Sean Scalmer

Stuart Macintyre (1947–2021): New Left Historian of Australia and Britain

Stuart Macintyre was one of the most gifted and productive historians of the New Left generation. He made the bulk of his career at the University of Melbourne, Australia, and wrote mostly on Australian history. But his first two works were distinguished and influential contributions to the history of British communism and his significant international reputation was registered in his appointment as an editor of *The Oxford History of Historical Writing, Volume 4*.[1] Readers of *Moving the Social* will therefore note his passing, with regret, and will benefit from considering his remarkable achievements.

Macintyre was a child of Melbourne's upper middle-class. His father returned from war service to found a successful business (and lectured in Management at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology). His maternal grandfather had been a Congregationalist Minister, and his parents had met at a Church social. Macintyre was raised in comfortable circumstances in the pleasant suburb of Hawthorn. He attended one of Melbourne's most prestigious private Schools, Scotch College, where his love of history was nurtured by a fine teacher, David Webster.[2] He then passed to Ormond College at the University of Melbourne, where he quickly won attention for his tremendous talents and his irregular attendance of university classes. From this point, Macintyre's education then followed the time-worn path of talented scholars from the antipodes: an Honours and a Masters degree in Melbourne; a doctoral degree in Oxbridge, at the University of Cambridge.

The passage from one academic laurel to another obscures a growing political consciousness. Macintyre took from his mother's religious traditions a concern with social justice, deepened by the influence of R.H. Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*.[3] His mother voted for the Labor Party, just as his father supported the conservatives; family discussions provoked his interest. Macintyre's middle-class suburb also abutted the industrial suburb of Richmond, and his local federal member of parlia-

---

1   Stuart Macintyre, Juan Maiguascha and Attila Pok, eds., *The Oxford History of Historical Writing. Volume 4, 1800–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

2   As Macintyre emphasized in "Q&A with Stuart Macintyre," with the Australian Historical Association, https://ahaecr.wordpress.com/2018/06/13/qa-with-stuart-macintyre/

3   Macintyre notes the influence of Tawney's work in "Q&A with Stuart Macintyre."

ment was Australia's leading left-wing politician, Dr Jim Cairns. Macintyre entered the University of Melbourne in 1965, just as a conservative government committed Australian troops to war in Vietnam, including military conscripts. Inspired partly by the American Civil Rights movement, Australian University students also began to protest in support of Aboriginal rights at this time; the mood on university campuses shifted leftward.

Reflecting these diverse influences, Macintyre joined the Labor Club at the University of Melbourne. But his activities in student politics were always tempered by a great interest in working-class politics. He read widely in Marxism, and in 1971 he joined the Communist Party of Australia. His first major undertaking was to collaborate on a new journal, *Intervention*, that sought to deepen theoretical discussion on the Australian Left, and especially to stimulate engagement with the work of Lukács, Gramsci and Althusser. The influence of Perry Anderson's reshaped *New Left Review* was palpable.

New Left Review had published Gareth Stedman Jones' evisceration of his elders, "The Pathology of English History," in 1967. This was an obvious inspiration, as was Perry Anderson's "The Origins of the Present Crisis" (1964).[4] Following these leads, Macintyre offered in *Intervention* an equivalent critique of earlier forms of left-wing historiography in Australia in his first published article, "Radical History and Bourgeois Hegemony" (1972).

Like Anderson and Stedman Jones, Macintyre came not to praise, but to bury. History in Australia, as in Britain, was apparently a compound of "scientistic empiricism" and "moralism."[5] The first generation of history teachers at Australian universities had not sought to understand "the lived past" and had limited their labours to "moral instruction based on established texts."[6] Their successors had reinforced "bourgeois hegemony" by such devices as an "inculcation of reverence for the founding fathers" and a preoccupation with "freedom of the will."[7] The radicals who protested the orthodoxy were politically courageous but intellectually stunted. They had narrowed their attention to labour and popular history rather than grappling with the more complicated field of "class relations."[8] Their "undialectical" and "mechanistic" approach to class offered "moral outrage" in place of serious social analysis."[9] They had failed to adequately consider the "racialist element in the Australian radical tra-

---

4   Macintyre has noted this influence in his contribution to "What is History? Historiography Roundtable," *Rethinking History*, vol. 22, no. 4, 2018, 515.

