'tribal business', an occasion where rules football parallels the corroboree —'the elements of flight and

grace, an emphasis on ritual'. It is an event which involved the community's elected leader. Albert Wilson, a man whose living father witnessed the punitive police raids in the Conniston massacre in 1928, a man taken away to Melville Island at 7 and returned at 33, a man who doubted 'whether this rump of the traditional Aboriginal nation can withstand another 20 years' exposure to Western society'.

Flanagan's reactions are interesting. He had gone to the Games with strong images of traditional ceremony, with expectations borne out of 'rigid Western values', with a desire to support the people in their struggles. Three days at Yuendumu shattered 'the glass tower' of his preconceptions: there was 'no place for urban sentimentality', this is their country, not his, and it is all so much more complicated than he had imagined. But in the end Flanagan reached the same conclusion I have always held—that *this carnival is as much about survival as it is about sport.*

The Yuendumu success inspired other communities. Barunga began its sports festival in the 1980s. It became so popular that the then Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, attended in 1988. There he was presented with the 'Barunga Statement', written on bark, calling for Aboriginal self-management, a national system of land rights, compensation for dispossessed lands, full civil rights and respect for Aboriginal identity. The Prime Minister responded by saying he wished to conclude a treaty between Aborigines and non-Aborigines by 1990. That hope has remained unfulfilled, as have most of the Barunga Statement claims.

When visiting Barunga a year later, I was told by Aborigines that the 1988 festival was too political and insufficiently sporting and cultural. Traditional dancing and modern music were blended with rules, softball, basketball and some athletics. Fourteen remote communities participated, from as far south as Santa Teresa and as far north as Elcho Island and Maningrida. There were visits by Perth football star Billy Dempsey and AFL umpire Glenn James: 'they were what the people wanted and needed', said the local recreation officer Gordon Kennedy.

There is now a Barunga Sports and Cultural Festival each year and the Pitjantjatjara Games in South Australia began in 1989. Identity and group cohesion emerge and are reinforced at festivals such as these. There is an emphasis on ritual through corroboree and sport. The poetic Flanagan

deals with what he calls this parallel of ritual dance and ritual playing. There is also the ceremony of colours, of belonging to a clan, of competition and of sharing. Flanagan is not alone in his contention that when Aboriginal teams play *against* each other in carnivals such as these they also play *with* each other. There is no conscious, or even unconscious, desire to hurt an opponent, and often effort is made to assist the players on the other side. What we see here is yet another facet of the playing styles of Aborigines: their spirit is fun, sharing, freedom—not war. (This, unhappily, is visibly not true of the Central Australian Football League, where the predominantly urban Aboriginal Souths and Pioneers have played some horror matches against the essentially white Rovers. Some of the mayhem has origins in long-standing family feuds. In 1993 the Santa Teresa team withdrew from the Aboriginal Communities competition after an Alice match when spectators threatened team members with armed violence.)

Another aspect of sport as social cohesion is the matter of organisation. Almost without exception, missionaries, public servants and cattlemen will tell you, adamantly and with vehemence, that Aborigines have no organisational ability, no innovative ideas, no sense of system or systemics, no ability to run a chain of command leading to implementation of any desired goal.

The Yuendumu Games are a living denial of this assertion; they are an organisational feat beyond measure. Amid what looks like nothingness, apart from dust and drought, there occurs an outstanding ceremony of dance and play for thousands of people travel enormous distances even by Australian bush standards.

Since the early 1970s there has been an annual Aboriginal rules competition, held in different parts of the country. That too is a triumph of organisation in the face of slim budgets and massive distances. I was able to attend an early event in 1971 at Bassandean Oval in Perth. High morale was boosted further by the presence of several members of the (then) Aboriginal Sports Foundation : Doug Nicholls, Charlie Perkins, Lionel Rose and Elley Bennett. Every team was rehearsed, trained, fully uniformed, disciplined and determined to share in both the play and the companionship. It is quite an experience to observe and to feel so large a group dynamic; the warmth, the brotherhood and the belonging were almost tangible. As with Yuendumu, but perhaps with a lesser sense of

urgency and desperation on the part of the organisers, Barunga's sports festival is a vehicle for a cultural recharging of the batteries and a venue for asserting political principles.

As impressive is the organisation of the annual rugby league knockout carnival in New South Wales. Begun in 1971, the convention is that the home town of the winning team hosts the next year's event. I first saw a carnival in Armidale in 1981. The town of 21,000 people was inundated with about 3000 Aboriginal visitors for a week. Aboriginal elders made a deal with the police: they would look after discipline inside the Armidale Showground and police would handle matters outside the ground. Such was the reality. There were three arrests, in total, that week. The 1986 carnival was held in Moree: 10,000 visitors arrived. I checked with the Moree police: there were three arrests in all. The 1989 carnival was held in Walgett, a town of about 2300 people. Police fears about an 'invasion' of 5000 Aborigines reached such paranoia that the Chief Superintendent of the region sought ministerial intervention to have the event moved to another town and the local chief inspector asked me to use my 'influence' with police headquarters to have the tournament cancelled. In the end he called in the special task forces, the tactical response people—and waited for Armageddon. The local Aborigines had to organise billets and camping facilities, portable toilets, discipline, food and water for 5000 people plus 1500 locals, for five days. They did so, superbly. I wasn't in town for the 'final count' but the regional superintendent of police told me later that there were five arrests in the entire period, three of them being warrants issued against individuals long before the football week. The 1993 final at Redfern Oval in Sydney was played before 5000 spectators: at most there were four pairs of police strolling along as if at an English village green cricket match. The organisation story is the same at Geraldton (WA), where an annual Aboriginal basketball carnival of great magnitude and complexity is held. At Barunga, police reinforcements are sent from Katherine and Mataranka, yet there have been no problems as generally understood.

It is significant that the reporter who covered the 1992 Aboriginal knockout at Henson Park in Sydney described the affair as 'the big rugby league corroboree'.[31] It is, indeed, a gathering of the clans. Fifty teams from across New South Wales, their families, 'countless mini-bus loads of friends', and Winfield Cup scouts meant that 17,000 people participated in

rather than witnessed the event. *After* the final there was a terrible conflict between Aborigines and police at the Petersham Hotel—due, in part, to an extravagant police presence *before* any trouble occurred.

The carnival becomes the biggest single gathering of Aborigines in the State in any year. It is the contention of the carnival secretary, Darryl Wright, that Aboriginal parents don't warn their kids off league because of its roughness: 'Aboriginal people love rugby league . . . one of the first gifts you give to a child is a football'.[32] It is also a venue in which one sees different cultural values about children and about parenting. Children appear to wander around, unsupervised—yet are never lost and are always under the collective eye.

11. Reasons for being

What we have here is an extraordinary capacity to organise events of great magnitude with virtually no resources, no special cash reserves, no sponsorships of note and with a police conviction that all hell must break loose because the event is Aboriginal. The answer, of course, lies in the fact that the events are Aboriginal-designed, that for the most part the organisers are family or kin-related and that for a brief moment they exercise and exert sovereignty over something. Yet the selfsame organisers often appear inept when asked to run schemes or projects designed by non-Aborigines. To this day most observers do not correlate the two situations and seem unable to add two and two.

'Sovereignty' often appears in the vocabulary of Aboriginal affairs. A vexed word, it has at least five major meanings in law and politics.[33] In this context it means what Aborigines want it to mean, namely, control over a situation, autonomy in the sense of not being unduly interfered with or coerced by others, the making of something self-generated and self-run. As compared with other groups in the larger society, there is little in Aboriginal life that has the opportunity for this kind of control. The entire history of Aboriginal policy and administration has been one of unilateral decision-making or, latterly, one of outwardly appearing to consult with Aborigines about what is all too often, in the end, unilateral decision-making. Even where autonomy exists in the form of legally incorporated associations or companies, almost all such bodies are dependent on federal

or State funding for their existence. It is therefore possible to have autonomy but not independence.

Autonomy does not always mean isolation. For Aborigines to play competitive sport they need white co-operation, that is, a willingness on the part of white teams to play them and to travel to games. Often that spirit is missing and Aborigines are forced to play solely within their own communities. When it comes to festival or carnival time, Aborigines have the freedom and the capacity to exercise political influence, that is, create and influence policy and direct it to fruition. There is no white opposition nowadays, no fundamentalist missionary to thwart the action, no administrator to issue or withhold playing or travel permits. The sporting carnival becomes an entirely black domain, with black language, music, muscles supreme. The event becomes a reason for being, an affirmation that it is worth being.

Sport, be it of the carnival kind or simply local league stuff, provides what Victor Frankl calls *purpose in life*. There is, he contends, a case for a tragic optimism even while life is threatened and circumscribed by pain, guilt and death. One must search for *meaning* in life *and* find out how to *find such meaning*. Sport is purposive and purposeful; it has simple, clear goals; it has well-worn and well-known methods of achieving them; it has inbuilt mechanisms for belonging, for loyalty and for treating disloyalty; it has uniforms that signify true membership and equality; it has elaborate ritual and its own special idiom; it has support groups, fans, audiences; it has, always, the promise of rewards at best, of improvement at least. One doesn't have to attend lectures on Frankl's meaning in one's future to derive these benefits: selection for the Barunga Eagles will do as well. Life in Wilcannia, for example, is purposeless. There is absolutely nothing within the community that signifies meaning and there is little on the horizon beyond that town. The Boomerangs and their victories provide some kind of *raison d'être*. A racist town, the unhappiest of towns, there are 800 Aborigines and 200 whites, empty of commerce, empty of people with purpose. H. G. Bissinger's *Friday Night Lights* is a brilliant account of little Odessa in West Texas, a town socially and racially divided, its economy fragile; the book is the story of a town, a team and a dream—a dream that the high school football team's success will diminish the harsh realities of an otherwise meaningless existence.[34] Odessa might be Wilcannia, with Boomerangs rather than Permian High School Panthers

providing the only common, visible, external meaning in dreary life. It is not enough—but it staves off a mass suicide of the mind and the soul.

For depressed minorities, sport has another sense of meaning: it is the chance of man or woman to exert his or her will over another engaged in the same enterprise. That phrase is Max Weber's famous definition of *power*. In the ring Henry Collins could exact his revenge on the man who ill-treated him outside the ring. On the field men and women can pit their bodies and minds against others on reasonably equal terms—the only times and places where Aborigines can compete on equal terms *against* mainstream society. (Art, dance, music, poetry are not competitions in the sports sense.) That opportunity to compete is unlike any other form of competition: one doesn't need to have completed school, an apprenticeship, college, worked one's way up from office boy, fought one's way up through the hierarchy, curried favour with those who bestow favours, and so on. Competition takes place in a set time and place and under special rules. It is a sporting competition, a piece of social theatre for enjoyment, reward, entertainment or honour. But just as the competition is an artifice, something contrived, something transient and, in the end, illusory, so sport for Aborigines—*in this particular sense*—is illusory. One cannot sustain life, and life with meaning, with sport *alone*.

12. Sport and delinquency

Throughout my visits there was a commonly expressed sentiment by a wide variety of people: 'footy is the god', 'without sport people have nothing', 'in the off season there is void', 'boredom is the killer: we drink and we fight'. Agnes Rigney, a wise lady from Glossop in South Australia, put it this way: 'Sport is the best avenue and area of acceptance of Aboriginal people. If you're good at sport and playing in competition, you're more readily accepted than in the workplace'. A former resident doctor at Palm Island put his finger on perhaps the most significant insight about sport in a context such as this: 'Sport is a contract to be of good behaviour—there is much to lose if one is thrown out'.[35] This is indeed the key: sport is a vehicle, an activity that diverts people from poor behaviour. It enables men and women, boys and girls, *to gain self-esteem, to enhance networks, to belong and to participate in a structure.*

While sport cannot be seen as a single solution to these existential issues, it can assist in providing ritual, regimen, belief, loyalty, a schedule of something to do, reference points and a support system—provided a sports agenda involves the community, is not seen as yet another white-imposed facility or program, sets expectations that have a more than reasonable chance of fulfilment, and gives the youth a chance to exercise power over *something*.

There is much evidence for the above propositions. However, there is a presentation rather than a methodological problem here. Inconsistent recording of arrests, charges and convictions by race (*within* States, let alone *between* States) makes it impossible to produce neat statistical comparative tables of Aboriginal delinquency and delinquency correlated with sports activities. In the Northern Territory, for example, Police have for several years now kept separate arrest figures for Aborigines and non-Aborigines and for offences alcohol-related or not. But the Law Department does not, as a principle of 'equality', keep separate identifications of those convicted. So unless one has the name of each arrested person one cannot follow through to court, to conviction or to acquittal, let alone subsequent behavioural history.

In any event, that which is reported as informant's speech or observer's perception is as reliable for research purposes as that which appears in statistical columns and subsequent computer correlations.

Here I wish to make a sharp comment about some aspects of methodology in the social sciences. In-depth interviews by an old hand, based on trust, based on the respondents' eagerness to inform about matters deeply felt or experienced, cannot be demeaned by that abused term 'anecdotal'. A clipboard collection of numbers, regardless of historical, economic, legal and sociological context, remains just that—regardless of the sophisticated arithmetic and mathematical treatments of such numbers. My concern is to find out if things are bad, worse, better, good: it matters not that we cannot state that compared to 'x' people, the 'y' people are 'z' times more likely to . . .

According to police figures, the minor and serious crime rate at Condobolin in New South Wales is very much lower than in Wellington, a town notorious for drug-pushing and use. Walgett, hardly a model of juvenile behaviour, nevertheless has a considerable sports program and

comes out well compared with their brothers and sisters at Gingie Reserve, 9 km down the road. Sport for juniors is the binding force at Bourke, only a little less so at nearby Brewarrina, much less so at the Barwon Four Reserve just out of town. Moree, for all its history of racial tensions, has moments of cohesion, the moments when sport consumes everyone in town. There are now several mixed teams in these towns, that is, Aborigines and police are in the same sides. This relationship has improved attitudes and helped *reduce* the astronomic arrest rates of youth, a group given to much under-age drinking. The table below is not a pretty one, but police and Aborigines assure me sport is the key factor in keeping numbers to this level. There is a minor level of drug involvement but a strong propensity towards assaults. The Aboriginal population is about 4500.

Charges against Aborigines, Moree Police, January–May 1988

Motor Vehicle Theft:	
Reports	39
Charges	5
Malicious Damage:	40
Street Offences:	
Language	0
Fighting	47
Conduct	0
Break bottle	0
Urinating	0
Assault/Resist Police:	31
Malicious Wounding:	
Assault occasioning actual bodily harm	25
Indictable assault	11
Assault female	29
Break domestic violence	0
Common assault	21
Sexual assault	7
Drug Offences:	
Supply heroin	0
Possess heroin	0
Supply cannabis	3
Possess cannabis	19
Cultivate cannabis	2
Break Enter & Steal:	27
Stealing:	65
Others:	183

The four major Aboriginal population centres in Queensland make for an interesting study. Violence is a daily feature of life: domestic, homicidal, suicidal. Alcohol is a major theme in many people's lives. Cherbourg's sporting success, the emphasis on football, the availability of a floodlit ground, the boxing training, the serious beginnings of sport for young women, all lead to some kind of containment. Containment is what

is needed, given the suicide there of five young people in one year. The same is true of Palm Island, Woorabinda and Yarrabah. In 1989 the arrests at Palm for violent offences were half the 1988 figure—a fact that correlates with the installation of lights at the oval. Sport at these places doesn't prevent alcohol intake but it certainly regulates behaviour. Woorabinda has much more going for it now than ever before in its rather sordid history as a penal 'dumping ground'. Yarrabah has an elaborate sports complex, designed in Canberra, badly sited, not supervised, barely used. Yet sport, for a while, holds the attention of the young.

