

The History Wars. By Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark. Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2003. 274 pp. NZ price: \$29.95. ISBN 0-5228-5091-X.

IT IS QUITE COMMON to visit Australia, glance at a copy of the *Australian* and find another front opened in the history wars. In 1997 Sean Brawley wrote in the electronic *Journal of Australian and New Zealand History* that it is hard to imagine that any historian in Australia is not now aware of the political implications of their craft'. John Howard had recently rewritten political history to emphasize Menzies' role and criticized Bob Hawke and Paul Keating for 'a form of historical correctness as a particular offshoot of political correctness'. The debates have continued. *The History Wars* had two printings in 2003 and now a second edition with an updated 'Afterword' has appeared.

The developments discussed by Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark in this book raise questions beyond Australia for scholarship as well as for the interaction of the public and historians. One chapter on the impact in the museum world uses a comparison with Te Papa. Macintyre's initial chapters on what historians do and what they say are beautifully clear and may provide food for thought in the New Zealand historical communities.

The special value of this book is that it places these issues in a wider context and a longer time frame. Macintyre discusses, for example, the US Republican attacks before the mid-nineties on the notion of a liberal education, their encouragement of patriotic history and use of the notion of 'political correctness'. He is able to provide a Cold War setting, showing the role played by the Australian Security and Intelligence Organization in securing the reversal of a unanimous decision of the selection committee at the emerging University of New South Wales to block the appointment of Russel Ward, author of a work which dominated studies of Australian nationalism until the 1970s. Similar attitudes persisted even into the 1990s with the allegations made, and later discredited, against Manning Clark.

One of the strengths of this book is the elucidation of the role of the media, conservative journals such as *Quadrant*, the *IPA Review* as well as the Sydney Institute headed by former speechwriter to John Howard, Gerard Henderson. Major historians became controversial, but they were never cardboard figures. Macintyre offers a careful and lively analysis of Clark and Blainey, two very different writers.

The Bicentenary of 1988 provided a case study of these elements. The Authority structuring the occasion to mark European settlement or invasion had been established in 1979; different agendas quickly emerged, some prefiguring later arguments. For example some participants campaigned, with *Quadrant*, for a commemoration of the First Fleet. The Authority historian, John Moloney, wrote a history of Australia largely omitting Aboriginal people which was consigned to the waters of Farm Cove, Sydney, by Aboriginal hands. Many historians contributed to more balanced writings such as Ken Inglis's handsome multi-volume slice history and the *People's History of Australia*.

Macintyre sees the Liberal Party as having lost its way in the decade after 1986, missing Menzies' attempt at a unifying belief system for Australians and embracing instead 'economic rationalism' which had little use for history. This left the way open for Keating as Prime Minister from 1991 (with an historical speech writer, Don Watson) to offer a coherent narrative criticizing the influence of British imperialism, but acknowledging in uncompromising terms Australian responsibility for the destruction of Aboriginal society.

In a famous 1992 speech at Redfern Park, Keating admitted 'We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life'. Macintyre remarks 'the Aboriginal audience was barely attentive (but) as he reached this passage a hush fell as if the listeners could scarcely believe their ears and when he finished the confession they burst into applause' (p.125). There followed legislation recognizing the continued existence of Native Title in areas of land and water, the report on the Stolen Generations and many

other attempts to redress injustices pointed out for many years before the government's admission. But in step with them there emerged, from the mid-nineties, an opposite reaction among the media, the conservative journals and the politicians. Howard was returned to power in 1996 with, on his right, Pauline Hanson's One Nation party, with whom the Liberal coalition had to compete. Howard claimed that 'people can now talk of certain things . . . without being branded a bigot or racist' (p.139). Administrative and legal changes followed, modifying earlier advances for Aboriginal people.

The book also addresses the history of the indigenous people in Australia. In 2000 Keith Windschuttle, a critic of historical methods then being taught in the universities, attacked in *Quadrant* the 'myths of frontier massacres', launching the most recent historical conflict in the media. Two years later he self-published a large volume, *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History*, that dealt with violent relations between the newcomers and Aboriginal people in Tasmania. It implied bad faith in the authors of prominent previous studies although suggested deficiencies in footnoting scarcely justified this. More, his approach to historical explanation was so limited (in omitting key sources and in the tendentious manipulation of statistics) that a collection of essays edited by Robert Manne (*Whitewash*, Melbourne, 2003) has effectively undermined its impact. Still, the book was welcomed by the same conservative interests that had previously been engaged in the History Wars.

New Zealand shares in its own way many of the issues addressed here. This is an admirable work where the subtleties and personal issues which must have been involved are handled with good humour and brio. The matter of political and ideological conflicts in the use of history makes this a book to be consulted by all historians concerned about their craft and their relationship with the wider society.

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Ngā Pikitiroa o Ngāi Tahu. By Rawiri Te Maire Tau. University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 2003. 290 pp. NZ price: \$49.95. ISBN 1-877276-27-8.

DURING AN OPEN LECTURE at the University of Otago in 1994, Joe Pere said that there are no iwi histories, only hapū histories. His assertion is demonstrated in Te Maire Tau's history of Ngāi Tahu from the perspective of Ngāi Tūahuriri hapū (of Tuahiwi, near Kaiapoi) as, despite Tau's assertion that 'it is not the primary purpose of this book to construct a Ngāi Tahu history' (p.15), *Ngā Pikitūroa o Ngāi Tahu* is certainly historical in its focus. Readers should be aware that there are other valid versions of some of the stories and various other points made, something not explained in the book; in particular, the unqualified statement that 'It is through Tutekawa's children that Ngāi Tahu may claim their links to Ngāti Māmoē and Waitaha' (p.194). This may be true for Ngāi Tūahuriri but does not apply to the entire iwi, and is certainly not the case in respect to this reviewer.

Ngā Pikitūroa exemplifies the problems that Māori authors have in finding competent academic publishers. There are a number of technical errors that would not normally appear in non-Māori publications. For example, many whakapapa show a vertical descent line from one generation to the next running from the '=' (denoting marriage) of the former generation, to the '=' of the descendant generation, whereas the line should denote which of the marital pair descends from the couple above. Deficiencies of proof-reading, too, detract from the end-product: the map on p.12 shows Tuahiwi due south of Kaiapoi but it is correctly located southwest of Kaiapoi on p.14; also on p.12, the Waiau Toa (Clarence River) is depicted subscribing an elongated 's' shape and rising well to the north of its