5   Stuart Macintyre, "Radical History and Bourgeois Hegemony," *Intervention*, no. 2, (1972): 50.

6   Macintyre, "Radical History," 48.

7   Macintyre, "Radical History," 50, 52.

8   Macintyre, "Radical History," 65–6.

9   Macintyre, "Radical History," 67–9.

dition."[10] A new kind of history was needed: based on a new "problematic";[11] guided by a concern with the "Marxist concept of totality";[12] devoted to the study of "class interrelationships and their determining factors."[13]

The tone was especially sharp, and is a notable contrast with Macintyre's mature posture in later scholarly exchanges; he would become much more pluralistic and concerned to observe civilities. But the continuities are as striking as the differences. Macintyre's first published work is animated by three characteristics that would typify his later career: a concern to use history as a means to understand and change the present; a commitment to enlarge the scope of traditional labour history; and a concern with the context of intellectual work. He would explore these themes through nineteen monographs; more than twenty-five edited books; and scores of minor publications, book chapters and journal articles. They ranged from *A Proletarian Science: Marxism in Britain 1917–1933* (1980) a reworked version of his prize-winning thesis at Cambridge, to *The Party* (2022), a study of the Communist Party of Australia, from its heyday in World War II to its decline in the 1970s. They spanned studies of radical history, labour history, the history of liberalism, biography, historiography, and the history of universities and the social sciences.

The first abiding characteristic of Macintyre's scholarship was a confidence in the capacity of historical study to connect past, present and future. In his first published work, Macintyre expressed a desire to win "an understanding of the present situation."[14] He turned to "history" in the belief that it enabled such understanding. He traced the changing contexts of historical writing in Australia. And he drew upon this historical account so as to ground an analysis of contemporary constraints and opportunities.

Macintyre would deploy this method across his career. Interviewed by early career researchers as a retired eminence, he reflected: "I retain that earlier aspiration to understand cause and effect, what happened and why it happened. I see history as an essential component of understanding public affairs."[15] Macintyre's first synoptic examination of Australian society, *Winners and Losers: the pursuit of social justice in Australian history* (1985), was quite self-consciously composed as a combination of historical analysis and political intervention. In this book he did not simply trace the history of the concept of "social justice," but declared "I want to argue that it

---

10 Macintyre, "Radical History," 62.
11 Macintyre, "Radical History," 72.
12 Macintyre, "Radical History," 67.
13 Macintyre, "Radical History," 69.
14 Macintyre, "Radical History," 48.
15 See "Q&A with Stuart Macintyre."

still possesses current relevance."[16] He did not just narrate a story of contest, advance and constraint, but aspired to "suggest how the weight of the past still presses on us today."[17] His study of attempts to construct education as a "ladder of opportunity" quite pointedly terminated with a critique of the then ruling Labor Government and a forthright statement that "A government even as nervous as this one about electoral consequences could abate the inequality of education by sticking to just a few minimal principles."[18]

A similar confidence in the analytical capacity of "history" illuminated Macintyre's entire career. His two books on history of communism in Australia—*The Reds* (1998) and *The Party* (2022)—might be considered as critical meditations on what could be salvaged from that inspiring but flawed political quest. His study of post-war reconstruction—*Australia's Boldest Experiment* (2015)—has resonated very powerfully over recent years, and has been especially influential among reforming Labor politicians. This is because it wrestles with urgent contemporary concerns: how might the State take action to correct the instabilities and inequalities of a market economy; how might an atmosphere of national emergency variously enable and constrain experiments in State intervention. Likewise, his books on Australian universities—notably *Life After Dawkins* (2016) and *No End of a Lesson* (2017)—sought to use history to better understand the transformation of higher education and the possibilities of alternative paths. *The Poor Relation* (2010), for its part, was a history of the social sciences in Australia that aimed to comprehend the relative failure of Australian governments to support such research, but also an effort to challenge such habits.

A second characteristic of Macintyre's "Radical History and Bourgeois Hegemony" also became a recurrent feature of his later contributions. This was a determination to reshape the traditional field of "labour history" and to offer in its place an enlarged form of historical investigation. The Australian labour movement's founding generation of the late nineteenth century had composed works of memoir and history.[19] These had been succeeded by penetrating historical studies by freelance radical intellectuals, such as Brian Fitzpatrick, and by labour-movement intellectuals who would later win a place in the universities, such as the famed prehistorian, V.G. Childe. In the 1950s and early 1960s, a generation of wartime Communists had entered the universities and had managed to establish "labour history" as an accepted sub-discipline.