Doomadgee has active programs but the costs make Aboriginal sport there among the most expensive in Australia. The Doomadgee elders and staff are acutely aware of the need for programs as a means of social control. Mornington Island is in a dreadful state. The figures below give some indication of the societal mess that exists in a community of 700 people. It is important to reiterate that it is not statistically possible to match arrests with convictions, convictions directly with sporting occasions, or Aboriginal rates of delinquency with non-Aboriginal. However, while there are statistical sketches or portraits, for me the preferable sources are the considered views of experienced Aborigines, police officers, social workers and judicial officers.

Arrests and Charges at Mornington Island, January-December 1988	
Population: 700	
Rape	5
Unlawful wounding	8
Assault with grievous bodily harm	0
Assault occasioning bodily harm	11
Common assault	5
Robbery with violence	4
Indecent dealing	5
Break and enter	100
Stealing	48
Receiving	20
Unlawful use of cars	50
Wilful damage	31
Obscene language, street offences, resisting arrest, etc.	100
Fire arms offences	21
Traffic offences (alcohol related)	50
Drunkenness	240

There is statistical evidence that offences increase greatly in the hot weather. There is also a sports relationship: most sport is played in the cooler season. Thus in the first six months of 1989 there were twenty-one assaults causing bodily harm, as opposed to eleven for the whole of 1988. Most of the stealing offences were for the theft of food. To add to the picture, a local resident compiled a list of attempted suicides between April 1987 and May 1989. In that two-year period, eleven men between 16 and 30, and one woman aged 18, made serious attempts at ending their lives.

Boggabilla (NSW) has a population of 900, of whom at least 500 are Aboriginal. There are between 600 and 700 people at Toomelah. The police statistics below are for black and white for the first six months of 1989:

Statistics for Boggabilla Police Station, 1 January–30 June 1989
Combined Aboriginal population of Toomelah-Boggabilla approximately 1200

Offence	*Aboriginal*	*White*
Malicious injury	11	nil
Assault male with indecency	nil	1
Possess loaded firearm so as to endanger life	1	2
Break bottle in public place	1	nil
Throw bottle in public place	3	nil
Assault	8	10
Offensive language	12	2
Assault occasioning actual bodily harm	1	1
Assault female	1	nil
Resist/hinder police	6	nil
Assault police	2	1
Unlicensed shooter	1	17
Possess loaded firearm in public place	nil	4
Possess prohibited weapon	nil	2
Trespass on enclosed lands	4	nil
Offensive conduct	1	nil
Throw missile	2	nil
Fail to leave licenced premises on request	1	nil
Carry firearm unsafely	nil	1
Carry firearm under influence	nil	1
Carry firearm with disregard to others	nil	1

These figures tell us something about the nature of offences: Aborigines swear and take out frustration on property; whites break most of the laws relating to firearms. Compared to other centres, there is very little in the way of serious delinquency there—due, I would argue, to the heavy investment in sport by one sector of the Aboriginal community and the involvement in a Pentecostalist religion by the other.

Echuca on the Murray River is of major interest. In the four-year period 1986 to 1989, there were no homicides, no suicides, no mutilations, no vandalism charges, no molestings and only one rape charge among Aborigines.

Aborigines charged at Echuca Watch House, Victoria, 1988 and 1989

Offence	1989—to 28/5/89	1988—to 1/6/88
Drunkenness	6	8
Drugs (cultivate)	1	0
Manner dangerous	1	0
Exceed P.C.A.	1	3
Deception	1	0
Burglary	10	2
Handle stolen property	2	1
Assault	0	1
Cruelty to animals	0	1
Intervention order	0	1
Warrants	0	8
Total Watch House entries	166	216
Total Aborigines charged	26 = 15.66%	25 = 11.57%
Total for Drunk	68	80
Total Aborigines charged (drunkenness)	6 = 8.82%	8 = 10.00%

Even the drunkenness figures are relatively low, albeit proportionately high given the Aboriginal percentage of the population. The town has a high level of Aboriginal integration in sporting activity, unlike Robinvale, Swan Hill and Mildura. There is, indeed, a very marked contrast between Echuca and these other towns in terms of internal violence.

I repeat that sport is not *always* a healer. If the social forces underlying a town are strong or passionate enough, sport can sometimes exacerbate tension. In May 1993 the Coomealla team from Dareton, just across the New South Wales border from Mildura, was banned from the Millewa League. The League's president, John Collins, gave this reason: players often failed to appear before the tribunal when suspended, had used 'unduly rough play' and 'language' on their opponents, and had been the subject of 'numerous complaints' from other clubs and their supporters.[36] The Coomealla president, Rod Smith, felt it ironic that such a ban should occur in the International Year of the World's Indigenous People: 'could

be a lot of reasons why they banned us . . . don't know if it'd happen if we was an all-white team'.

During my fieldwork in 1989 and 1990 there were, among others, two parasuicides at Bourke, three at Brewarrina, four at Walgett, five suicides at Cherbourg, four parasuicides at Palm Island in Queensland, *twelve* at Mornington Island, four at Pularumpi in the Territory, four at Murrin Bridge in New South Wales, two in Mildura, at least five attempts at Dareton, two actual youth suicides at each of Koonibba, Robinvale (Vic) and Raukkun (SA). The forensic pathologist in the ACT tells me that he does 'far, far too many autopsies on Aboriginal teenage suicides in the nation's capital'. There is no need to go on with arithmetic of this kind: the parasuicide and suicide picture is stark. But what is significant is that there were no reported parasuicides at Port Lincoln and that gang warfare and juvenile crime dropped markedly during the sports season; there were no parasuicides at Barunga, a phenomenon they consider is 'for silly blacks down south'; there were no reports of parasuicide or mutilation at Nowra.

There is enough evidence to warrant the assertion that sport is a mitigator, an inhibitor, a restraint and, in season, a dampener if not preventer of delinquent behaviour. Most of the literature talks about the value of sport as a rehabilitator of the delinquent child. The obvious question is why wait for the delinquency to invest in sport?

In the late 1980s most of the senior police and welfare officials in Western Australia were on the verge of implementing fairly radical but liberal plans to deal with young Aboriginal offenders, especially projects to overcome the absurd situations by which, for example, a Kalumburu kid would be transported to a Perth institution 2500 km away, deprived of both liberty and any remote chance of being visited by family. I was involved in many discussions with Western Australian officials about the replication of an experimental model in the Northern Territory, the Wildman River Camp scheme. This was essentially an open farm in Arnhem Land, with youthful offenders working productively in farming and animal raising, supervised more 'lightly' than one would expect, with much time spent in sport and sports training. Inmates who worked well earned days off, at home. Parental visiting and family support were an integral part of the scheme. Regrettably the government—in response to radio talkback hysteria and as part of a tough law-and-order stance—decided to pass the draconian *Crime (Serious and Repeat Offender's Sentencing Act) 1992*.

There is no doubt that this measure was aimed at Aboriginal youth. Two years later there was no evidence that serious juvenile offences—black and white—had lessened. In 1994 it appeared that the Queensland government was about to embark on similar measures. The per capita costs of sport for sport's sake, or for the sake of limiting, containing or ameliorating some of the conditions that give rise to the violence, the crime and the young deaths, are very much less than the daily costs of maintaining State juvenile prisoners. Decision-makers don't have to give a damn about human rights or moral considerations—simply let them engage in their favourite activity, cost-benefit analyses.

13. Sport as practicality

Of the functions of sport that can be called practical rather than existential, some are speculative, or at least hedged with many qualifications. To say that sport offsets, mitigates or even stops alcohol abuse is to stretch reality. It can be argued that in some communities the opposite is true, that alcohol is central to sport. Thus Palm Island, Woorabinda and Nguiu, all heavily populated centres, have successful football grounds, clubhouses and competitions, but each relies on beer sales in the local canteens for sports maintenance and travel. There is a real sense in which grog sales are pushed deliberately as fundraising for sport. Nguiu, with a population of 1600, has an average weekly sale of 96 kegs (that is, 8736 litres of beer) in a canteen that is open only eighteen hours a week. Allowing for the child and non-drinking population, the drinkers' consumption is approximately eight or nine standard drinks (middies of beer) per day. On the other hand, many sports teams engage in serious training and alcohol is either avoided or banned outright. The Yuendumu Games, among other such festivals, declares dry days and dry areas and these bans are enforced. Some research suggests that alcohol stops, or at least lessens, during the time of tribal 'law' business. Ted Egan's special ABC radio program a decade ago, 'Will the Singing Stop?' (because of alcohol) endorsed the primacy of law-making ceremonies. Dick Kimber, who has extensive experience of the south-west 'corner' of the Territory, is certain that the 'brakes' are put on alcohol during travel to and during the ceremonies, and that 'backsliders' are dealt with. Hunter and others now question this, at least in the areas they work in. If Egan and Kimber are right—and I believe they are, at least about the Territory—

one cannot avoid asking the obvious question: since bans can be, and are, effective for so many days in each year, why can't there be more of such activity and more bans? A researcher should be found to address the matter of alcohol and the twin activities of sport and ceremonies.

There are several major reports on employment, and the lack of it, in the remote communities. Since the advent of the Community Development Employment Program, employment has escalated. In essence, the scheme had its origins about fifteen years ago when Territory Aborigines expressed their dislike of the 'sit-down money' system, that is, unemployment benefits. Mornington Island was one of the first closed communities to experiment with a system by which people who were entitled to various social service benefits (aged, invalid, deserted wives, unemployed) would work a sufficient number of hours per week to reach the value of their benefit, which was then paid as a wage, not as a benefit. CDEP has wrought wonders in many communities. When one observes the transformation of Woorabinda from a depressed 'penal colony' to a thriving, ambitious and industrious township, one has to applaud the scheme. But for the most part, CDEP in the end means that Aborigines are working, at times in a tokenistic and artificial way, for their dole money. There are few real jobs with real wages.

Playing football or basketball can be a virtual full-time activity in some communities. Sport—again using Palm, Woorabinda, Barunga and Nguiu as examples—occupies time and energy. It engages much of the population, as supporters, manufacturers of jumpers, drivers of buses, printers of programs. During the season, people are tuned in : the talk is endless, the practices well attended. Sport doesn't replace a meaningful job—but when meaningful jobs are that scarce, sport helps to fill the vacuum in people's hourly lives.

The health issue is vexed. There is one key question: given the appalling pattern of ill health in almost all Aboriginal societies, how is it that men and women can achieve the heights they do in harsh, competitive sport? There are stories about Aboriginal peds winning races or high jumps one evening and being found dead, from tuberculosis or pneumonia, the next morning. In Mulvaney and Harcourt's *Cricket Walkabout* we learned that in the Sydney visit before the 1868 cricket tour of England, Sugar died before the first match, Watty died on the road home, Paddy and Jellico died of pneumonia soon after arriving back in Victoria and King Cole died of

tuberculosis while on tour in England. The Rovers Football Club won the 1958 rules premiership in the Far West League of South Australia. In a team of eighteen young men from the Ceduna region, only Keith Willoughby was alive in 1987. Assuming an average age of 20 in 1958, this means that seventeen athletes didn't make it to age 50, or soon thereafter! Of the Koonibba team which won the 1963 premiership, only eight were alive at the end of 1993. In the 1945 Redfern All Blacks team, only three of fourteen have lived into their sixties.

Richard Smith, research fellow in the CSIRO Division of Human Nutrition, tells me there was little evidence of high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease among remote communities until the 1940s.[37] Urban living, together with nutritional and cultural deprivation, have led to the present state of Aboriginal ill health. Aboriginal sportspeople continue to make outstanding achievements yet still face the prospect of dying very young. There is explanation of early death but not of how athletes are able to perform at such levels while suffering what is called 'the metabolic syndrome'. Infant malnutrition is clearly associated with adult mortality and heart disease. The exact mechanism is not understood but it is believed that foetal and neonatal nutritional deprivation may distort co-ordinated development, particularly the development of vessels (angiogenesis), in such a way as to predispose the person to later deficiency of blood supply to the heart (ischaemic heart disease). Low birthweight and later, low body weight at one year of age is very much associated with adult mortality, ischaemic heart disease, high blood pressure and the late onset of diabetes. This cluster of symptoms in single individuals makes up the 'metabolic syndrome', *one which is now the dominant feature of Aboriginal health.*

Some research has been done on the relative longevity of athletes and non-athletes, and on the lifespans of 'major' athletes and 'minor' athletes. There is some evidence that people with heavy bone and muscle structures, people with compact physiques (mesomorphs), survive longer than other physical types. In another study, however, the major athletes died earlier from heart disease—which the researcher explains may well be due to their body type rather than their athletic activity. In short, we don't know how and why quality athletic performance by Aborigines can be generated and sustained by people with flawed circulatory systems. There is a flaw in their systems, yet people survive. Smith suggests that perhaps the very

flaw that still enables one to survive is also an advantage to performance, or at least no disadvantage to performance. However, the cost of performing at the top level may well accelerate the degenerative processes that lead to heart disease.

There may also be a flaw in the accepted wisdom that sport and recreation must be good for the mind and body. The idea reaches back to Plato 2381 years ago and forward into every school in Australia today. But where there is malnutrition, as in wrong nutrition, physical retardation after weaning, organic disease, chronic respiratory, eye and ear problems, does one place upon those young bodies the same physical regimen as one does in other contexts?

The contrary view may be correct—that the mere existence of some kind of sport and recreation in some communities, even of the calisthenics and tunnel-ball variety at primary school, is a way of overcoming, or at least mitigating, ill health. (There is clear evidence that sport and recreation is vital for diabetics, of which there are alarming numbers in Aboriginal societies.) There is no doubt that to the naked eye the young men at football practice, or sparring, look marvellously healthy, fit, lithe, strong; the women are fast, nimble, agile, the antithesis of the obesity that is to be the fate of so many later in life. On balance, there is no hard evidence to suggest that sport as such hastens early Aboriginal death. We know just how short life is for the many who do not engage in vigorous activity.

14. Conclusions and suggestions

Sport has more positive attributes and functions than any other single human activity in contexts such as these: it provides purpose, cohesion and serves as a new or a replacement structure of ritual; it is a boost to morale in long periods of depression; it is a means of reducing delinquency and even more serious crime and is an alternative to suicide; sport has elements of sovereignty and moments of autonomy; sport is the only means of competing body against body on roughly equal terms, the only forum of revenge on the 'system', indeed of beating the 'system'; it is a temporary and occasionally a permanent avenue to upward social and economic mobility; sport is essential to the treatment of some serious illnesses. The

virtues are overwhelming, even if it should be proved that competitive sport shortens some life spans.

There is an urgent need to bring 'normal sport' to remote communities. Aboriginal achievement has been a triumph over absence. It has also been a result of men and women having to move to places where they could train and play. Most Aborigines and Islanders have an inordinate affection for their locales: they don't move much, or for long, and homesickness is a perennial problem. Australia's overarching philosophy is assimilation in all things. The real meaning of assimilation is not that the smaller group is always absorbed by the larger, causing the disappearance of the former. Rather it is that the mainstream establishes its way of doing things—running schools, curricula, hospitals—and minorities must change their ways by accommodating to the mainstream ethos. And so it is in sport: if Aborigines want to play, they must come to the playground. If people want to be elite athletes then they must come to Canberra, to the Institute of Sport or to its various metropolitan academies. It is not difficult, given the extraordinary budgets we provide for each (hopeful) gold-medallist, for the Institute and similar bodies to export a part of itself, part of its staff, to spend a few *months* in the Aboriginal domains. They could show people how to play strange games—like badminton and volleyball—and what the rules are. They could start training referees. They could provide and demonstrate equipment. They could even bribe some of these talented black pearls to come to the metropolis in search of sporting gold for the nation.

