

Joan Wingfield vom Stamm der Kokotha kam aus einer Familie starker, wortgewaltiger Frauen. In Australien ist die Anti-Atom-Bewegung zu einem großen Teil eine indigene Bewegung. Alle Atombombenversuche der Briten fanden auf dem Land der Aborigines statt, alle Uranminen zerstören die Traumzeit und gefährden die kommenden Generationen. Bei der ersten NFFA-Preisverleihung vertrat Joan die Preisträgerin Yvonne Margarula.

Unser Freund Dave Sweeney, Mitarbeiter der Australian Conservation Foundation, schickte uns einen Nachruf :

*„Eine gute Seite hat die Atomindustrie: Wenn man ihr Widerstand leistet, trifft man herausragende Menschen. Joan gehörte ohne Zweifel dazu. Ich lernte Joan in den frühen Achtzigern bei Roxby Downs kennen, als die Western Mining Corporation den Ausbau der Olympic Dam Mine forcierte.*

*Western Mining wurde damals von Hugh Morgan geleitet; er war einer der Frontfiguren der Minengesellschaften, deren Ziel es war, Gesetze für die Landrechte der Ureinwohner zu Fall zu bringen. Es war die Zeit der Hinterzimmergeschäfte, der Eigeninteresse der Firmen, der gebrochenen Versprechungen, der Demonstrationen und der Bestechungsgelder – heute ist es nicht anders.*

*Joan strahlte aus ihrem Inneren und schuf sich in der Anti-Atombewegung schnell einen Ruf als leidenschaftliche und sprachgewandte Fürsprecherin für ihr Volk und für ihr Land. Sie war ein Mensch, dem man Respekt zollte, sie konnte aber auch zur Furie werden, wenn sie von ihren Mitstreitern enttäuscht wurde. Für jene von uns, die die ersten Prüfungen bestanden, war Joan eine treue Verbündete und teure Freundin.*

*Unsere Freundschaft vertiefte sich, als wir zusammen durch Europa reisten und auf Vorträgen über Geschichte des Uranabbaus sprachen und über die Auswirkungen auf Mensch, Kultur und Umwelt. Wir waren beim World Uranium Hearing gemeinsam auf dem Podium und fanden uns wieder auf einer Vortragstour durch Deutschland. Viele gute Erinnerungen stammen aus jenen Tagen: entspannte Spaziergänge durch den Schwarzwald, die Flagge der Aborigine vor dem Deutschen Bundestag. Dabei hat sie immer neue Verbindungen knüpft.*

*Sie war erfahren, beharrlich und großzügig. Gleichzeitig trug sie mit sich die Trauer und das Vermächtnis von Entwurzelung und Zwangsumsiedlung, und als die Zeiten härter wurden, wurde auch dieses Vermächtnis unerträglicher. In den letzten Jahren verloren wir den gegenseitigen Kontakt. Aber das ändert nichts daran, dass ich – wie viele in der Anti-Atombewegung in Australien und im Rest der Welt – für Joan immer einen besonderen Platz habe.*

*In einer verkrümmten, verbogenen Welt sprach sie gerade heraus. Gegenüber einer fragwürdigen Industrie leuchtete sie rein. Ihre Anstrengungen wurden hoch geschätzt. Sie wurde bewundert und geliebt.*

*Möge ihr Geist hoch schweben und dann in Leichtigkeit ruhen“.*

Auf dem World Uranium Hearing in Salzburg im September 1992 hielt Joan diesen Vortrag:

I'd like to start back in the 1950's, when the Kokotha people were forcedly removed from their lands because of the atomic bomb testing and because of the testing of the rockets at Woomera. At that time, the Kokotha and other Aboriginal Australians weren't citizens of the country, so we didn't have any rights. Because we weren't citizens that meant that we couldn't own land, it meant that we couldn't go to school, it meant that we couldn't get a job. So in 1966/67, there was a referendum where the Australian people voted to give us Aboriginal people citizenship rights. So, up until that stage we've been really powerless to do anything about our struggle. After that time we're still pretty powerless because we've had 150-odd years, 160-odd years to catch up on, learning on non-Aboriginal ways.

