

Natives open 'embassy' of their own

CANBERRA. — Three young Aborigines have set up an "Aboriginal Embassy" on the lawns opposite Parliament House to protest against the Government's decision not to grant tribal land rights.

They hope about 100 Aborigines from all parts of Australia will join them in the next few weeks.

One of the Aborigines, Mike Anderson, 20, of Waggett, NSW, said yesterday the group planned to stay "indefinitely".

He said: "We mean business. We will stay until the Government listens to us."

Mike, who wearing a Black Power badge, is vice-chairman of the all-black NSW Aboriginal Lands Board, which seeks land ownership rights of reserves for Aborigines.

In his Australia Day statement on Aborigines the Prime Minister (Mr. McMahon) said the Government would not give Aborigines land rights on reserves based on traditional association.

Mike said the Aborigines would discuss a policy submission and put it to the Government.

He predicted that the Government's decision on land rights would lead to violence.

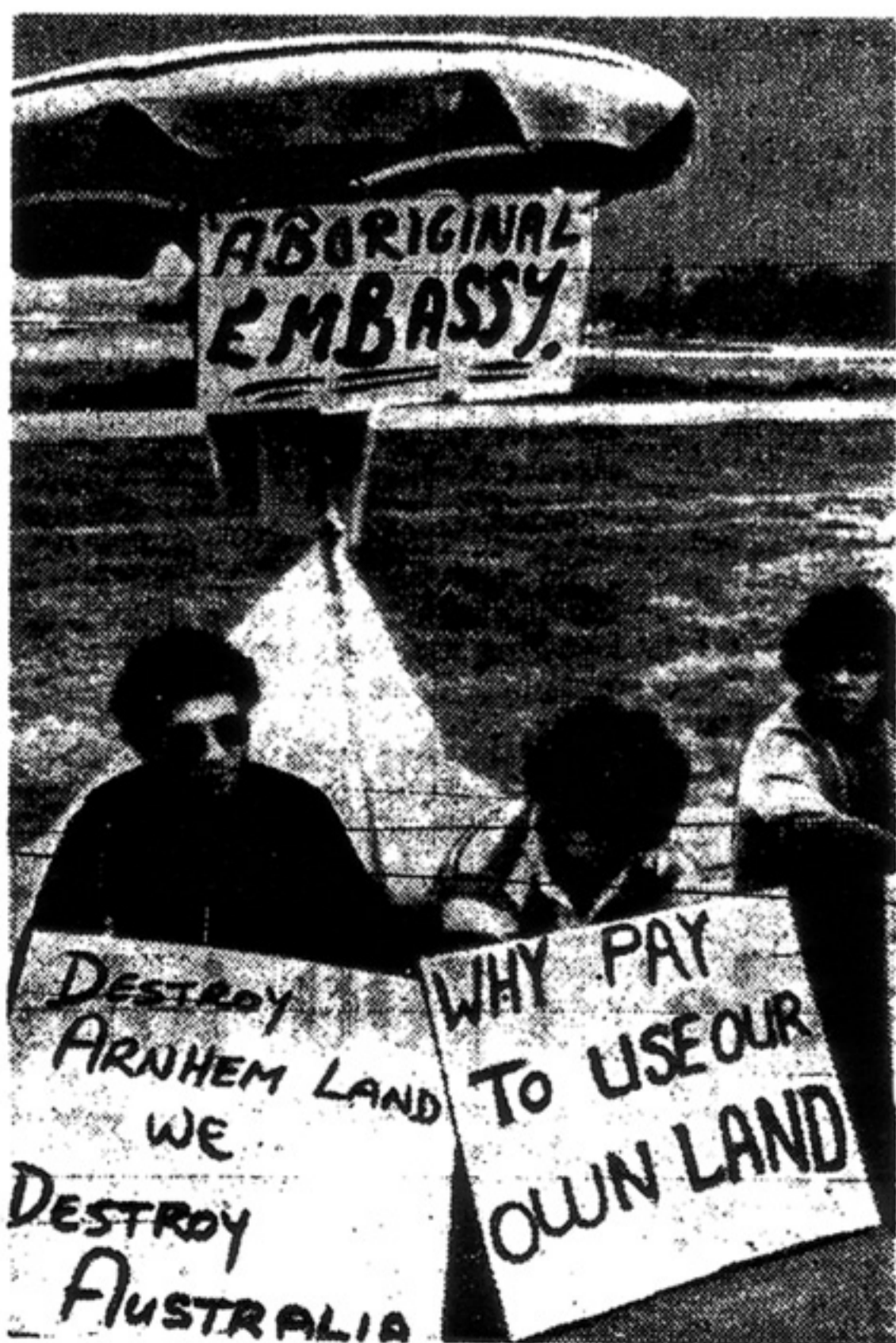
"If we destroyed a church we'd be put in prison, but when white men destroy a spiritual place like Arnhem Land we can't put them into prison," he said.

"I look to Arnhem Land as a place where we can start to dig our roots in and restore the pride of the Aboriginal culture. If they destroy that we have no place."

Notices outside Aborigines' red tent said "Why pay to use our own land?" and "Which do you choose — land rights or bloodshed?"

Mike said he was associated with "last-resort" minority organisations that would favor "getting out into the streets" and destroying something beyonding to the white man if he destroyed Arnhem Land.

He said Aborigines should be compensated for all the land outside the reserves that had been taken away from them. The compensation should be used to start a trust fund so Aborigines could buy back land they wanted.



Mike Anderson (left) with the other two founder-members of the "Aboriginal Embassy".