The sports institutes could provide what I believe to be essential: a degree or diploma course in sport and recreation, taught in conjunction with a variety of neighbouring colleges and universities on a partly residential (both home and away) and partly external basis. There are excellent tertiary facilities in Port Hedland, Cairns, Darwin, Alice, Kalgoorlie. That way, the Aborigines and Islanders would not have to leave for three to five years to qualify. It is said to be cheaper to send a trained non-Aboriginal sports person to these communities for limited periods. Perhaps cheaper, but the idea is that Aborigines have trained personnel who belong to the community and who want to stay there, at least for the most part. One glance at the duration of stay of nurses, doctors, schoolteachers and legal aid lawyers should be enough to convince

institutes that these quick sojourns are pointless for all concerned and that indigenous people are the only ones who ever stay.

The federal and State governments have to face the needs of Aboriginal sport at a national level. National sports and cultural carnivals, visits by all-black teams abroad and reciprocal visits by indigenous teams are essential. In 1994 the Canadian Indian soccer teams came to Australia to continue a series—yet paid their own way entirely. ATSIC and its regions are but one vehicle for improvement, yet at the beginning of 1994 there is virtually no sports desk at ATSIC in Canberra. State departments of sport and recreation clearly attempt to take some care of their own. But transport and movement to competition and to training are the keys, elements that can only be handled by serious national co-ordination. There is need for a national Aboriginal Sports Commission, a *small* professional and knowledgeable independent authority with power to raise funds and to disburse them directly to communities in need. Basketballers at Broome, for example, need to know before the season starts whether they can travel to their fixtures. Under the present system there is hardly a black team in Australia that knows where its next bus is coming from—or if it is coming at all. Such a Commission is necessary to facilitate national events of a cultural and sporting nature, to assist in overseas and reciprocal visits, to establish sport and exercise programs for the general population and for special groups such as the diabetics, and to work with other agencies in establishing better nutrition patterns, especially among the sporting youth.

At the local municipal level, Police Boys Clubs or, rather, refurbished versions of that essentially good idea must be reinstituted. The cost is usually the salaries of two or three police officers per club. If the new vogue of community policing means anything, it surely means interacting with youth, black and white youth, who in some instances have become less literate and less functional than the earlier cohort group now in their thirties, who have reached a stage of mindless violence that cares nothing for property and, at times, nothing for life—theirs and everyone else's.

In all this discussion the importance of role modelling must not be overlooked. In *Obstacle Race* I show that in the decades up to the 1960s Aboriginal parents saw the ring and the rugby league arena as better avenues for their sons than the classroom. Eric Simms and company held out greater promise than the (then) two university graduates, Charles Perkins and Margaret Valadian. But even with about 5000 Aborigines in

some form of tertiary study in the early 1990s, it seems that league and Australian rules at any rate are still the major (even if temporary) way out of futility. Most Aboriginal youth I met—whether in urban, peri-urban, rural or remote Australia—have a greater veneration for the histories and personalities of the sports (and music) stars than for any group. If they have any vision of a future, it is one that embraces these achievers, including the good, the bad and the ugly that have been a feature of their lives. As the *Obstacle Race* book shows, of the more than 1200 Aboriginal achievers mentioned or discussed, perhaps only six grew up in a 'normal' sports environment, with ready access to school sport, special training, professional coaching, the necessary equipment, money to travel and a sports scholarship of some kind. For many, sport was the avenue to some degree of upward economic and social mobility. For most, it was their passport to respect in an essentially racist society. It is perhaps a sad reflection on Australian values, but such respect as we accord Aborigines—however little it is, however grudgingly it is given—comes from their sporting prowess rather than from their social organisation, survival skills, music, art, lore, law, culture, their civility and civilisation.

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Appendix I: Persons Interviewed

New South Wales

Ahoy, Lewis, Armidale
Allen, Darryl, Aboriginal Legal Service, Moree
Alvarez, Esther, WALS solicitor, Bourke
Anderson, Michael, Armidale
Bamblett, Dell, Erambie, West Cowra
Bell, Grant, Constable, Dareton Police
Birtles, Greg, Moree Police
Bloxsome, Eddie, South Coast Aboriginal Legal Aid Service, Nowra
Boney, Athol, Aboriginal Programs Branch, Dubbo
Brennan, Colin, Constable, Lake Cargelligo
Caine, Gillian, Aboriginal Legal Service, Moree
Cameron, Ian, general practitioner, Bourke
Clark, Chris, Willowbend Aboriginal Corporation, Condobolin
Clark, Kay, Murrin Bridge
Coe, Isobel, Erambie, West Cowra
Coe, John, Erambie, West Cowra
Cogan, Noel, Inspector, Moree Police
Connor, Dr Brian, general practitioner, Armidale
Crouch, Graham, Inspector, Patrol Commander, Cowra Police
Dennis, Dulcie, Gingie Reserve
Dennis, Steve, Gingie Reserve
Dennison, Albert, Toomelah Reserve
Donnolly, John, Snr Sergeant, Bermagui Police
Dorrigo, Tony, Drug & Counselling Service, Dubbo
Eckermann, Dr Ann-Katrin, anthropologist, University of New England, Armidale
Edwards, Len, Sergeant, Walgett Police
Eggmolesse, Gloria, youth coordinator, Dareton
Ellis, Irene, Toomelah Reserve
Fardell, Michael, Constable, Brewarrina Police
Foster-Penrith, Shirley, Merriman Local Government Land Council, Wallaga Lake
French, Thomas, Aboriginal liaison officer, Walgett Police
Gillon, Noel, coordinator WALS, Dubbo
Graham, Colin, Sergeant, Boggabilla Police
Gray, Andrew, specialist officer, DAA, Dubbo
Hahn, Tony, Chief Inspector, Walgett Police
Harris, Cliffy, health centre, Murrin Bridge
Harris, Jack, Murrin Bridge
Harrison, Harrold, Merriman Local Government Land Council, Wallaga Lake
Harrison, Robert, Merriman Local Government Land Council, Wallaga Lake
Hawley, Tom, Sergeant, Condobolin Police
Hooper, Linda, Gingie Reserve
Hooper, Stan, Gingie Reserve
Hummel, Ray; Sergeant, Moree Police
Hunter, Dr Ernest, psychiatrist and researcher, Northside Clinic, Sydney
Ingram, Josie, Erambie, West Cowra
Ireland, Stephen, Detective Sergeant, Police Headquarters Sydney
Jeffries, Dan, Erambie, West Cowra
Johnson, Lynette, Lake Cargelligo Central School
Johnson, Mark, Murrin Bridge
Kidd, Michael, solicitor, WALS, Dubbo
King, Francis, Murrin Bridge
Kirk, John, Director, M.A.S.H., Moree
Leon, Cecil, Merriman Local Government Land Council, Wallaga Lake

Lockwood, Phil, Constable, Condobolin Police
Long, Cec, Inspector, Personnel, Dubbo Police
McDonald, John, Client Services, Youth, Police HQ, Sydney
McKay, John, DAA, Bourke
Moonie, Kelly, Willowbend Aboriginal Corporation, Condobolin
Morgan, Rose, Gingie Reserve
Morgan, Topsy, Gingie Reserve
Munroe, Bruce, Aboriginal Legal Service, Moree
Murphy, Gary, Gingie Reserve
Murphy, Queenie, Gingie Reserve
Myers, Ian, Acting State Director, DAA, NSW
Naylor, Eric, Merriman Local Government Land Council, Wallaga Lake
New, Dennis, Dubbo Police
Parsons, Timothey, Merriman Local Government Land Council, Wallaga Lake
Patrice, Bob, Sergeant, Brewarrina Police
Penrith, Mervyn, Merriman Local Government Land Council, Wallaga Lake
Reid, Vaughn, Sergeant, Bourke Police
Satour, Glen, Special Projects Officer, DAA, Bourke
Silove, Dereck, Professor of Psychiatry, University NSW
Sloane, Kevin, Willowbend Aboriginal Corporation, Condobolin
Stafford, Christine, criminiologist, University of New England
Stutsel, Bob, Sergeant, Bourke Police
Taylor, Glen, family support officer, Dareton
Thomas, Carl, Merriman Local Government Land Council, Wallaga Lake
Thorne, Roy, administrator, M.A.S.H., Moree
Tighe, Brian, Aboriginal Legal Service, Moree
Tighe, Ronald, CES project officer, Wallaga Lake
Townsend, Lloyd, Superintendent, Staff Officer Intelligence, Dubbo Police
Trindell, Gary, Aboriginal liaison officer, Walgett Police
Ure, John, Superintendent, Program Development and Coordination Branch, Police HQ, Sydney
Widders, Terry, Aboriginal historian, Macquarie University
Williams, Pat, Armidale
Williamson, Bob, Snr Sergeant, Nowra Police
Wilson, Chris, Barwon Aboriginal Community Ltd, Walgett
Windsor, Peter, DAA, Canberra
Woods, Ron, Chief Inspector, Armidale Police
Wright, Clinton, Aboriginal Legal Service, Moree
Yeo, Peter, Staff Officer Operations, Dubbo Police

Queensland

Adcock, Trevor, Sergeant, Aboriginal & Islander Liaison Officer, Brisbane
Allen, Glen, Constable, Yarrabah Police
Amiet, Lou, Principal, Woorabinda Primary School
Bassini, Paddy, Gungarde Community, Cooktown
Blackley, Bill, ex-Principal, St Michaels School, Palm Island
Blair, Norris, Deputy Chairman, Woorabinda Council
Brand, Ray, District Superintendent, Townsville Police
Brown, Alistair, DAA, Townsville
Buchanan, Bob, Director, Child Care Centre, Palm Island
Burgess, Andrew, teacher, Doomadgee
Butler, Mary, Trachoma Program, Cairns
Button, Joe, Cherbourg
Callaghan, Peter, DAA, Rockhampton
Cameron, Michelle, Aboriginal preschool teacher, Mornington Island
Cameron, Norman, School Principal, Yarrabah
Castley, Chris, Constable, Doomadgee Police

Chandler, Darryl, Constable, Laura
Chase, Athol, anthropologist, Griffith University, Brisbane
Clay, Rick, Chairman, Palm Island Council
Cobbo, Warren, Aboriginal Community Police, Cherbourg
Collins, Tom, construction engineer, Woorabinda
Collins, Warren, Council clerk, Cherbourg
Conlan, Vince, Child Care Centre, Woorabinda
Connolly, Mick, Council Chairman, Yarrabah
Coolwell, Glennis, field officer, Deaths in Custody Royal Commission
Copeman, John, Principal, Mornington Island
Davey, Joan, Family Services Dept, Brisbane
Deemal, Robbie, DEET, Queensland
Douglas, David, Council clerk, Doomadgee
Doyle, Gerry, Old People's Home, Woorabimda
Dunlop, Chris, DAA, Townsville
Edbroke, Bill, Constable, Mornington Island
Eustance, Ken, Sergeant, Palm Island Police
Evans, Brett, CDEP Project Officer, Mornington Island
Fitzgibbon, Sister Norah, Catholic Church, Worrabinda
Fourmile, Henry, welfare officer, Yarrabah
Fraser, Donny, Dept of Community Services, Doomadgee
Freeman, Eddie, Gungarde Community, Cooktown
Gela, David, DAA, Mt Isa
Gela, Wazana, sports administrator, Woorabinda
Gooda, Mick, field officer, DAA, Rockhampton
Gordon, Willy, Chairman of Council, Hopevale
Gorham, Maude, teaching aide, Cherbourg
Greatrex, John, teacher, Doomadgee
Gulliver, Peter, DAA, Brisbane
Harradine, Jack, Anglican minister & boxing trainer, Woorabinda
Hart, Doreen, Hopevale
Hegarty, Michelle, Aboriginal Legal Service, QEB Division, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Legal Service
Henry, Dr Jean, Mornington Island Hospital
Hogan, Terry, tax consultant, Cairns
Holden, Annie, PhD student, Griffith University
Hooker, Ailsa, Council clerk, Wujal Wujal
Hulls, Rob, solicitor, Mt Isa
Johnson, Hilda, Aboriginal Legal Service, Mt Isa
Johnson, Norm, Regional Manager, DAA, Mt Isa
Johnson, Sally, Aboriginal health sister, Yarrabah
Jones, Sister Margery, Cairns
Jose, Victor, Aboriginal consultant, Cairns
Juhel, Jack Jnr, Mornington Island
Keilor, Gary, Sergeant, Woorabinda Police
King, Jenny, Educational Resources, Townsville
King, Warren, CDEP Project Officer, Doomadgee
Lake, James, Constable, Bloomfield River (Wujal Wujal)
Lind, Evelyn, administrator, Palm Island
Lucas, Helen, School Principal, Hopevale
Mackay, John, Director, Child Care Centre, Woorabinda
Macklin, Matt, teacher, Laura School
Maclean, Lois, kindergarten, Hopevale
McLean, Greg, Welfare, Hopevale
McNab, John, Constable, Mt Isa
Meadows, Geoff, Regional Manager, DAA, Cairns
Michael, Connie, Gungarde Community, Cooktown
Musgrave, Christine, Ang-Gnarra Aboriginal Community, Laura

Musgrave, George, Ang-Gnarra Aboriginal Community, Laura
O'Connell, John, CDEP specialist, DAA, Brisbane
Parsons, Dr Barry, resident doctor, Palm Island
Peachie, Phil, Teacher, Doomadgee
Pearson, Gerhard, Council clerk, Hopevale
Pearson, Noel, law student, Hopevale
Powder, Pearcie, sports administrator, Woorabinda
Reays, Ken, Regional Manager, DAA, Cairns
Reuben, Sylvie, Councillor, Palm Island
Roberts, Fred, sports administrator, Woorabinda
Rolfe, Ross, Deputy State Director DAA, Brisbane
Ross, Rob, Chairman, Gungarde Community, Cooktown
Schultz, Nigel, Constable, Cherbourg Police
Schultz, Steve, Acting Sergeant, Cherbourg Police Station
Scott, David, Senior Constable, Bloomfield River (Wujal Wujal)
Simms, Bob, sports administrator, Woorabinda
Simpson, Ada, Cherbourg Council
Simpson, Kippy, Hospital, Palm Island
Singleton, Bernie, Dept of Community Services, Queensland
Stapleton, Fred, sports administrator, Woorabinda
Stephenson, David, Principal, State Primary School, Palm Island
Streatfield, Dr Rick, Queensland State Health Dept, Cairns
Taylor, John, antrhopoligist, James Cook University, Townsville
Thomas, Bob, finance officer, Woorabinda Council
Thompson, John, Sergeant, Mareeba Police
Tomson, Dr John, surgeon, Cairns
Veering, Andrew, teacher, Doomadgee
Walsh, Algon, Guest House, Palm Island
Walsh, Bella, Guest House, Palm Island
Wano, Ken, DAA, Townsville
Webster, John, Principal, Bloomfield River Primary
Willis, Alan, Principal, Cherbourg School
Woodleigh, George, project officer, DAA, Cairns
Yoman, Delvena, kindergarten, Hopevale
Yougie, Andrew, Council Chairman, Wujal Wujal