16   Stuart Macintyre, *Winners and Losers: The Pursuit of Social Justice in Australian History* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1985), xiii.
17   Macintyre, *Winners and Losers*, xiii.
18   Macintyre, *Winners and Losers*, 117.
19   For example: W.E. Murphy, *History of the Eight Hours Movement, Volume I* (Melbourne: Spectator Publishing, 1896); W.G. Spence, *Australia's Awakening: Thirty Years in the Life of an Australian Agitator* (Sydney: Worker Trustees, 1909).

Macintyre rejected three defining elements of these earlier works. First, their relatively narrow concern with institutional politics (especially the internal character of the Labor Party and the Communist Party). Second, their treatment of key institutions as carriers of relatively unbroken traditions—notably "labourism" (variously defined) for the Labor Party and the trade unions, and revolutionary communism for the Communist Party. Third, their attempt to connect these traditions to a mythical (and largely positive) account of the Australian character and Australian political culture. Macintyre substituted for this restricted approach a much more expansive treatment of "the Left." His early works on British labour history explicitly rejected a widespread tendency to conflate labour history with the "history of institutions." Far from assuming such an identity, they closely examined the shifting ties between institutions and working-class communities. This was a project pursued most fully in Macintyre's pioneering study of three British mining and industrial centres that became strongholds of interwar communism, *Little Moscows*.[20]

The historian's subsequent works ranged still more widely. They considered the period that ran from the mid-19th century until the near present. They examined not only leading figures of the Labor and Communist Parties, but also creative interpreters of "liberalism" (as evident in the work, *A Colonial Liberalism* [1991]), trade union militants (as evident in the biography *Militant: The Life and Times of Paddy Troy* [1984]), reformist bureaucrats of the 1940s (in *Australia's Boldest Experiment* [2015]) and civil libertarians (analyzed in *Liberty: A History of Civil Liberties in Australia* [2011]).

Macintyre did not present his key protagonists as embodiments of unchanging traditions, but rather as creative reinterpreters of complex political ideas. *A Colonial Liberalism* established how liberals in nineteenth-century Australia rethought a traditional opposition to State action and came to recognize the value of expanded State intervention to meet their political purposes and ambitions. *A Proletarian Science* (1980) traced the rise of what he called "two relatively systematic ideologies" in the British Left over the 1920s: "Marxism" and "Labour Socialism."[21] It is a work inspired by the "sheer energy and determination" of "self-taught worker-intellectuals."[22]

This sensitivity to the intellectual richness of working-class politics is evident in other work. Macintyre's study of the foundational years of the Australian Labor Party, *The Labour Experiment* (1989) denied that the Australian movement was "lacking principles" and "bereft of theory"[23] (then the dominant view), though he also traced the incapacity of Labor's founding ideas to meet the overwhelming force of class rela-

20   Stuart Macintyre, *Little Moscows: Communism and Working-class Militancy in Inter-war Britain* (London: Croom Helm, 1980). On institutions: p.19.
21   Stuart Macintyre, *A Proletarian Science: Marxism in Britain 1917–1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908), 49.
22   Macintyre, *A Proletarian Science*, 71.
23   Stuart Macintyre, *The Labour Experiment* (Melbourne: McPhee Gribble, 1989), 35.

tions and the State. *Winners and Losers* examined the changing ways in which advocates of "social justice" reimagined this influential concept from the early nineteenth century until the later 1980s: first, as an expression of the inalienable rights of a free-born Englishman; then to the right to a living wage; thence to the right to work; and eventually to an acknowledgement that "citizenship" and universal entitlements were insufficient to meet the rightful claims of women and of First Nations peoples. *The Reds* traced the shifting ways in which the Bolshevik model of the revolutionary party came to be understood and pursued in a changing Australia. *The Party* went on to consider the slow recognition of the limits of this model and the attempt to practice a new form of Communist politics. In these and other studies Macintyre unveiled a much more pluralist and dynamic "Left" than had been evident in most earlier work. He did not champion of a single "tradition," but on the contrary explored a variety of attempts to understand and combat injustice. He acknowledged the role of mainstream politics, but challenged the "institutionalised consensus" that change "proceeds from the centre," emphasizing rather the necessity of "vigorous tributaries and turbulent eddies that feed it and impel it onwards."[24]