In 1991, the Kokotha became concerned about mining activities at Roxby Downs. And this is basically when the Kokotha started to get back together, because we were spread all over South Australia for thousands of miles. So the difficulty came to protect the sites at Roxby Downs because we weren't all in one group. We were separated all over South Australia. We went to the mining companies and to the South Australian Government and we told them that we had traditional interests in that area and that we'd like the sacred sites and the lands there protected. The government and the mining companies blamed us, the victims, for not being in that land. They said, you haven't lived in that area for so many years, you haven't maintained your cultural links with that land for so many years, so you haven't got a right to talk about Roxby Downs.

First of all, I'd like to say that 200-odd years do not give them the right to tell us that we have no right to talk about that land. It doesn't give them the right to deny us our cultural heritage, and I'm here to protect what's left, what hasn't been destroyed at Roxby Downs. I'm here to tell people that we have an interest at Maralinga even though it's been contaminated by the atomic bomb testing. According to South Australian law we had to help do the environmental impact statement, we had to do an anthropological complement. For a long time the government would not give us money to do this. When we eventually got it done, we had to have what we said in that report verified by a white anthropologist. In other words, we had to have a white anthropologist saying that what the Aboriginal people are saying about our sites and our lands is true. Which is a big insult! We know what we're talking about, we have always known that, we've passed it down from generation to generation, so why should we have a non-Aboriginal verifying that our culture and what we say about it is true? Well, they finally accepted it and the anthropologist said "yes", not surprising to us, but, yes, what we said was true.

Still today, our lands are being destroyed, our sites like the stone arrangements at Roxby Downs have been deliberately knocked over. Some of the stones went in the way of the mining operations, so it's quite obvious when you see heavy vehicle tracks leading up to the stones that the sole purpose of being in the area was to knock them over. In 1988 I went to British Petroleum. British Petroleum have 49 percent interest in Roxby Downs mining, and Western Mining Corporation have the other 51 percent. In 1988, I went to the British Petroleum annual general meeting and I asked the chairman if British Petroleum would knock down Stonehenge like they knocked down our stone arrangements for the sake of their mining operations. And the chairman of British Petroleum said to me that, of course, all nations have sacred sites, sites of importance, and that some would have to be sacrificed in the name of civilization. He then equated our cultural stories that go for thousands and thousands of years -- he equated them with a fairy story. He said that, well, for instance, they would be going to knock down Poo Corner, which is a fairytale -- fictional and it's only just recently been made up. Our stories go on for thousands and thousands of years, and to me, it was just indicative of the treatment of the Kokotha people and their fights at Roxby Downs.

In 1986, I went to Vienna to talk to the lobby of the International Atomic Energy Agency. I might say that we never actually got to meet them; we only had press releases, they did not want to know us, and even today they do not want to know what is happening to indigenous people. One thing about our culture which separates us from non-indigenous cultures, I think, is that with Aboriginal law the religion and the law are one and the same things, we cannot separate them. With non-indigenous

cultures you have the religion and the law, and quite [a few] of them, they don't marry up very well. And that's why companies, mining governments have been allowed to do what they do to indigenous people and to indigenous people's land and culture.

I'm a cultural heritage manager and I did this because, when Roxby was going ahead, of course a lot of our stuff wasn't documented. And so the mining companies used to excuse that: Because it wasn't documented we were just making it up at the last minute. They refused to recognize that our culture has been going on for thousands and thousands of years and they refused to recognize that we lived there before, that our ancestors lived in Australia before they did, and therefore, we have more rights. When I talk to non-Aboriginal Australians, they talk about four, five generations' worth and that they have a right, and I really get upset when they challenge to that right when I say I have thousands and thousands of generations of interest in this land. It almost gets down to a physical confrontation. They do not like it.

Our culture, because it's part of the religion, and the law is the same, is so important, not just for us, but for everybody in Australia and for the world. Unfortunately, the Aboriginal women's thought of the culture has been underrepresented. The sites at Roxby Downs that have been talked about in the past are mainly men's sites -- and I would like to apologize to the Aboriginal men, because in our tradition we don't really sort of talk about men's sites, especially women, and the men don't sort of have -- aren't allowed to talk about the women's sites, so that's totally separate. But the women have had a raw deal at Roxby Downs, that the sites there are very, very important, perhaps more important than the men's sites. The men have had anthropologists and experts going out mapping their sites, but the women haven't had much of that. We've had just a little of survey done, but really, there is a lot more that should and could be done.