Northern Territory

Alice, Phillip, police aide, Santa Teresa
Anderson, Don, Operations Director, NT Correctional Services, Darwin
Bartlett, Peter, Redbank Outstation, Kintore
Bell, Neil, Member of Legislative Council, Alice Springs
Boland, Arthur, Deputy Director, Correctional Services, Darwin
Brennan, Father Tim, Santa Teresa
Brown, Stewart, solicitor, Aboriginal Legal Aid, Alice Springs
Bunduck, Felix, Port Keats
Bunduck, Like, Chairman of Council, Port Keats
Burke, Maurie, Inspector, Police, Alice Springs
Calma, Rhonda, DAA Regional Office, Darwin
Carlon, Lorraine, Sergeant, Tennant Creek Police
Castillio, Usha, Regional Manager DAA, Darwin
Crabb, Bronwyn, administrative officer, Hermannsburg Council
Crocombe, Mark, resoruce coordinator, Port Keats
Curwen-Walker, Peter, probation & parole officer, Port Keats
Davey, Stan, Uniting Church, Darwin
Devanesen, Dr Dayalan, Health Dept, Darwin
Dieudonne, Miriam, adult educator, Santa Teresa
Downing, Reverend Jim, Uniting Church, Darwin

Egan, Ted, Alice Springs
Ellsgood, Phil, Darwin Hospital
Folds, Ralph, head teacher, Kintore
Frampton, Derek, DAA, Alice Springs
Gardner, Sister Anne, head teacher, Nguiu
Gordon, Peter, Sergeant, Pularumpi
Granits, Rex, Council Chairman, Yuendumu
Hansen, Greg, Constable, Maranboy Police
Hepplewhite, Ross, Deputy State Director, DAA, Darwin
Hughes, Geoff, Constable, Papunya Police
Hughes, Peter, Dept of Health, NT
Ingram, John, Batchelor College
James, Marion, teacher, Hermannsburg
Jeffrey, Roger, Constable, Hermannsburg Police
Jones, Liz, head teacher, Hermannsburg
Jordan, Rob, Constable, Hermannsburg Police
Kennedy, Gordon, Recreation Officer, Barunga
Keogh, Lynn, Juvenile Justice Program, Darwin
Kerinaiua, Walter, Deputy Chairman of Council, Nguiu
Kimber, Dick, Alice Springs
Langmair, Tony, Superintendent of Juvenile Justice, NT
Lindsay, Charles, Town Clerk, Pularumpi
Little, Sister Elizabeth, School Principal, Port Keats
Maher, Brad, teacher, Barunga School
Maloney, Dean, Constable, Pularumpi
Marmion, Doug, adult educator, Kintore
Martin, Les, Senior Constable, Port Keats
Martin, Wesley, Regional Manager, DAA, Katherine
McDonall, Lindsay, Superintendent, Police, Alice Springs
McGowan, Dr Heather, Director Sport & Recreation, Darwin
McKeon, Dave, store manager, Mt Liebig
McKeon, Veronica, Mt Liebig
McLeay, David, teacher, Batchelor College
Muddell, Bill, DAA, Alice Springs
Mullin, Lee, Principal, Yuendumu
Narndu, Louis, Vice-Chairman of Council, Port Keats
Narndu, Theodora, Port Keats
Norman, John, teacher, Papunya
Norman, Pamela, teacher, Papunya
O'Brien, Joseph, teacher, Barunga School
Owston, Doug, Director of Correctional Services, Darwin
Palmer, Mick, Commissioner of Police, NT
Pang, Dr Henry, Pintubi Health Service, Kintore
Parker, Steve, Superintendent of Wildman River Camp
Pastor, Bob, Principal, Barunga School
Pitman, Sister Pauline, Community Health Centre, Santa Teresa
Rasmussun, Outstation Resource Centre, Yuendumu
Richardon, Jan, Darwin
Robb, Adrian, Constable, Tennant Creek Police
Ryan, Bill, Santa Teresa Sporting & Social Club
Schwartzkoff, Peter, senior project officer, DAA, Darwin
Scobie, Johny, Chairman, Kintore Council
Smith, Barry, North Australia Development Unit, Darwin
Smith, Les, Detective Snr Constable, Alice Springs
Smythe, Les, Constable, Yuendumu Police Station
Stewart, Colin, Council clerk, Santa Teresa
Tapsell, Barbara, project officer, DAA, Darwin
Taylor, Jack, Superintendent, Training Commissioner, NT Police

Temme, Peter, Principal, Lutheran School, Hermannsburg
Thorley, Peter, teacher-linguist, Kintore
Tillbrook, Marcus, Sergeant, CIB, Alice Springs
Tipangwuti, Stanley, Council member, Nguiu
Tipuamantumirra, John Francis, school worker, Nguiu
Tipuamantumirra, Luke, Council member, Nguiu
Whelan, Guy, DAA, Katherine
Wicks, Chris, DAA, Darwin
Williams, Daphne, Arts Cooperative, Kintore
Williams, Elna, DAA, Alice Springs

Western Australia

Alton, Joe, DAA, Kalgoorlie
Andrew, Adam, Junjuwa Council, Fitzroy Crossing
Andrew, Phillip, Derby Shire
Baird, Ian, outstation director, Coonana
Benning, Amy, Ngunga Women's Group, Derby
Benning, Sally, Ngunga Women's Group, Derby
Bin Hitam, Sherena, DAA, Derby
Bin Omar, Loretta, administrator, Lombardina
Boehm, Rod, Sergeant, Halls Creek Police
Brahim, Adrian, Charles Perkins Hostel, Halls Creek
Brandis, David, Regional Manager, Kununurra
Bronner, John, Constable, Police Citizens & Youth Club, Kalgoorlie
Budiselik, Bill, Director of Operations, Corrective Services, Perth
Calyun, Alan, Kurrawang Aboriginal Christian Corporation
Carter, Ivan, Inspector, Derby Police
Casey, Chris, community clerk, Kalumburu
Casey, Helen, Kalumburu
Chalker, May, Aboriginal sports administrator, Perth
Charles, Dominic, Red Hill Community, Halls Creek
Clark, Bob, Sergeant, Broome Police
Clements, Doug, Regional Manager, DAA, Geraldton
Clements, Mary, pensioner, Kalumburu
Collard, Sandra, Aboriginal sports administrator, Perth
Cornish, Glenn, DAA Regional Manager, Perth
Councillor, Loretta, DAA, Derby
Cowley, Mary, WA Drug & Alcohol Authority, Derby
Cullen, Bill, Dept of Corrective Services, Perth
Dann, Glennis, Regional Manager, DAA, Kalgoorlie
Davey, Caroline, Catholic College teacher, Broome
Davies, Arnold, Superintendent, Geraldton Police
Djanghara, Andrew, Council member, Kalumburu
Djanghara, Basil, Council member, Kalumburu
Djanghara, Clarence, foreman, Kalumburu
Dodson, Patrick, Commissioner, Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Royal Commission
Farrer, Josey, shire councilor, Halls Creek
French, Les, Chairman of Council, Kalumburu
Fyfe, Ann, Kimberley health nurse, Halls Creek
Green, Patrick, Junjuwa Council, Fitzroy Crossing
Green, Sarah, ABC, Geraldton
Greig, Bert, WA Dept Sport & Recreation
Groves, Denise, DAA, Perth
Hayward, Eric, Aboriginal Studies, Hedland College, Port Hedland
Henderson, Sharon, Ngunga Women's Group, Derby
Herrod, Elizabeth, Community Health, Derby
Higgins, David, psychologist, Perth

Holmes, Mike, WA Alcohol & Drug Authority, Derby
Hunter, Puggy, Aboriginal resource officer, Community Services, Kununurra
Illingworth, Brian, Chief Superintendent, Police Headquarters, Perth
Jamison, Margaret, Ngunga Women's Group, Derby
Johnson, Trish, Aboriginal sports administrator, Perth
Jones, Myra, nurse, Kununurra Hospital
Kelly, Elizabeth, Community Health, Derby
Kickett, Marian, Aboriginal sports administrator, Perth
Lake, Bill, Superintendent, Kalgoorlie Police
Lamb, Richard, Director, Kalgoorlie College
Lamboo, Chalma, Red Hill Community, Halls Creek
Latham, Pat, Ngunga Women's Group, Derby
Lea, Martin, Corrective Services, Perth
Leslie, Lex, Principal, Kalumburu School
Lock, Tania, Community Health, Derby
MacNamara, Albert, Aboriginal sports administrator, Perth
Marshall, Andrew, Corrective Services, Perth
Mason, Alex, Aboriginal sports administrator, Perth
McClellan, Greg, WA Dept Sport & Recreation
McLarty, Alan, Junjuwa Council, Fitzroy Crossing
McLennon, Ethel, administrative officer, Turkey Creek
Middleton, Selina, Junjuwa Council, Fitzroy Crossing
Munroe, Alan, DAA, Kalgoorlie
Nobler, Amy, Red Hill Community, Halls Creek
Nudding, Albert, Chairman of Council, Coonana
Nudding, Joyce, home maker & school cook, Coonana
Pedersen, June, Ngunga Women's Group, Derby
Pell, John, Aboriginal sports administrator, Perth
Phillips, Neil, Aboriginal sports administrator, Perth
Phoenix, Ab, administrator, Kurrawang
Reid, Michelle, Dept of Community Service, Halls Creek
Riddler, Sister Maree, Principal, Turkey Creek Catholic School
Riley, Spencer, Aboriginal sports administrator, Perth
Roberts, Jean, Ngunga Women's Group, Derby
Sampi, Andrew, teacher, Lombardina
Scott, Karen, Ngunga Women's Group, Derby
Shadforth, Ina, Ngunga Women's Group, Derby
Sharrett, Arthur, Superintendent, Kimberley Regional Police, Broome
Shinn, John, community advisor, Lombardina
Sibosado, Glennis, Aboriginal Visitors' Scheme, Broome
Sinclair, Steve, recreation officer, Coonana
Smith, Ray, DAA, Perth
Spargo, Dr Randolph, Tropical Medicine, Derby
Stevens, Leonie, resident, Coonana
Stuart, Bob, Sergeant, Argyle Police
Tangwei, Alan, police aide, Broome
Tataya, Patrick, Norforce Army, Kalumburu
Thomas, Adrian, DAA, Kalgoorlie
Thomas, Peter, recreation officer, Coonana
Thornton, Gail, Halls Creek School
Tucker, Les, Chairman, Kurrawang Aboriginal Christian Corporation
Ugle, Greg, Coonana community
Unghango, Austin, Council member, Kalumburu
Unghango, Patricia, social security clerk, Kalumburu
Unghango, Pauline, social security clerk, Kalumburu
Vick, George, Sergeant, Fitzroy Crossing
Waina, Laurie, Council member, Kalumburu
Walley, Jack, Aboriginal sports administrator, Perth

Westbury, Neil, State Director, DAA, Perth
Williams, Diana, Council member, Kalumburu
Williams, Frank, Chairman of Council, Lombardina
Williams, Roy, Derby Youth Centre
Williamson, Ian, Sergeant, Kununurra Police
Won Don, community coordinator, Lagrange
Woodhouse, Cindy, teacher, Kalumburu School
Yalunga, Ralph, Chairman, Warmun Community, Turkey Creek

South Australia

Aspinall, Richard, community co-ordinator, Yalata
Baddams, Wayne, Sergeant, Port Augusta
Barrett, State Aboriginal Affairs Dept, Adelaide
Betts, Sharon, recptionist, Port Lincoln Aboriginal Organisation
Brice, Graham, Flinders University
Bristow, Wayne, Sergeant, Murray Bridge Police
Bryan, Lauric, Aboriginal Education Foundation, Adelaide
Buckskin, Peter, DAA, Adelaide
Burgoyne, Faith, committee, Port Lincoln Aboriginal Organisation
Burgoyne, Joe, captain, Mallee Park FC, Port Lincoln
Casey, Gary, Sergeant, Adelaide Police
Cook, Yvonne, Gerard
Davies, Hadyn, DAA, Ceduna
Domaschenz, Malcolm, Gerard
Dudley, Kurt, committee, Mallee Park FC
Dunnett, Mitch, CDEP officer, Ceduna
Edwards, Bill, SA College of Advanced Education, Adelaide
Fitzgerald, Danny, Segeant, Ceduna Police
Freeman, Tracy, Regional Manager, DAA, Port Augusta
Fuschtei, Val, basketball organiser, Port Augusta
Garrett, Karen, commitrtee, Port Lincoln Aboriginal Organisation
Gascoyne, John, Ceduna Area School
Gerhardy, David, Senior Sergeant, Port Lincoln Police
Graetz, John, Constable, Port Victoria
Hanley, Phil, Senior Constable, Ceduna Police
Howie, Bob, Chief Inspector, Berri Police
Hull, Rodney, coordinator Tji Tji Wura Centre, Davenport
Isles, Eddie; director, Ranges Youth Centre, Port Augusta
Johncock, John, Mallee Park FC youth worker, Port Lincoln Aboriginal Organisation
Karpeny, Jeanette, Gerard
Kidney, David, DAA, Adelaide & Melbourne
Koolmantrie, Colin, deputy chairman, Raukkan
Laffin, Ted, Sergeant, Berri Police
Lamshead, Barry, DAA, Adelaide
Liddle, Tom, deputy co-ordinator, Port Lincoln Aboriginal Organisation
Maher, Anthony, teacher, Ceduna Area School
McKenzie, Alwyn, coordinator, Davenport Aboriginal Community
McKenzie, Carol, Port Lincoln Aboriginal Organisation
McKenzie, Laverne, sports coordinator, Aboriginal Community Affairs Panel, Port Augusta
McKenzie, Marvin, Ranges Youth Centre, Port Augusta
Mclean, Andrew, Constable, Ceduna Police
Miller, debbie, DAA, Ceduna
Miller, Hary, Aboriginal liason officer, Dept of Social Security
Miller, Maurice, footballer and teacher aide, Ceduna Area School
Miller, Russell, vice-president Mallee Park FC, Port Lincoln Aboriginal Organisation
Millera, Lionel, coordinator Tji Tji Wura Centre, Davenport

Moller, Peter, Sergeant, Adelaide Police
Pippos, Angelo, Senior Constable, Ceduna Police
Priestly, Wendy, Constable, Ceduna Police
Rankin, Henry, chairman of council, Raukkan
Rankin, Jean, Raukkan
Rankin, Jimmy, Raukkan
Rankin, Laurie, Lower Murray Nungars Club, Murray Bridge
Rathman, David, deputy director, State Aboriginal Affairs Dept, Adelaide
Richards, Brenton, co-ordinator, Port Lincoln Aboriginal Organisation
Rigney, Agnes, Jerry Mason Senior Memorial Centre, Glossop
Rigney, Wendy, Lower Murray Nungars Club, Murray Bridge
Riley, Steve, permanent relief teacher & acting principal, Point Pearce
Sambo, Linda, committee, Port Lincoln Aboriginal Organisation
Stanton, Jeff, coordinator Tji Tji Wura Centre, Davenport
Tregenza, John, Far West Aboriginal Peoples' Association, Ceduna
Trevena, Richard, Regional Manager, DAA, Ceduna
Tripp, Marge, DAA, Adelaide
Wanganeen, Craig, community centre youth worker, Point Pearce
Watts, Jeff, Snr Sergeant, Port Augusta
Wilson, Peter, Snr Constable, Narrung Police
Winslow, Laura, Lower Murray Nungars Club, Murray Bridge

Victoria
(some Victorian centres are serviced by NSW departments across the River Murray)