These studies also developed a much more historical understanding of the process of political change. In Macintyre's hands, Australians embarked upon a series of distinct and identifiable political projects, challenged existing inequalities, met resistance as well as partial incorporation, and were blunted and exhausted in this contentious process. Though of the Left, Macintyre recognized the "creative energy" of Australian Liberals and their formative role in establishing distinctive Australian measures, such as compulsory conciliation and arbitration of industrial disputes and the guarantee of a living wage for all white men. Nonetheless, he adjudged that political "energy" as "largely exhausted" by the later 1920s.[25] Likewise, Macintyre's respect for the impulses that animated post-war reconstruction—and his belief in their enduring import—reverberate through the pages of *Australia's Boldest Experiment*. And yet he also argues that by 1949 "The impetus for reconstruction was clearly spent."[26]

Macintyre's historical perspective on the rhythms of political change was also an injunction to contemporary experiment and challenge. He put this view directly in his *Overland* lecture of 2001: "'Temper Democratic, Bias Australian': One Hundred Years of the Australian Labor Party." Delivered at a moment in which neoliberalism still sat high in the saddle, he argued that Australian Labor needed less "surrender to binding

24   Stuart Macintyre, *Militant: The Life and Times of Paddy Troy* (North Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1984), 220–1.

25   Stuart Macintyre, "Whatever Happened to Deakinite Liberalism?," in *Confusion: The Making of the Australian Two-Party System*, edited by Paul Strangio and Nick Dyrenfurth (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2009), 232.

26   Stuart Macintyre, *Australia's Boldest Experiment: War and reconstruction in the 1940s* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2015), 459.

orthodoxy" and "more improvisation": "A democratic temper is sorely in need of revival."[27] He had the courage to make a similar argument in an address to the federal conference of the Australian Labor Party, "Who Are the True Believers?": "You cannot treat the traditions of the Party as a form of political capital unless you maintain and renew those traditions; and this involves something more than a celebration of pragmatism […] True believers need beliefs."[28]

Macintyre's arguments and his significance were most obvious to students of Australian history. Nonetheless, his methodological contributions were incisive and somewhat original in their challenge to institutional labour history. They will also be of interest to many readers of *Moving the Social*, as they demonstrate a fecund attempt to draw upon traditions of Marxist history, to respond to the rich contributions of the British Marxist historians, but also to imbue their approaches with distinctive emphases.

Macintyre wrote under the clear influence of the Marxist intellectual tradition, and particularly the inspiring examples of Perry Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm (the latter examined his doctoral thesis). As a postgraduate student in Cambridge, and then as a postdoctoral fellow, he played an active role in collective efforts to develop Marxist historical research.[29] As such, he sought from the early 1970s to write a history that could comprehend "totality" (a privileged term in his first published essay) and that considered the interrelationship of multiple structures of power and resistance. His capacity to work on this large canvas underpinned his prize-winning general histories of Australia. It was particularly evident in his contribution to the Oxford History of Australia, his book *1901–1942: The Succeeding Age*, though also evident in his *Concise History of Australia* for Cambridge University Press (a work of such excellence that it ran to five editions).

But Macintyre also wrote in the aftermath of Edward Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class*. In a notable essay of 1978, "The Making of the Australian Working Class" (the mirroring of the title very obvious), he emphasized especially Thompson's "theoretical influence," arguing that "Thompson redefined class for labour historians and opened their eyes to areas of analysis that had previously been neglected."[30] This was not simply rhetorical. Macintyre's work always reflected Thompson's

27   Stuart Macintyre, "Temper Democratic, Bias Australian": One Hundred Years of the Australian Labor Party," *Overland*, no. 162 (Autumn 2001): 11–2.

28   Stuart Macintyre, "Who Are the True Believers?," *Labour History*, no. 68 (May 1995): 166–7.

29   Themes taken up in: Geoff Eley, "What happened in the 1970s?" and Kevin Morgan, "Stuart Macintyre and British Communism," in *The Work of History: Writing for Stuart Macintyre*, edited by Peter Beilharz and Sian Supski (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2022).

