

## Fight for Liberty and Freedom The origins of Australian Aboriginal activism

John Maynard

### ENDORSEMENTS

*One of the most naturally talented and promising Aboriginal writers whom I have had the good fortune to meet.* Peter Read

Professors Henry Reynolds, Heather Goodall and Ann Curthoys have provided positive comments.

### DESCRIPTION

*Give us a hand, stand by your own...and fight for liberty and freedom for yourself and your children.* Fred Maynard

Opposition to the British colonisation of Australia did not spring from the Mabo decision or the Native Title Act, nor was it born in the vibrant 1960s, which culminated in the famous tent embassy in 1972.

Rather, the first politically organised and united all-Aboriginal activist group was the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association (AAPA), begun in 1924 under the leadership of Frederick Maynard.

For the first time Aboriginal people voiced their disapproval in public in a well-organised way. They opened offices in Sydney, held street rallies, conducted public meetings, gained newspaper coverage, wrote letters and petitions to Government at all levels, and collaborated with the international black labour movement. The AAPA's demands resonate today. They centred on Aboriginal rights to land, stopping Aboriginal children being taken from their families, the acquisition of citizenship rights, and defending a distinct Aboriginal cultural identity.

This form of resistance and organised action has now endured for more than seventy years and through a detailed exploration of the life of his grandfather, John Maynard reveals the AAPA's invaluable legacy.

### AUTHOR(S)1

John Maynard is Professorial Chair and Head of the Wollotuka School of Aboriginal Studies at the University of Newcastle. His traditional roots lie with the Worimi people of Port Stephens, NSW. He has authored four books including *Aboriginal Stars of the Turf*.

### SELLING POINTS

- Reinforces that all-Aboriginal political activism began prior to the 1970s. It has a long history.
- Reveals the AAPA's contact with controversial African-American black activist Marcus Garvey.
- First investigation of Fred Maynard (the author's grandfather) and the AAPA.
- Author Professor at Newcastle Uni (NSW): highly motivated; well connected through history associations; has a good media profile; has advised on TV programs etc.

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