Atkinson, Mary, Rumbalara community
Body, Geoff, Snr Constable, Robinvale Police
Brookes, John, Sergeant, Morwell Police
Bryant, Eddie, Lake Tyers
Bryant, Johny, Lake Tyers
Bulled, Denise, Warma Aboriginal Cooperative, Echuca
Chandler, Greg, Snr Sergeant, Swan Hill Police
Dalton, Eddie, Snr Sergeant, Swan Hill Police
Dalton, Paddy, Central Gippsland Aboriginal Health & Housing Coop, Morwell
Dunbar, Janice, bookkeeper, Lake Tyers
Edwards, Paul, DAA, Melbourne
Edwards, Ron, Lake Tyers
Endacott, Frank, historian, Healesville
Grist, Brian, Snr Sergeant, Warragul Police
Harrastal, Les, historian, Healesville
Hayes, Harry, Morwell
Hayes, Johny, Central Gippsland Aboriginal Health & Housing Coop, Morwell
Herauville, Ian, Sergeant, Echuca Police
Hoffman, Elizabeth, Cummeragunja
Jackomos, Alick, Melbourne
Jackomos, Merle, Melbourne
Jackson, Lenny, president, Rumbalara FC
Johnson, Melva, Warma Aboriginal Cooperative, Echuca
Kelton, Don, Sergeant, Drouin Police
Lalor, Adrien, Snr Sergeant, Lakes Entrance Police
Marheine, John, Chief Inspector, Deniliquin Police (NSW)
Mayes, Phil, Inspector, Echuca Police
McKay, Mel, Chief Inspector, Shepparton Police
Mitchell, Gerandine, secretary, Coomealla FC, Dareton (NSW)
Mitchell, Valerie, Warma Aboriginal Cooperative, Echuca
Morgan, Des, Warma Aboriginal Cooperative, Echuca
Mullett, Albert, Central Gippsland Aboriginal Health & Housing Coop, Morwell
Mullett, Pauline, Warragul

Nicholls, Doug, Swan Hill District Aboriginal Coop
Nicholls, Howie, Swan Hill District Aboriginal Coop
Nicholson, Thelma, Cummeragunja
Nicholson, Veda, Cummeragunja
Pepper, Mona, Lake Tyers
Peter, Beverley, Birralee Piringa Family Group Home, Dareton (NSW)
Proctor, Dorothy, West Gippsland Hospital, Warragul
Roberts, Robert, Swan Hill District Aboriginal Coop
Rodgers, Cecil, Cummeragunja
Rose, Darryl, Sunraysia & District Aboriginal Corporation, Mildura
Rose, Deidre, Central Gippsland Aboriginal Health & Housing Coop, Morwell
Rose, Jenny, Drouin
Sanderson, Charles, Detective Sergeant, Deniliquin Police (NSW)
Saunders, Ken, Fitzroy gymnasium, Melbourne
Savage, Russell, Snr Sergeant, Mildura Police
Stewart, Barry, Sunraysia & District Aboriginal Corporation, Mildura
Tippett, Dr George, Melbourne
Tregonning, Hilda, Lake Tyers
Walker, Colin, Cummeragunja
Wandin, Joe Jnr, Lake Tyers
Wandin, John, Lake Tyers
Williams, Kevin, youth programs, Robinvale Aboriginal Coop

Appendix II: Aboriginal sports facilities

These captions apply to the numbered photographs below:

1. The Yuendumu Games, held annually in August, with attendances reaching 6000 on occasion.

2. The Olympic pool at Woorabinda (Qld), built by money levied on cans of beer sold in the local canteen.

3. The installation of Woorabinda's rugby league football clubhouse: seven of these demountables were bought from the Burdekin Dam and joined.

4. The Aboriginal-owned and run sports complex at Condobolin (NSW).

5. The oval at Palm Island. The population of 3000 sustains no less than sixteen football teams.

6. Cricket at Doomadgee (Qld).

7. Rugby league at Doomadgee.

8. Primary schools' sports day, Goondiwindi (Qld). Many of the prizes are won by Aboriginal children from Toomelah and Boggabilla, about seven km across the border in New South Wales.

9. Gymnastics at Port Keats (NT).

10. Basketball action at Mowanjum (WA).

11. Basketball court, Santa Teresa (NT).

12. Basketball court, Lagrange (WA).

13. Basketball court, Lombadina (WA).

14. Basketball, Ali Carung (NT).

15. Basketball court, Lake Tyers (Vic).

16. Basketball court, Morningᴧton island (Qld).

17. Basketball court, Kalumburu (WA).

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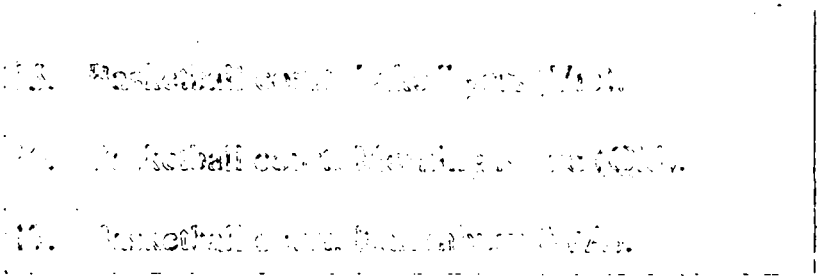
14. Basketball, Ali Carung (NT).

15. Basketball court, Lake Tyers (Vic).

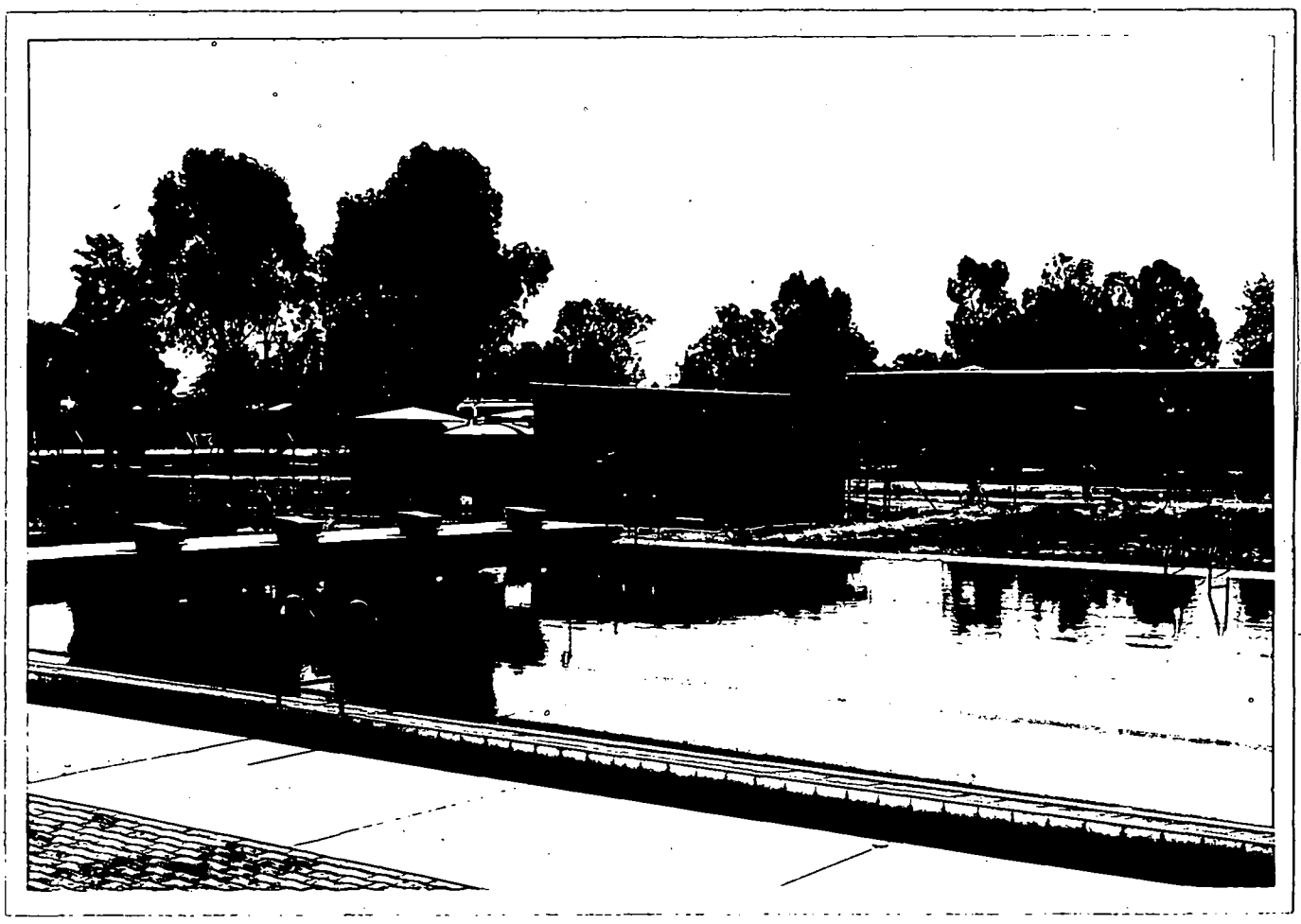
16. Basketball court, Morning Island (Qld).

17. Basketball court, Kalumburu (WA).



18. Basketball court amid the cotton fields, Maningrida (NT).
19. The oval at Kalumburu.
20. The oval at Santa Teresa.
21. The oval at Lagrange.
22. The salt pan used as an oval at Lombadina.
23. The oval at Kintore (N).
24. The 'oval' covered by wild bushes, Gingie Reserve, Walgett (NSW).
25. The oval at Hermannsburg (NT).

1



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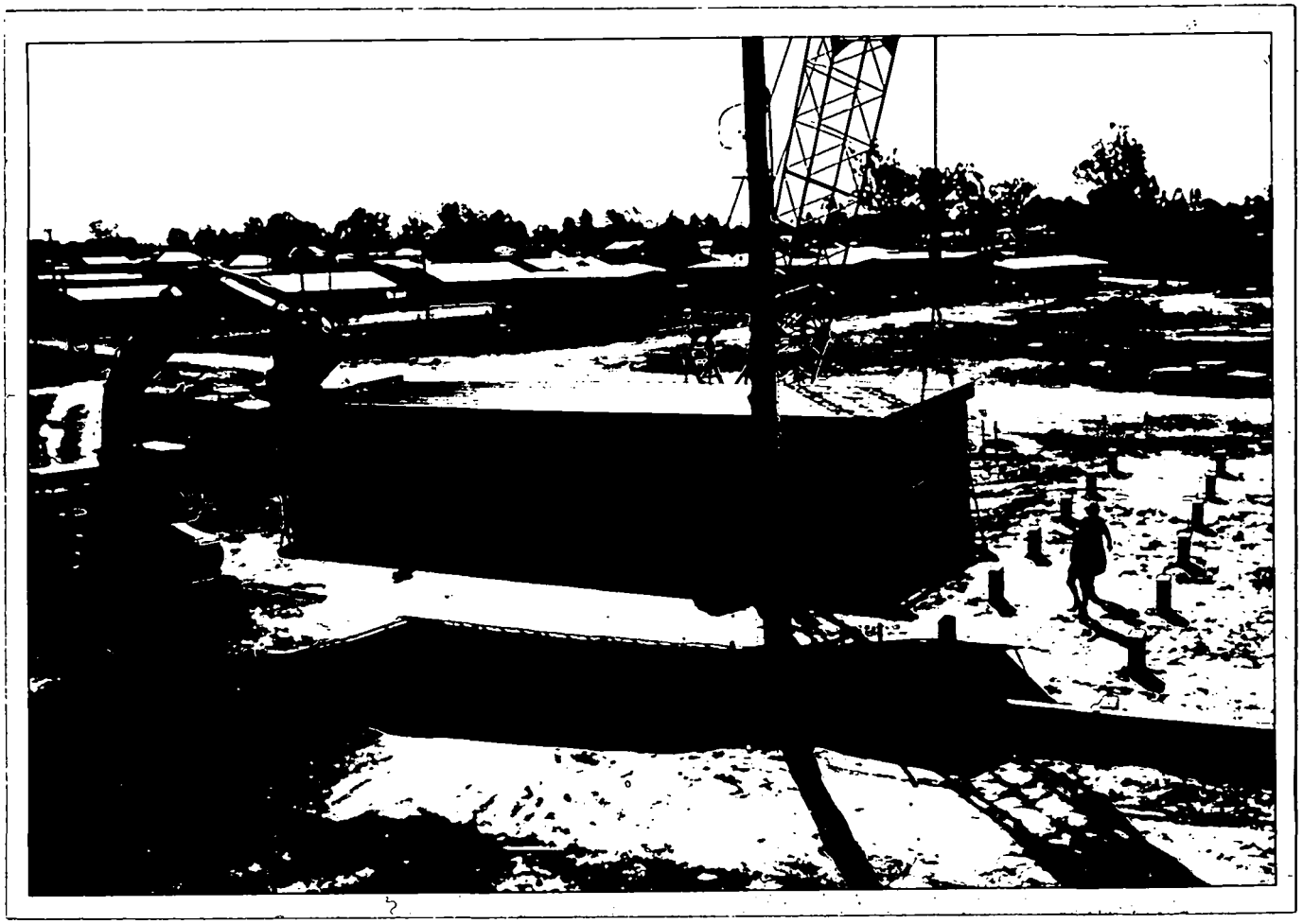

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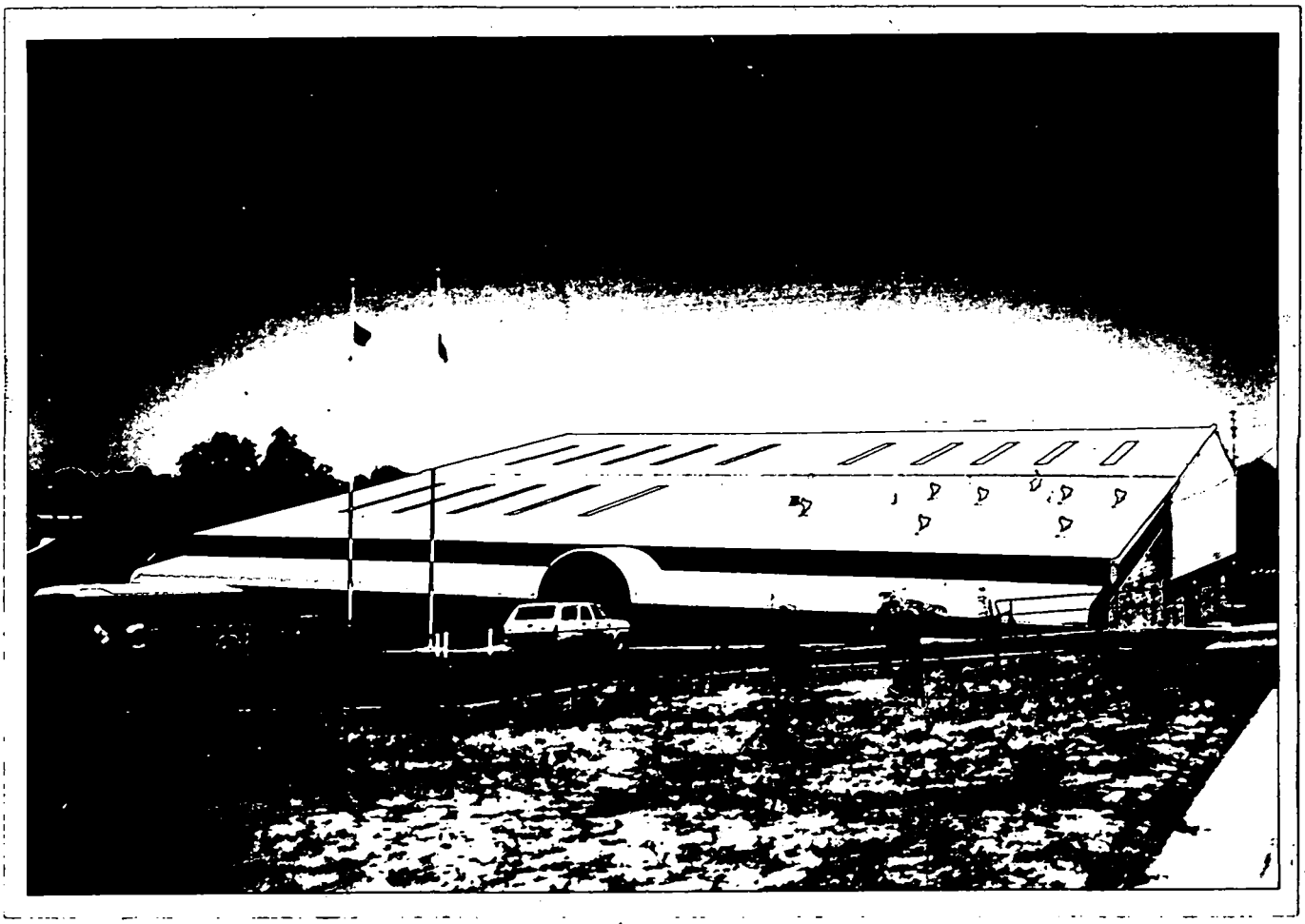