30   Stuart Macintyre, "The Making of the Australian Working Class: An Historiographical Survey," *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand*, vol. 18, no. 71 (1978): 233.

elevation of the concept of "experience" as a mediating force between "structure" and "consciousness," as well as his practical emphasis on "experience" as a central feature of compelling historical narrative.

Macintyre's work therefore connected both the structural impulse associated with Hobsbawm and others and the experiential impulse associated with Thompson.[31] It was unusual for the author's capacity to move back and forth between the registers of "individual experience" (with all of its complexity and variety) and of social, political and economic process. Macintyre's study of *The Succeeding Age*, for example, begins (unconventionally for a general history) with a chapter entitled "Some Australians" that provides a biography of five individuals. He shows how these individuals "were separated not just geographically, but by firm economic and social boundaries."[32] He then used his close analysis of their experiences to identify what he called "common social structure."[33] Likewise, Macintyre's histories of the Communist Party are punctuated by carefully observed and sometimes affecting biographical close-ups of Communist leaders and rank-and-filers. And his contribution to the history of the Australian Labor Party's federal caucus, *True Believers*, is a revealing prosopography of the first Labor men elected to federal parliament.[34]

These biographical treatments reflected Macintyre's talent for observation (obvious to anyone with whom he shared conversation) and his interest in human complexity. They also reflected the influence of Macintyre's spouse—the distinguished anthropologist, Martha Macintyre—for there was something of the ethnographer in the historian's thick descriptions of working-class activists, of their rituals and their habits. Whatever the origins of this biographical and experiential emphasis, its imprint on Macintyre's work was significant and distinctive. It helped the historian to escape the snare of over-abstraction without ever losing the insights of social and political analysis. And it gave his narratives an enviable richness that won him a wide audience.

Macintyre also published several outright biographies. These shared his capacity to move between the general and the particular, even if their framing was more overtly personal. His study of Western Australian union leader, Paddy Troy was presented not simply as a striking portrait of an individual but also as a model of a "distinctive strand of the Australian Labour movement, that of the militant." Through his rich examination of Paddy's life, Macintyre was able to articulate the key dimensions of that model of the militant: "proud of their occupational skills, intensively class-conscious, suspicious of all compromise […] Their rejection of pragmatism is grounded in a

31   Macintyre notes the influence of both in "Q&A with Stuart Macintyre."
32   Stuart Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia, vol. 4: 1901–1942: The Succeeding Age* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1986), 21.
33   Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia,* 24.
34   Stuart Macintyre and John Faulkner, eds., *True Believers: The Story of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party* (Crow's Nest: Allen and Unwin, 2001).

developed view of society, usually strengthened by self-education and a corresponding sense of historical mission."[35]

Similarly, Macintyre's portraits of three leading public figures in 19th century Victoria—George Higinbotham, Charles Pearson and David Syme—was framed not merely as a study of three connected lives, but more abstractly as an examination of *A Colonial Liberalism*.[36] Even Macintyre's biography of a distant predecessor as Professor of History at the University of Melbourne, Ernest Scott, bore the revealing title *A History for a Nation*. Here the method of biography provided a means to interrogate the rise of "Australian history" as an academic enterprise.[37]

The pursuit of biography leads its serious practitioners to an appreciation of the necessary entanglement of circumstance and agency, personal self-fashioning and contextual constraint. "We make history, not under circumstances of our own choosing, but in circumstances directly encountered and given from the past," to paraphrase Karl Marx from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. Macintyre returned periodically to Marx's historical essays (he noted that they "repay rereading");[38] his own understanding of the struggles of the Left reflected this abiding wisdom. In the first pages of his history of the Communist Party, *The Reds*, he deprecated party histories that "treat the fortunes of communism as a reflex of appropriate endeavour."[39] While he was justifiably critical of many aspects of Communist practice and much of the Party's strategy, he was too wise and too empathetic an historian to assume that there were always adequate answers to the dilemmas and the challenges thrown up by the past.

Macintyre's study of *The Labour Experiment* was a severe examination of the weaknesses of Labor's policies in the first half of the twentieth century: their unwillingness to fundamentally challenge divisions of labour and gender; their ultimate failure to abolish pronounced inequality; their inability even to provide a reliable safeguard against unemployment and poverty.[40] But even here he was conscious of the great difficulties the first Laborites faced. As Macintyre pointed out, the Australian Labor Party's precocious political success—it held minority national government from 1904 and majority national government from 1910—meant that it was forced to try to solve pressing social problems long before its Social Democratic counterparts overseas.