I come from the desert, but I wanted to tell you that it's also our concern with the waters. The waters that we use is part of the great Artesian Basin that stretches over three states from New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland, Northern Territory. And a lot of the pastoral industry relies on that water. That's the water that is being contaminated because of the operations at Roxby Downs. So it's not just what's on top of the surface like the sacred stones and the sand hills and the plants and the animals. It's underneath this world, it's the water that is a vital importance, water is so important for all life that to contaminate that means that you are contaminating the life source of everything and anything on this planet.

So from 1981, when I went to Europe, to Britain, to talk about Sizewall, the nuclear power station on the coast of Britain, to 1986 talking at the International Atomic Energy Agency or lobbying them, from 1988 doing a tour of Germany, Scotland, Wales, England, going to Sweden, the Kokotha still haven't any more rights as what they did back, say, before 1966, before we were considered citizens of Australia.

We still care about our land, it's so important to us, it's part of us. We are part of the land, we come from there and when we die, we will go back to the land. We are responsible for [it], under traditional law we would be punished if we didn't look after it. Under traditional law that is our responsibility. I think it's about time that the non-Aboriginal peoples of the world started to change their ways. Maybe it should be more like our religion and our law where it's one and the same. Where you can't chop and change when it suits you. Sometimes it's all right, sometimes it's not. That's the way I see non-Aboriginal law. It's good when you want it to be, but you don't listen to us when you know that we have our rights.

I was taken away from my people when I was two years old and I lived in Adelaide separated from my brothers and sisters who also lived in Adelaide, and I just wanted to tell you that to prove to the governments, the atomic mafia and to other people who tried to prevent us from knowing our culture, that our culture, by all the hurdles that you put up, still survives, it's still strong and we want it to keep on going strong. You cannot stop us from learning our culture, you cannot stop what is right. It must be right. We have lived for thousands and thousands of years on that continent Australia, and

more damage's been done in the last 200 years to that land than in the whole time we've lived there. We want help, the Kokotha need help, we haven't got any lawyers, anthropologists, money, we didn't even have enough money to pay for a post office box where we could receive our mail from interested people who wanted to know about the Kokotha. So, we've been really powerless.

I'm disappointed that the Kokotha men couldn't come because they have their side of the story to talk about. But really, I'm glad that I'm here, because I can talk from the women's point of view. The women do have an interest there and we are very concerned about it. As women, we teach survival skills to our young children. I'm not sure what survival skills we can teach them now apart from saying: "No, we do not want uranium mining and we want you to clean up your mess!" We are responsible for that land. We will not be part of the war on that land. And we will not be part of the war on other peoples' lands and the plants and animals on this earth. If you don't listen to us there will be a cultural desert. If you don't listen to the indigenous people there will be a survival desert. We are just one little group on the planet, the Kokotha, we are not saying that our rights come before anybody else's, that we are more important than anybody else. What we are saying is, we are part of the planet. We have to do something along with everybody else and we want to know how to do, but we need help from you people.

I'd like to tell you a little bit about the dreaming stories: This Roxby Downs is part of "The Sleepy Lizard Dreaming Story", in our language we say "galda", stumpy-tail lizard. At Roxby, the main shaft, the Weenan shaft, goes right through the stomach of the lizard. At that shaft they mine uranium, the yellow cake, the gold, silver, copper, lead, all those minerals can be found in that area. When you open up the real lizard you find exactly the same colors as what you found deep down inside the earth. We didn't need big machinery, we didn't need the sinking shaft to know that those colors existed underneath the earth. So we have our wisdom as well as the technical wisdom, but because ours has been going on for so much longer we urge you to listen to indigenous peoples, and we want something to be done fast. I'm not sure what can be done, as I think the damage has been done. But I think we have to stop it right now.

That's all I've got to say.