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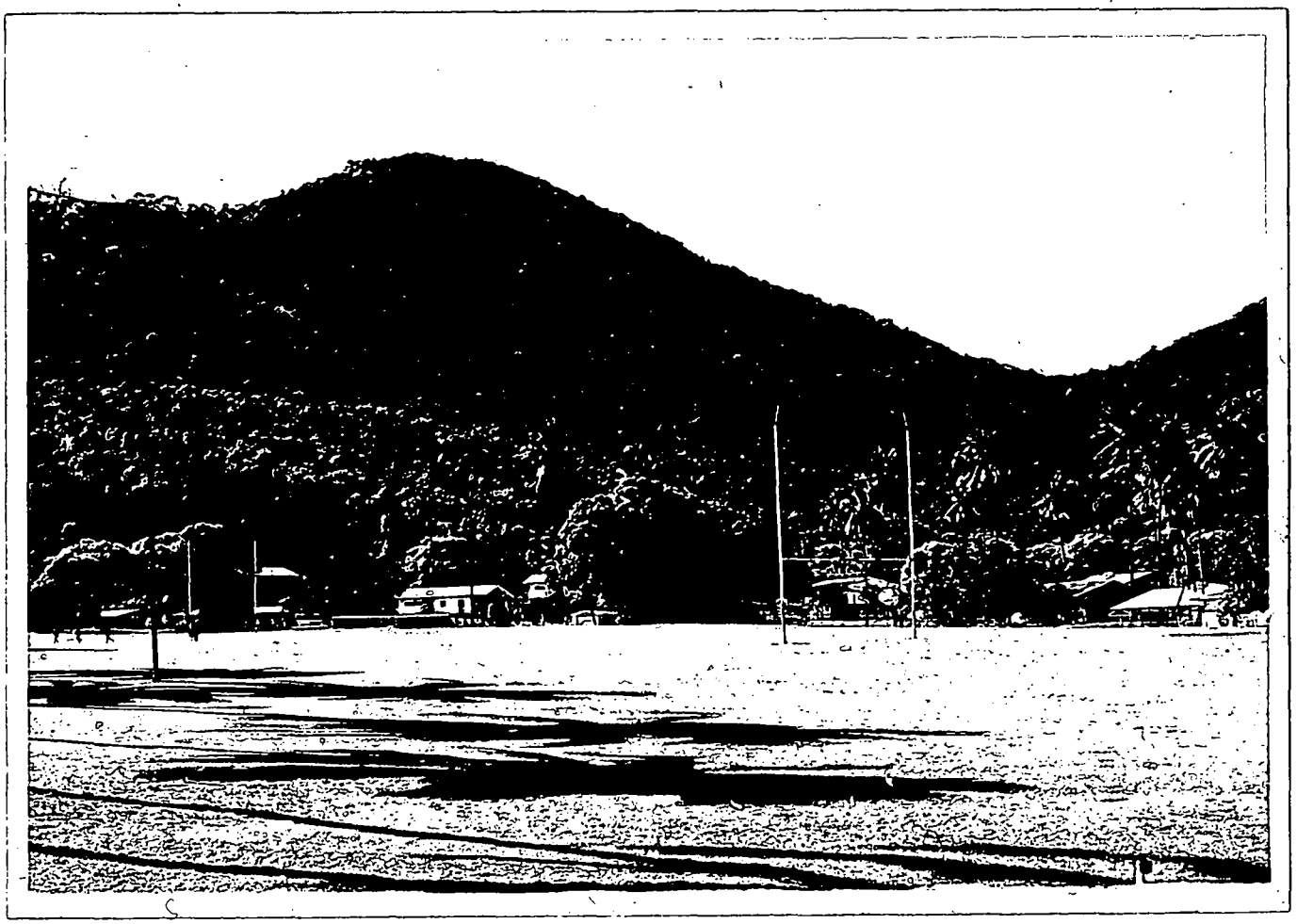

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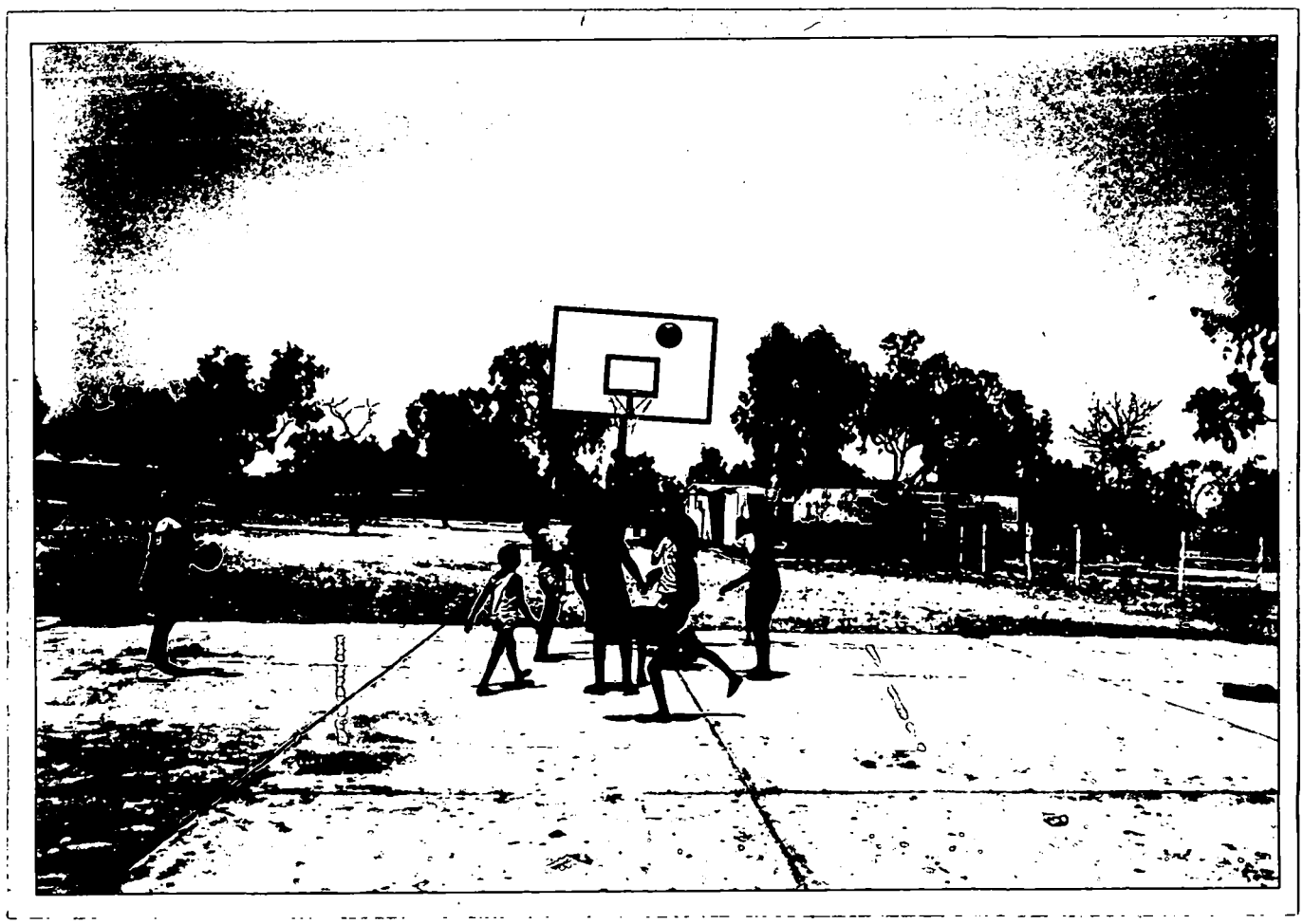

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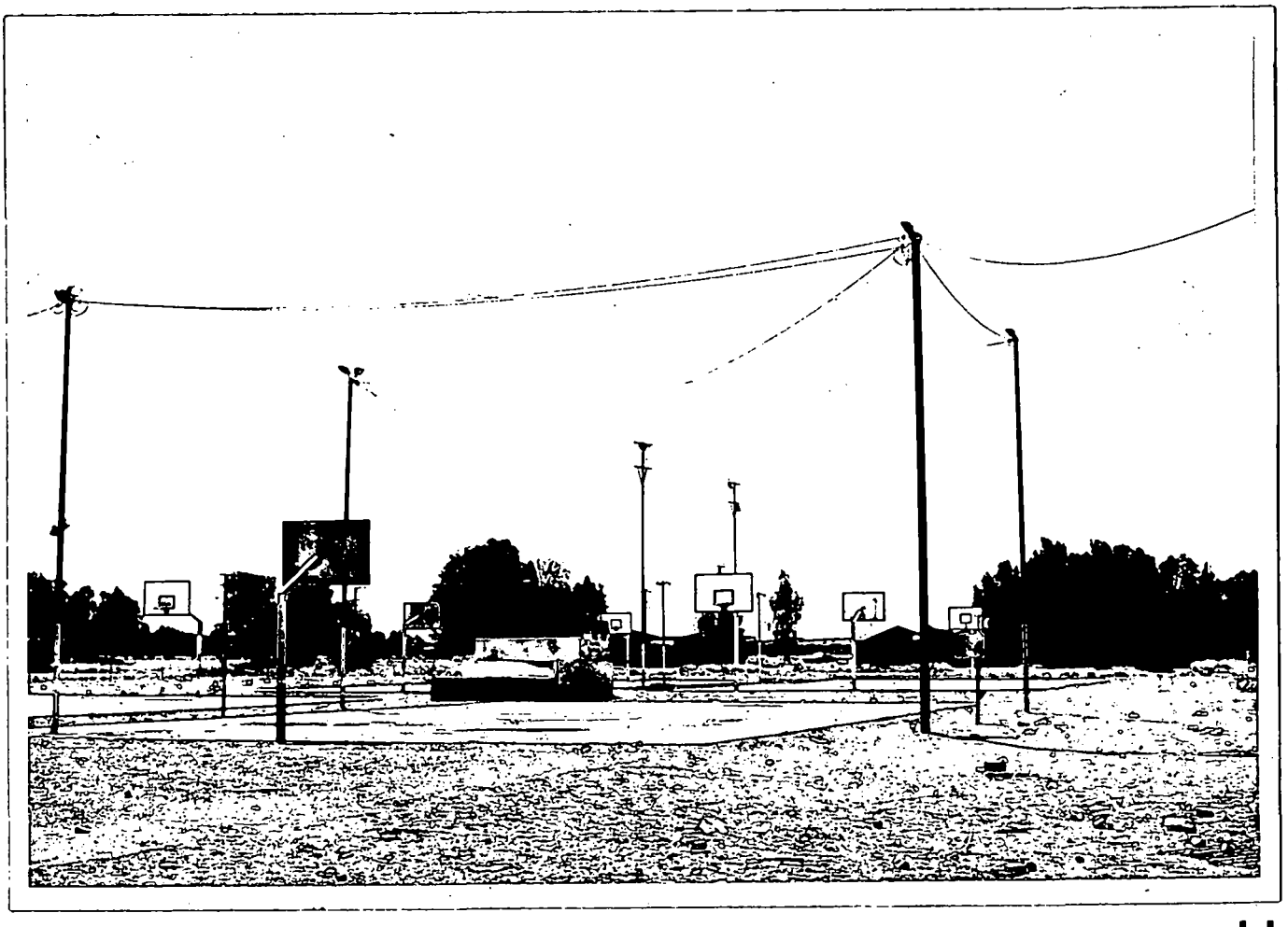

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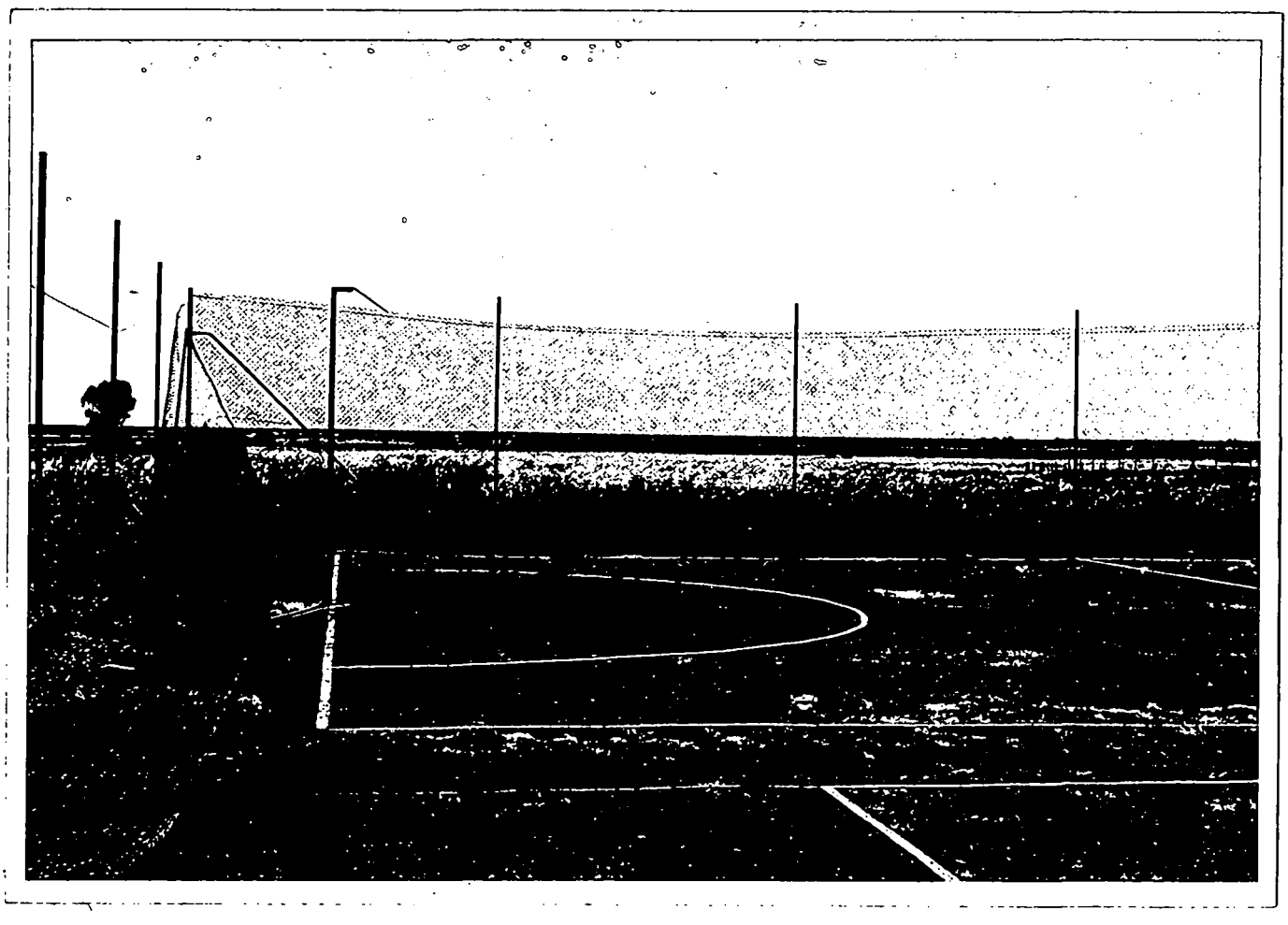