---

35   Macintyre, *Militant*, 221.

36   Stuart Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism: the lot world of three Victorian visionaries* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1991).

37   Stuart Macintyre, *A History for a Nation: Ernest Scott and the Making of Australian History* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1994).

38   As noted in "Q&A with Stuart Macintyre."

39   Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds: The Communist Party of Australia from Origins to Illegality* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1998), 5.

40   Macintyre, *Winners and Losers*, 63–4.

When they began to develop more effective policies, over the 1930s, Australian labour was "committed to policies it was difficult to abandon."[41]

Australia's Boldest Experiment is the obvious successor to Macintyre's study of Labor's first five decades. Here he notes how an "unprecedented national emergency" opened up "new possibilities" for political change and how "many were grasped before the moment passed."[42] Reforming Laborites and intellectuals would not have chosen to return to office only as a great world-historical struggle between fascism and its alternatives teetered this way and that. But they were able to pursue what Macintyre called a "distinctive Australian design of reconstruction" in the teeth of this crisis, and to thereby establish the foundations of greater prosperity and greater equality in the decades that followed.[43]

A career focused simply upon enlarging the field of labour history in Britain and Australia would have constituted an appreciable life's achievement. Macintyre was unusually wide-ranging and productive, however, and he also made important contributions to historiography and to the history of ideas, broadly defined. Again, this interest was imprinted upon Macintyre's first published work, "Radical History and Bourgeois Hegemony." Again, he there developed an original approach that he would carry across his subsequent career.

Macintyre's first foray into historiography was clearly inspired by Marxist scholarship, and especially by Althusser's specific insights. The young Macintyre advocated historical studies animated by "the Marxist concept of totality," and his rejection of economism and idealism was accompanied by a desire to examine "class interrelationships and their determining factors."[44] These inclinations persisted. In his later commentary on the scholarship of fellow New Leftists, "The Making of the Australian Working Class" (1978), Macintyre identified an unhelpful tendency to treat "consciousness" as the "ultimate criterion of class."[45] He urged more careful attention to the construction of a national economy, the character of Australian capitalism, and the social basis of racism and imperialism.[46] His prize-winning general history that formed volume four of the *Oxford History of Australia, 1901–1942: The Succeeding Age* (1986), reaffirmed a desire to grasp relationships "in their totality": "material" practices, "social" practices, political mobilizations.[47] This granted his narrative ac-

41   Macintyre, *Winners and Losers*, 65.
42   Macintyre, *Australia's Boldest Experiment*, 15.
43   Macintyre, *Australia's Boldest Experiment*, 472.
44   Macintyre, "Radical History," 67, 69.
45   Stuart Macintyre, "The Making of the Australian Working Class: An Historiographical Survey," *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 18, no. 71 (1978): 248.
46   Macintyre, "The Making," 249–51.
47   Stuart Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia, Volume 4. 1901–1942: The Succeeding Age* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1986).

counts an intimidating breadth. But this same sensibility meant that when he turned to the work of intellectuals—especially historians—he necessarily placed it in a fully realized context.

Macintyre's writings on historiography were moored in a deep understanding of their institutional environment. A historian of the Australian University, he was able to illuminate the possibilities and confinements of this place of work: the arduous rounds of teaching, for Australia's first Professors of History; the expectation that one might contribute to public affairs; the persistent superintendence of State authorities, including the security services. In his attention to the resources available for research—archives, jobs, scholarships, journals—he was able to trace its growth, its increasingly national perspective, and its less gratifying tendency to specialization.[48] Macintyre went further. In rich analyses of particular historians, he was also able to demonstrate how creative individuals sought to negotiate their changing circumstances, sometimes successfully, though sometimes less so. These included illuminating studies of leading academic historians such as Keith Hancock and Max Crawford.[49]

But Macintyre's capacity to place the historian in their context perhaps yielded the most startling results in his treatment of those writers less fully integrated into the world of the University. He showed how the first scholarly research in Australian history by Ernest Scott reflected a quest for authority (buttressed by a turn to von Ranke) and a desire to hold an audience outside of academia (reflected in a belief that "history" was a form of romance).[50] Likewise, his analysis of the work of freelance radical historian, Brian Fitzpatrick (the father of noted Soviet historian, Sheila Fitzpatrick), demonstrated how his intellectual momentum was stalled from the 1940s by the hostility of the cultural and political environment.[51] A similar capacity to locate careers

