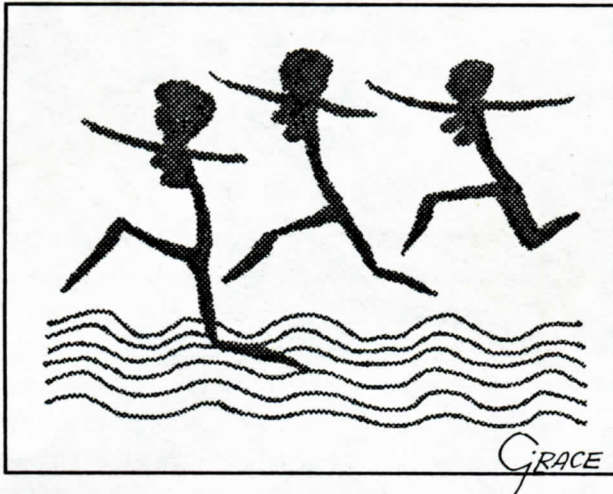


"We refuse to be token niggers in feminist groups"

by Lydia Graham



The struggle for

Aboriginal Land Rights is the struggle for equal rights and human dignity. Such is the struggle for women's rights in Australia.

The question of why feminists should support land rights is a question of basic justice, remembering also the treatment of aboriginal women during the last 200 years of white invasion of this country.

So the question is, how can white women support blacks? They also support aboriginal women because we were born with a double handicap in a predominantly white, male-run society; we were born both black women. We are doubly oppressed.

Aboriginals usually have little education after leaving school at an early age due to racist tensions formed through the racist white school system.

Aboriginal women can seldom get a job, or if they do they are exploited because they are black

women. Most of them can only look forward to being a married mother with hungry children.

There are many black women that run the communities that aboriginals are proud of. Black women will not join feminist groups to be token niggers. Black women can understand and may or may not support feminism. They will not be token blacks for any organization.

Aboriginal women are not only fighting for the sexual freedom that white women are fighting for. They are also struggling to survive.

They are aware of feminism but often it is only in the back of their heads. Aboriginal women have too many pressures of society upon them. They stand with their men for land rights. They have equal rights and an equal struggle.

Aboriginal women have suffered the full force of white invasion. They have had rape pushed upon them for the last 200 years. It

was common for women to be kidnapped from their tribes and sexually exploited.

Today it is still happening. If white man rapes a black woman there is a little chance he will be charged with the rape.

A leaflet put out at the conference in Canberra a few years ago by several aboriginal women stated:

If You Are Black And A Woman In Your Early Teens, Then You Have Probably Been Raped Once. If You Are Black And A Woman In Your Early Twenties, You Have Probably Been Raped 2 or 3 Times.

In many cases black women are raped by a policeman after he has arrested her for some minor or nonexistent offence. There is no one the women can turn to then.

Aboriginals want land: freehold title, sacred land, burial grounds. We want recognition of our aboriginality through maintaining our ties with the land. Governments continue to deny our very real ties with our land as an excuse to refuse land rights.

We are treated in life as second class citizens; knocked back from jobs while stereotyped rumors continue to circulate oppressing us more and more.

Education has long been used as a weapon against us. We must now use education to fight the white oppressors.

Nobody can combat racism in Australia better than a black person just as no one can combat sexism better than a woman.

We are both minority groups attempting to defend ourselves against the capitalist society which pushes us down and segregates us.

As feminists supporting the aboriginal struggle for land rights one must be aware of the Black struggle and understand the oppression everywhere among us; the oppression which has been forced on both aboriginal men and women.

Source: Girls' Own, Sydney Feminist Newspaper No. 12 August/September 1983, P.O. Box 188 Wentworth Building, Sydney University, 2006 Australia.

1993: "International Year of Indigenous Populations"

The world's indigenous people will be the focus of activity in 1993, the United Nations "International Year of Indigenous Populations."

Decreed by the U.N. General Assembly two years ago, the 1993 commemorative date is intended to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems facing indigenous people around the world, including human rights, environment, development, education and health.