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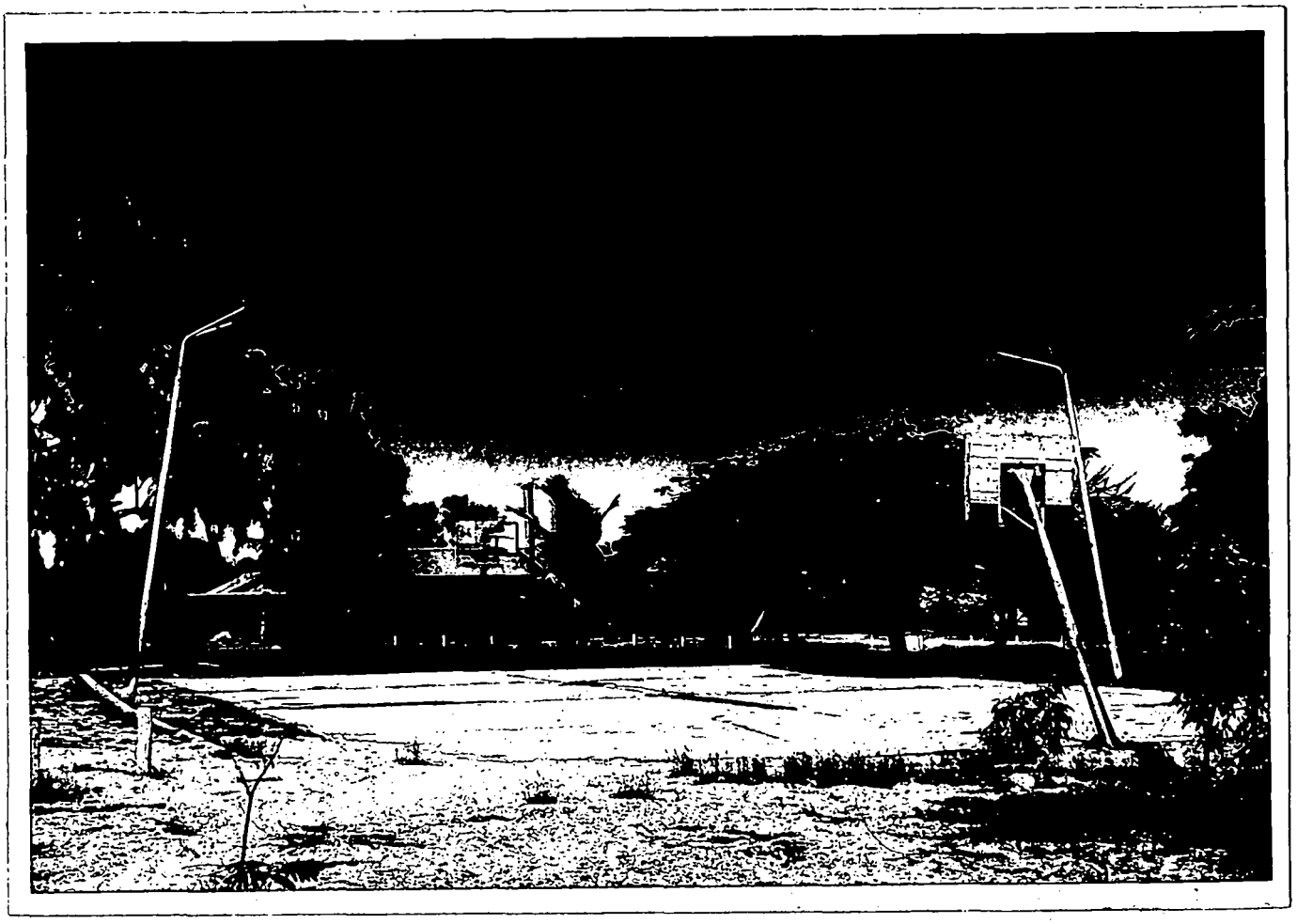

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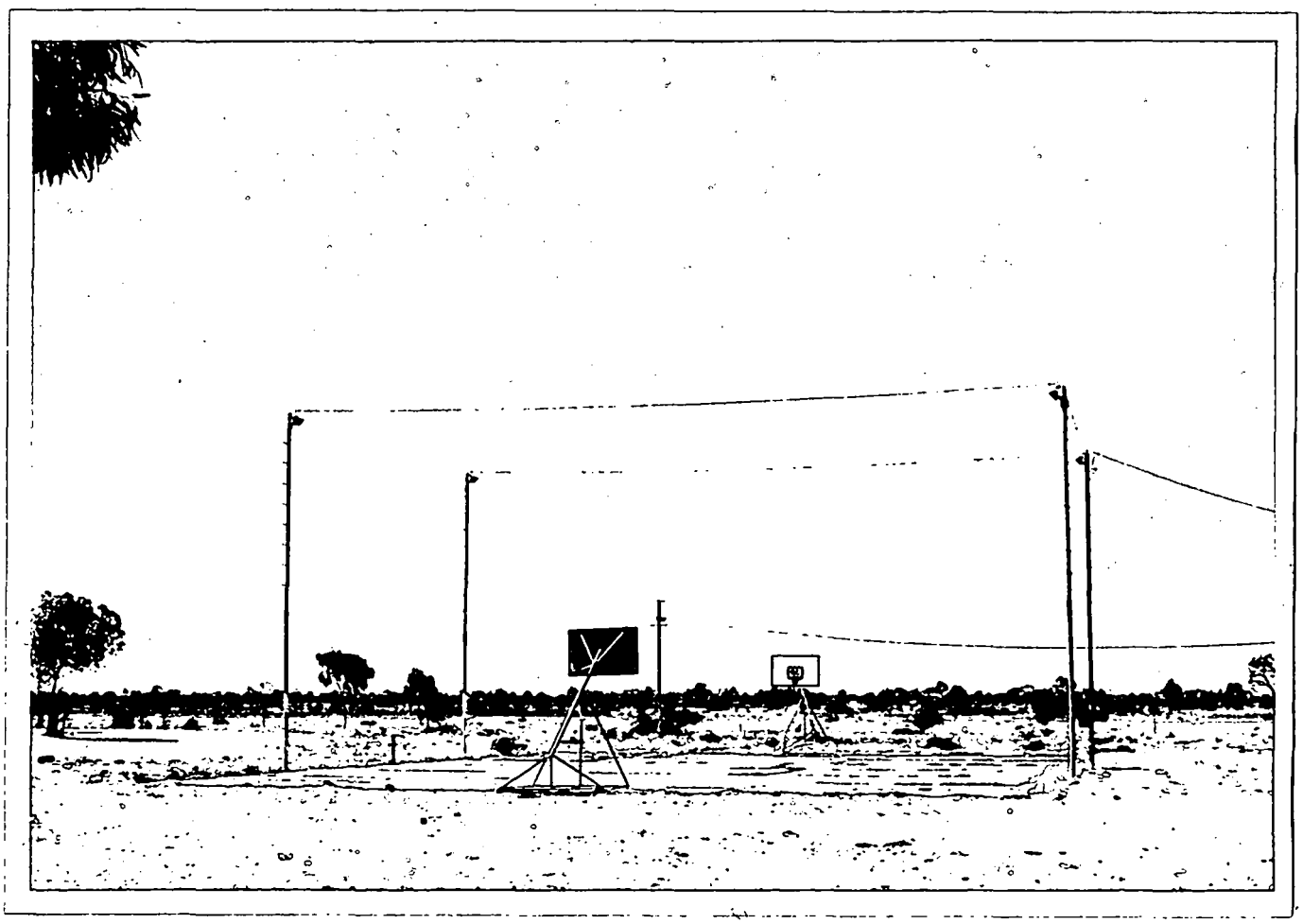

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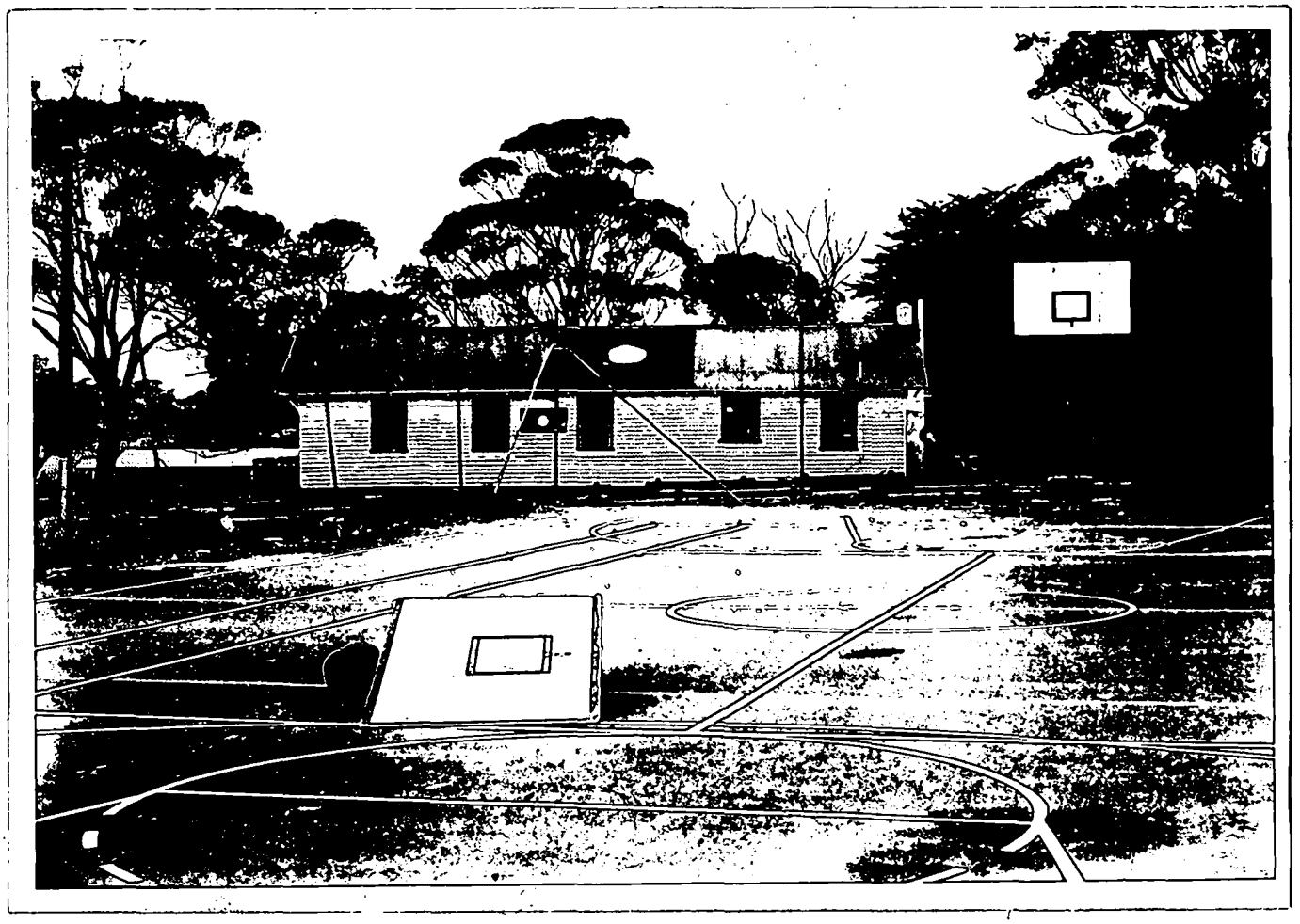

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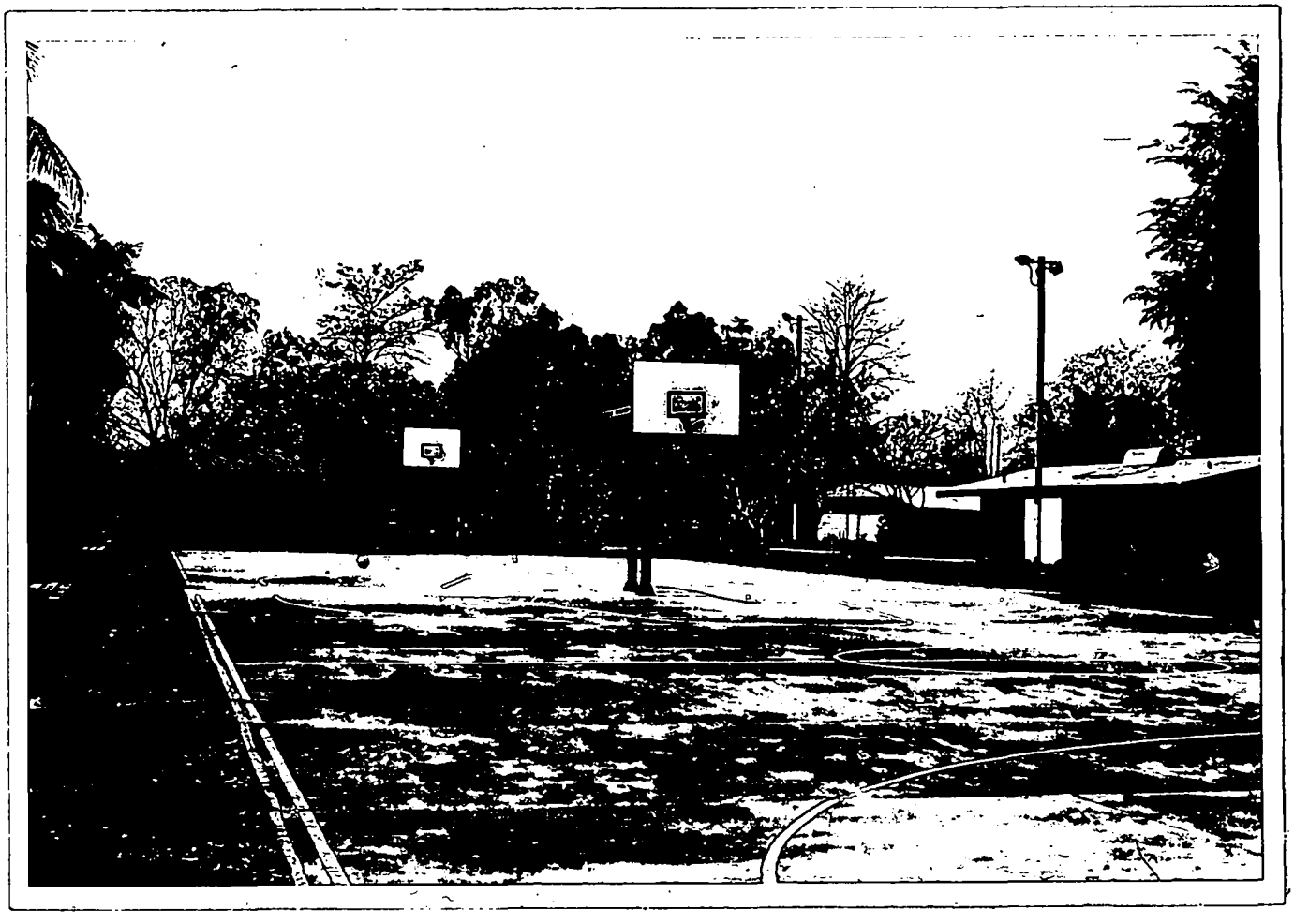