---

48   On how increasing resources underpinned "a much stronger national perspective": Stuart Macintyre, "Historical Writing in Australia and New Zealand," in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing. Volume 4, 1800–1945*, edited by Stuart Macintyre, Juan Maiguascha and Attila Pok (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 425. For critical references to specialisation see: Tyson Retz and Stuart Macintyre, "The Honours Conception of History," *History Australia*, vol. 15, no. 4 (2018): 808.

49   On Hancock: Stuart Macintyre, "'Full of Hits and Misses': A Reappraisal of Hancock's *Australia*," in *Keith Hancock: The Legacies of an Historian* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2001). On Crawford: Stuart Macintyre, "The Making of a School," in *Making History* (Fitzroy: McPhee/Gribble, 1985), 3–33.

50   Stuart Macintyre, "Ernest Scott: My History is a Romance," in *The Discovery of Australian History, 1890–1939*, edited by Stuart Macintyre and Julian Thomas (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), 71–90 and Stuart Macintyre, *A History for a Nation: Ernest Scott and the Making of Australian History* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1994). On his absence of expertise, p.34.

51   Stuart Macintyre, "The Radical and the Mystic: Brian Fitzpatrick, Manning Clark and Australian History," in *Against the Grain: Brian Fitzpatrick and Manning Clark in Australian His-*

against the background of their circumstances was also evident in Macintyre's revealing studies of the two dominant Australian historians of the period that ran from the 1960s through to the 1980s, Geoffrey Blainey and Manning Clark.[52]

Macintyre's interest in the relationships between context and historical writing perhaps made him especially sensitive to changes in that context during his own lifetime. In the early 1980s, the Australian right launched a "culture war" against the rise of left-wing interpretations of history and politics. Macintyre traced these developments in a prescient 1983 study, "Manning Clark's Critics." Here he noted the rise of critics of history from outside the profession: journalists, amateur historians, sociologists,[53] publishing in the house journals of right-wing thinktanks or in the conservative press. The new critics were "ideologues," anxious to redefine national identity for "conservative ends."[54] Their impact on Australian historians would be more fully explored in Macintyre's book-length study of 2003 (featuring a chapter by Anna Clark), *The History Wars*.

Written against the background of a right-wing polemicist's accusations of the "fabrication" of Aboriginal history (a claimed inflation of Aboriginal deaths in massacres), *The History Wars* places these conflicts in a longer historical and political perspective. Macintyre draws on thirty years of writing on Australian historians to investigate growing public conflicts over Australia's past. In his assessment, these "History Wars" should be distinguished from the necessary and perennial impulse to rewrite the past. The latter is an accepted aspect of research and debate, regulated by collegial inspection, academic honesty and intellectual fair dealing.[55] The former is animated by a Manichean vision and a vigilant resolution against a hateful enemy.[56] It is distinguished by the prevalence of ad hominem attack. It is inspired by an anxiety over the "politicization of history," though its prosecutors are themselves "advocates of a partisan political cause."[57] Its primary arenas are "extra-curricular."[58]

tory and Politics, edited by Stuart Macintyre and Sheila Fitzpatrick (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2007), 12–36.

52   On Blainey: Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark, *The History Wars* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003), Chapter 5. See also "The Making of a School," 27–32. On Clark: Stuart Macintyre, ""Always a pace or two apart"," in *Manning Clark: Essays on his Place in History*, edited by Carl Bridge (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1994), 17–29. See also: Stuart Macintyre, "Manning Clark's Critics," *Meanjin*, vol. 41, no. 4 (December 1982): 442–6. On Clark and Whitlamism: *The History Wars*, 58–9.

