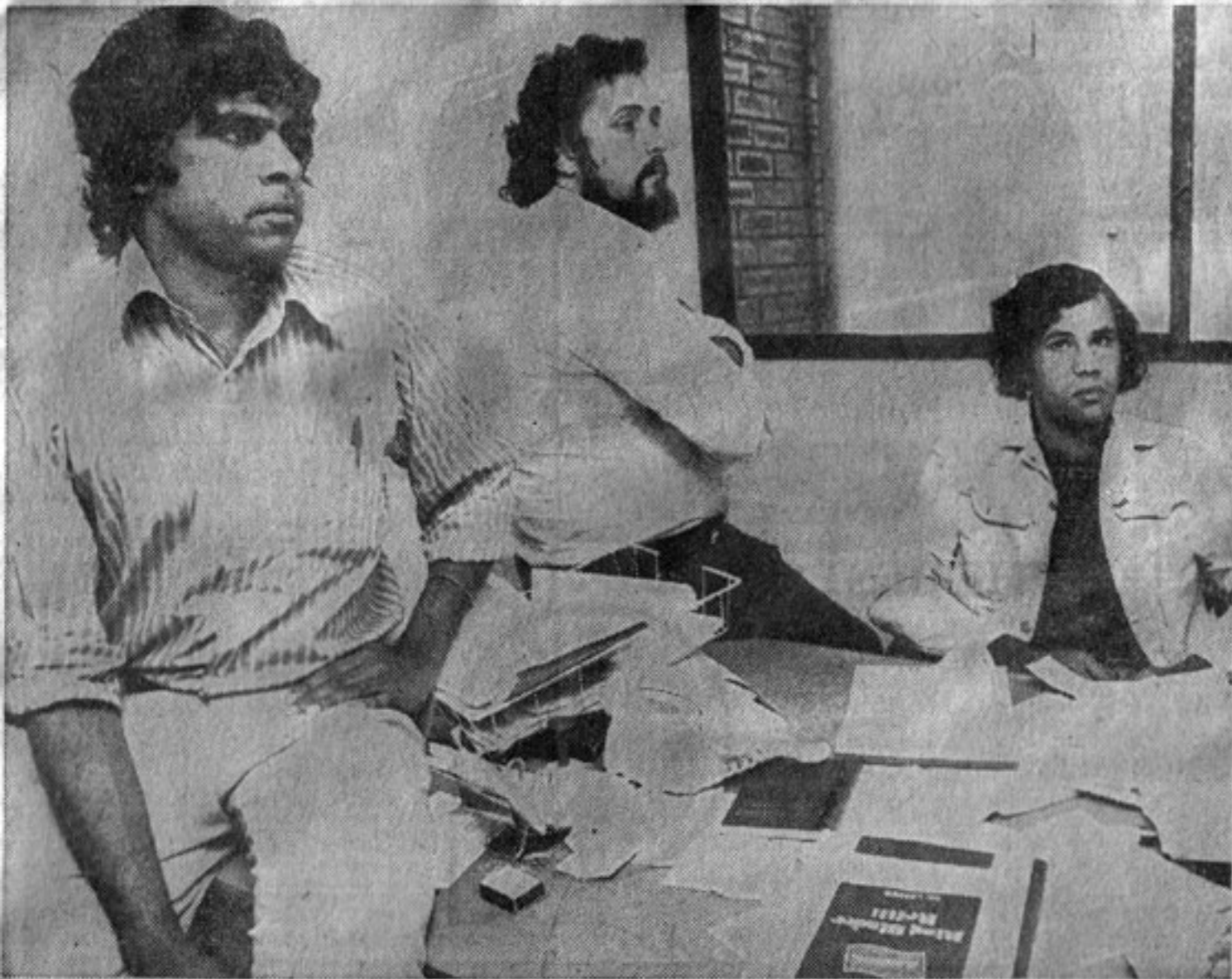


ABORIGINAL BODY COMPLAINS OF VICTIMISATION

Police 'trying to bust' legal service



From left, Mr Gary Williams, Mr Peter Tobin and Mr Paul Coe at the Aboriginal Legal Service offices yesterday.

Leading members of the NSW Aboriginal Legal Service said yesterday that its staff was being victimised by the police.

They demanded an end to "police warfare on Aborigines" and mass arrests.

Their claims and allegations, with a further demand for a Royal Commission into Aboriginal-police relations in NSW, were in a telegram to the Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam; the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Cavanagh; the NSW Premier, Mr Lewis; the NSW Minister of Justice and Attorney-General, Mr Maddison, and the NSW Police Commissioner Mr F. Hanson.

At their new administrative offices at Bondi Junction, officers of the service, which is funded by the Federal Government, gave instances of recent police activity they claim was directed against Aborigines.

"The most recent incident was the arrest of 12 Aboriginal people last Saturday night at the Empress Hotel in Redfern," the service's research officer, Mr Gary

"They were charged with being drunk, hindering police, assault, offensive behaviour and similar things.

"This came on top of another incident on April 19 when 11 people were arrested at the Cricketers Arms Hotel, Redfern."

Mr Williams said these were only examples. The service had details of many other incidents, especially in country areas.

"We feel that in these matters the police provoked the responses they got from the Aboriginal people," he said. "After provoking the response, they then used their authority to arrest them."

Mr Paul Coe, the vice-president of the service, said he believed the police were trying to stop people associating with it.

"We feel the police are deliberately trying to bust this organisation. The attitude of the police is to test this organisation and smash it.

"I heard the police complain that their taxes

defending black people.

"In the course of doing their job — arranging bail and such things — many of our staff people have been arrested on trumped-up charges."

A solicitor for the service, Mr Peter Tobin, said more than half the members of its council and staff had been arrested in the last few months.

"It's just absurd what goes on," he said. "The hallmark of all these things is that they wouldn't have happened if the police hadn't been there and provoked them.

"At times, you get a paddy-wagon outside a pub and they empty the whole bar into it."

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