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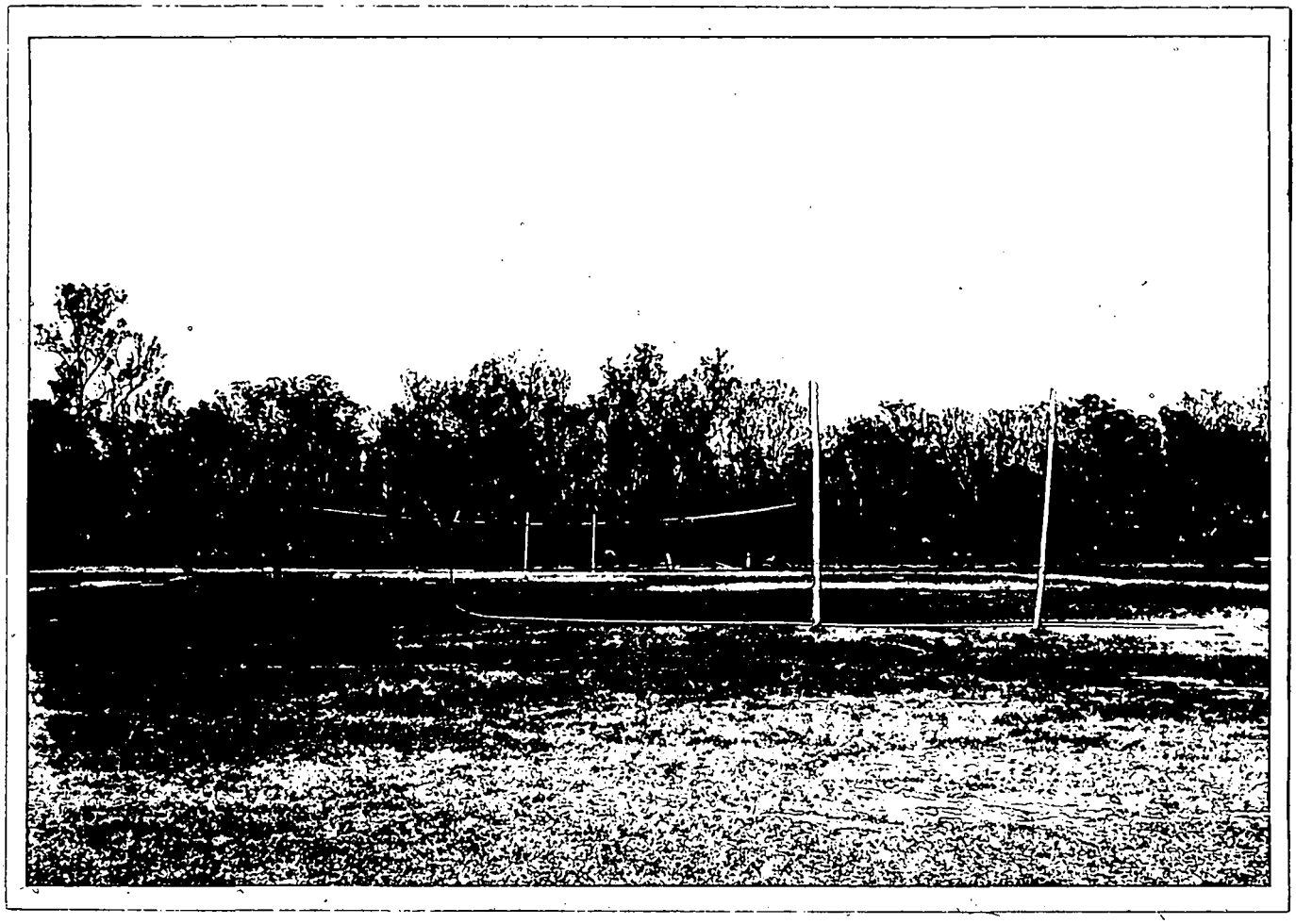

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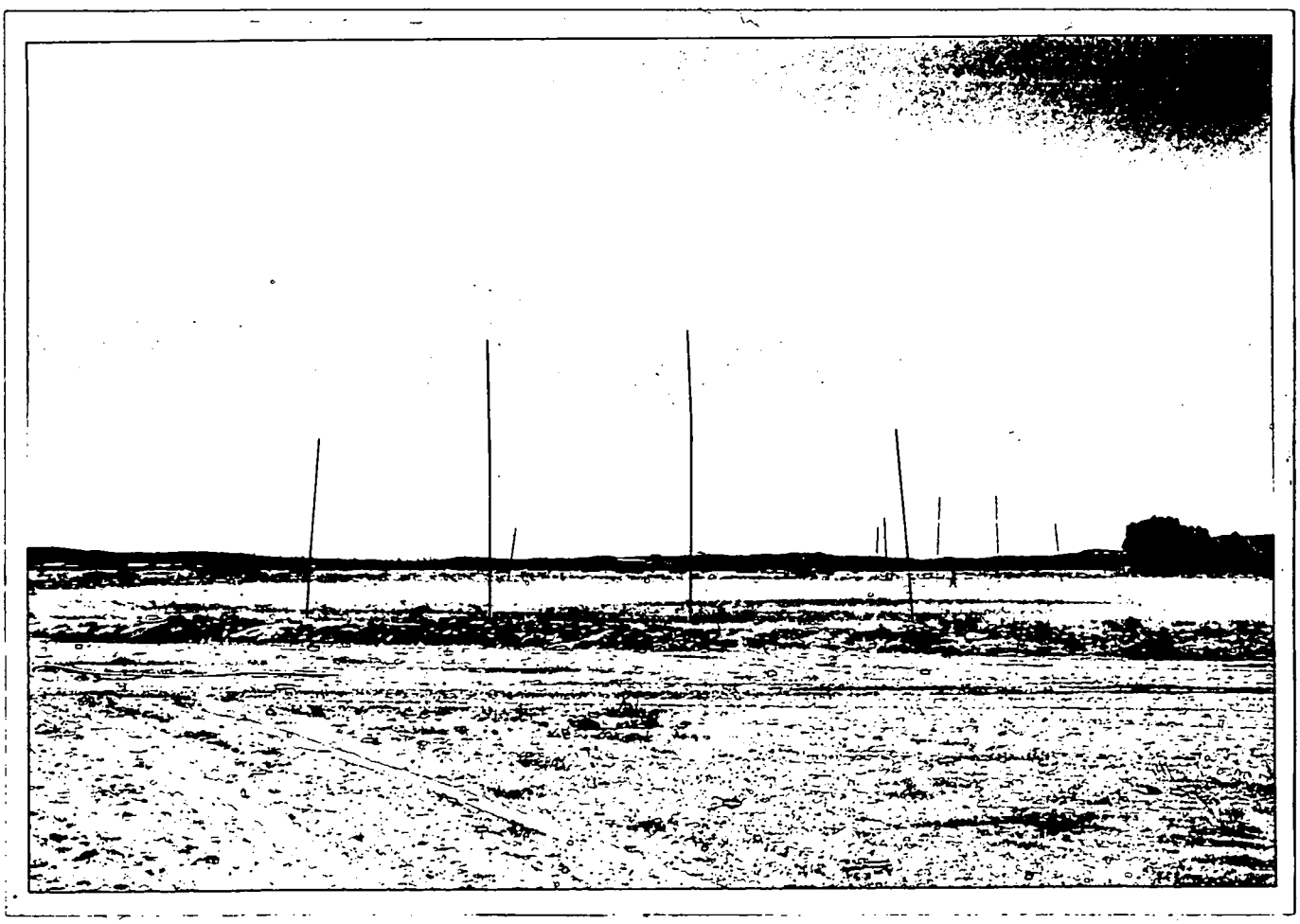

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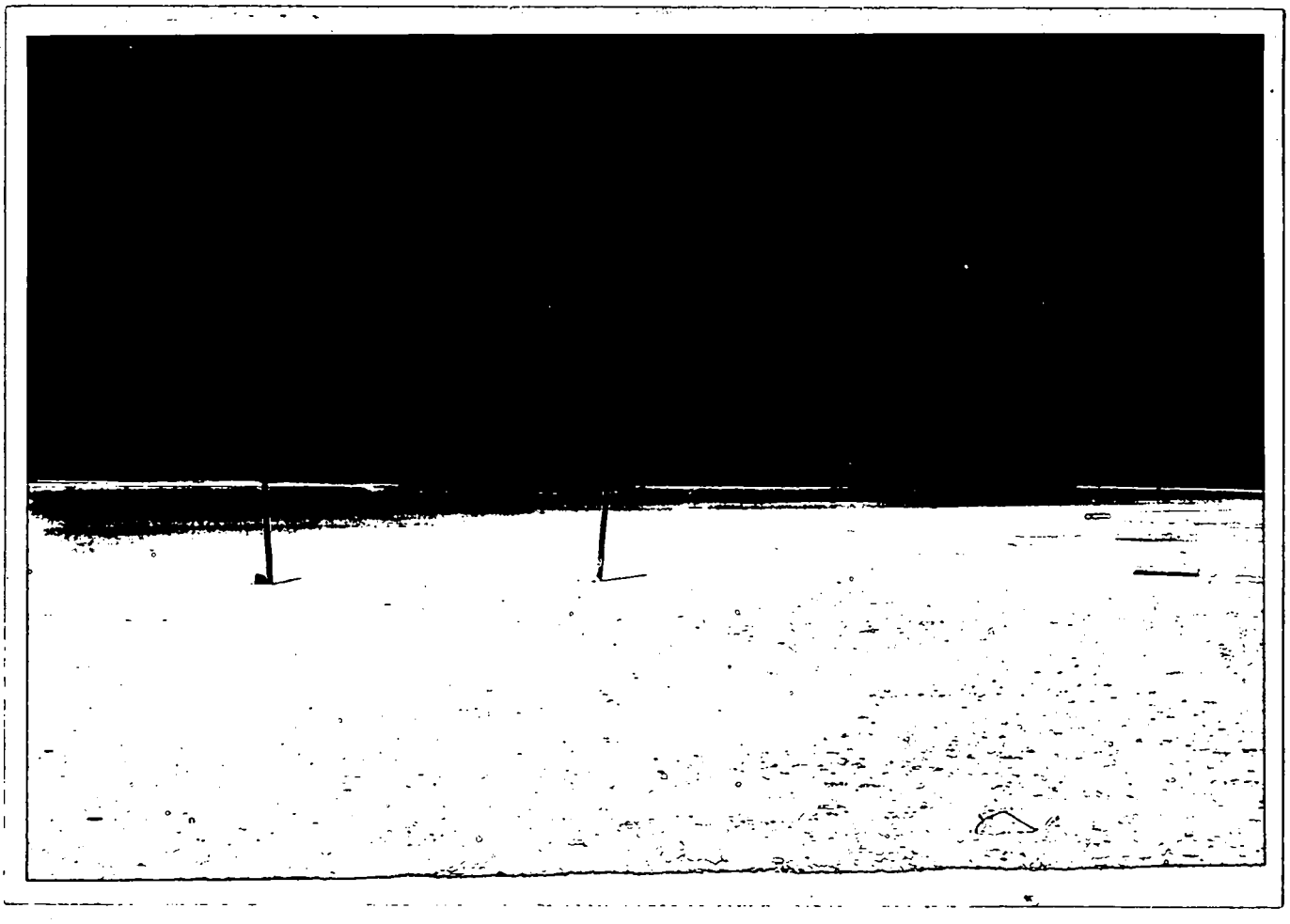

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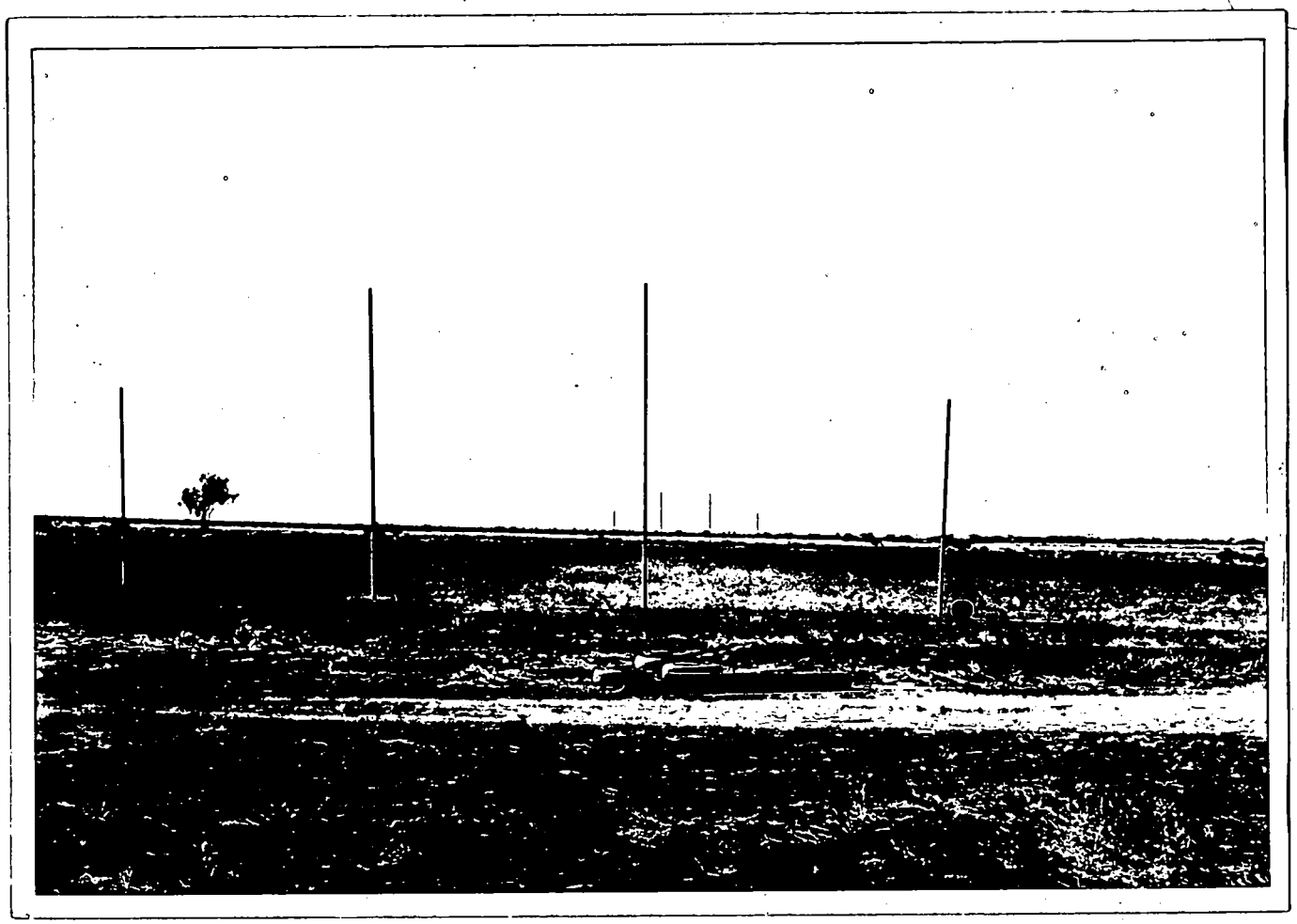

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