53   Stuart Macintyre, "Manning Clark's Critics," *Meanjin*, vol. 41, no. 4 (1982): 442–52.

54   Macintyre, "Manning Clark's Critics," 449–50.

55   Macintyre, *The History Wars*, 218.

56   Macintyre, *The History Wars*, 9.

57   Macintyre, *The History Wars*, 218–9.

58   Stuart Macintyre, "The History Wars," 78.

Macintyre's analysis of historiographical conflict was marked by a compelling clarity, and the book secured great media coverage and academic honours. It also made Macintyre a target of the political right. On the morning of the book's launch, Rupert Murdoch's *Australian* newspaper published a feature article that presented him as the "godfather" of Australian history; it implied that he had corruptly influenced the dispersal of Australian Research Council grants. A columnist from the *Daily Telegraph* alleged that Macintyre had improperly used the stationery of the University of Melbourne in a campaign against press bias.[59] His critical analysis of the power of a hostile media to influence historical debate was likened to a "shop steward" seeking to enforce a "closed shop."[60] His writings were rejected as "vindictive" and "abusive,"[61] reviving "the pro-Communist" invective of "the Cold War." Elaborate attention was drawn to his earlier membership of the Communist Party, long since ceded.[62] A later critique raked over internal conflicts at the University Melbourne and presented Macintyre as the victor in a vicious game of academic politics that brought him "power and perks."[63]

Macintyre bore these attacks with accustomed dignity and barely broke stride. He broadened in the following years his analysis of the context in which scholarship is undertaken, developing cogent analyses of the changing Australian University system (*No End of a Lesson* [2017]) and of his own University's negotiation of these changes (*Life After Dawkins* [2016]). Though little known outside Australia, they bear comparison with Stefan Collini's critical interventions in a British context. Macintyre also pursued a history of the social sciences in Australia, *The Poor Relation* (2010), an interest associated with his Presidency of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.

He was distinguished by great administrative capacity and collegiality, and therefore served in senior positions on very many important cultural institutions: The State Library of Victoria, the National Library of Australia, the Australian Historical Association, the Heritage Council of Victoria. He chaired an important inquiry into Civics Education in Australia, and he drafted a new National Curriculum in History that covered the primary and secondary years. He held senior posts at the University of Melbourne, including two terms as Dean of Arts. But his eminence never compromised a concern for younger scholars and their careers: he carefully supervised as many as eighty postgraduate theses and aided these researchers and many others to take the next steps in their professional lives. He remained committed to teaching

59   As detailed in: Macintyre, "The History Wars," 78–9.
60   Greg Melleuish, Review of "The History Wars," *Policy*, vol. 19, no. 4 (2003-04), 54.
61   Kevin Donnelly, "Enraged or Engaged?," *Review* (Centre for Independent Studies) (2003), 39.
62   Melleuish, Review, 54.
63   Windschuttle, "Stuart Macintyre," p. 35.

and continued to teach at the University of Melbourne for some years after his formal retirement.

Macintyre was a man of settled habits. He ran marathons and half-marathons into his early seventies and enjoyed a Sunday morning run with a large group of friends that crossed generations. He bore the marks of Oxbridge with his fondness for pipe smoking and tweed jackets. He ardently followed the sports of Australian Rules Football (barracking for Hawthorn) and cricket and enjoyed especially taking overseas visitors to the Melbourne Cricket Ground to share in the atmosphere. He loved the city of his birth, Melbourne. He loved his library (some 11,000 volumes) and was perhaps most at home surrounded by his books and settling down to write.

Notwithstanding the slight introversion that most historians share, he was warm and very approachable to colleagues and acquaintances (though sometimes inadvertently intimidating to those with lesser achievement and intellectual range). He had a wry sense of humour and delighted in recounting stories animated by the follies and ambitions of his protagonists (whether historical figures or contemporaries). He was fundamentally modest and resisted the efforts of colleagues to celebrate his work and achievements. Reflecting both a confidence in his own gifts and a kind and generous disposition, he was always ready to welcome new scholars into his chosen fields, and to aid them in their own endeavours. Macintyre was conscious that he made his own histories under the relatively propitious circumstances of a middle-class childhood, a post-war boom, and an expanding University sector. He used his own opportunities and his talents to enlarge the possibilities available to other scholars. He also managed to enlarge our understanding of the history of Australia, and of the Left. And he thereby expanded our collective capacity to forge a better future.

Stuart Macintyre died in November 2021, after a protracted battle with cancer. He had the opportunity to hold his final book in his hands just a few weeks before his death and drew some satisfaction from his completion of these labours. Characteristically, he had already begun work on a new book. His many admirers will regret the books unwritten, but will be grateful for those many fine works that will endure. He is survived by his wife, his two daughters, and many grandchildren.