

the Left, especially Ian Buruma and Timothy Garton Ash, treat Ramadan highly positively, yet denigrate more liberal Muslim figures—especially the Somali-born Dutch citizen Ayaan Hirsi Ali.

Berman's outrage and anger begins to burn through as he demonstrates their subtle condescension, their arguable sexism, their dismissal of her ideas, and their absurd efforts to paint Hirsi Ali as an 'enlightenment fundamentalist.' In the end, this final burst of white heat is illuminating. Berman demonstrates that what Western intellectuals are doing is in fact adopting the categories of the Islamist movement themselves—to whom Qaradawi is an orthodox moderate and Ramadan is half-way lost to Western liberalism while Hirsi Ali is 'an infidel fundamentalist,' as she was labelled by the murderer of her collaborator Theo van Gogh.

Moreover, these intellectuals basically treat Muslims as children with no agency while engaging in an essentialising and condescending quest for a single Muslim intellectual messiah to cure all the ills of the diverse Muslim world—thus their attraction to Ramadan. Overall, this is a book that anyone interested in the most important intellectual debates of our time must read.

Reviewed by Tzvi Fleischer

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Hawke: The Prime Minister By Blanche d'Alpuget

Melbourne University Press,
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H*awke: The Prime Minister* has been written to confirm the 'great man' view of history, which is not surprising given Blanche d'Alpuget is Bob Hawke's current wife. The result is that Hawke's judgment is depicted as near peerless and he is seen as having full ownership of the reform legacy of his governments. It would have been a better book if it were less cavalier in its portrayal of Hawke and more willing to credit his team of ministers for successes.

Looking back on the Hawke era, there were at least four or five potential prime ministers. There were obvious candidates in Hawke, Bill Hayden and Paul Keating, and less obvious contenders in Kim Beazley and John Dawkins. The strength of Hawke's government was in the depth of its talent as well as his leadership. This is almost completely lost in the biography.

Hawke's importance to the government peaks in the first 18 months after his election to office. Keating had yet to emerge as the Treasurer who would dominate politics in the latter part of the 1980s. Hawke's involvement is well mapped out as integral to the float of the dollar. The Keating of 1983 may have been guided by Hawke, but the condescending nature of d'Alpuget's depiction is unnecessary. Both men emerge

from the float strengthened, but for d'Alpuget only Hawke can take credit.

d'Alpuget barely covers the deregulation of the banking sector or Keating's role in putting together the detail of the policy together, underplaying his contribution to the government from the start.

Hawke's great contribution as a Labor leader, aside from winning four elections, was the Accord. In

this landmark change for labour relations in Australia, the major unions and the Hawke government agreed to arbitrated wage increases that were lower than rises in inflation in exchange for social benefits such as universal health care, superannuation, and tax reforms benefiting low-

and middle-income Australians most. It was both the framework for negotiating key reforms to the economy and an effective macro-economic tool for creating jobs and limiting inflationary pressure. It had support from key business groups.

Ralph Willis is credited in the book with formulating the vision of the Accord. After visiting Britain in the late 1970s and early '80s, Willis became convinced that the unions there had cost Labour office, resulting in Thatcher recasting the industrial landscape. The Accord was a hope that the political wing of the Labor Party could tame the industrial wing led by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). Hayden as leader had been sceptical of this, but Hawke embraced this hope and could use his relationships in the union movement to obtain



broad agreement to significant wage restraint.

Although Hawke was the critical figure in establishing the Accord framework and delivering the social wage in the context of wage restraint, the book misses the later reality that Keating became the negotiator with and the better friend of ACTU leaders like Bill Kelty. Keating delivered significant superannuation for all workers and enterprise bargaining after the 1993 victory. The move to enterprise bargaining came after inflation had been broken by both the 1990 recession and the years of Accord wage restraint. This was a key moment in Australian economic and social history and perhaps the most lasting change in the relations between the Labor Party and the union movement.

The book does not cover the significant meetings of the Expenditure Review Committee, the key committee of Cabinet considering fiscal policy decisions for the Hawke government budgets. So it does not sufficiently cover the role of Keating, Dawkins, Peter Walsh, and Willis in the budget decisions of the government. It also fails to cover Dawkins' reforms to education that have proved so important. This is unfortunate and the reader has little or no knowledge of Hawke's involvement (if any) in these key policy outcomes.

Hawke was a fortunate leader living in interesting times. He had a consistently divided Opposition but an Opposition that supported some of his key reforms. Critically, tariff policy and privatisation were supported by both sides of politics, and this surely made it easier to implement and sell change. Indeed, one of the key insights to Hawke's

success should be that he pushed economic reform at a pace that the public could accept, whereas at times Keating and John Howard pushed reform faster to strengthen their leadership bids within each party.

And yet, Howard hardly rates a mention in the book although his support for the policies of the economic dries gave Hawke his opportunity to take the centre ground reform position on so many issues. The Liberal Party's distaste for the Fraser legacy and Labor's embrace of markets meant the Liberals became unhinged from political reality, ultimately ending with the catastrophe of John Hewson's Fightback!

Tariff policy was embraced by Hawke after the 1990 election, but this should be seen in the context of the Liberal Party going further, harder and faster. In one of the great ironies of politics, Hawke and Keating made difficult policy decisions on cutting tariffs and could still say they were more measured than Hewson. The good political fortune of the Hawke-Keating era barely rates a mention in the book. This oversight is unjustifiable.

The book stops being frustratingly simplistic when it moves from domestic to foreign policy. Hawke's successes on the world stage were substantial and broad. Hawke was both a statesman and a humanitarian. Whether the policy area was the US alliance, engaging with China, Cambodia in the mid-1980s, Jews in the Soviet block, South Africa, or the first Gulf War, the book hits its high points. Perhaps Hawke's biggest contribution was an early understanding of the importance

of the Asia-Pacific and Australia's position in it. It is fair to say that Hawke arrived at this view well before Keating's embrace of Asia, and Hawke's strategic view drove the priorities of foreign policy even after Keating became leader. Of course, by then Keating was the primary architect who further developed the positions earlier mapped out.

Hawke was not a leader of great rhetoric. He was a good campaigner and largely second to Keating in the Parliament and the set piece speech. We hear little of Hawke's speeches in the book. Hawke the public speaker is barely discussed except with regard to the 'no child will live in poverty by 1990' gaffe during the 1987 election campaign. Reflecting on the Hawke-Keating era, Keating's words are invariably more poignant or cutting. Even Keating's 1986 warning that Australia would become a 'banana republic,' seen as a gaffe at the time, is a critical rhetorical device that forced the country towards deeper structural reform of the economy. The era is often defined by Keating's language, not Hawke's, and this deserves more reflection.

Perhaps the gravest mistake that the book makes is to write about Keating's leadership challenge in only 25 pages. Hawke emerges as a leader hard done by, rather than one who his colleagues considered unable to turn around the dire opinion polls following the 1990 recession. Hawke the man of vigour is compared continually to Keating the 'sick man.' Keating is caricatured as a man who barely reads briefing material, works far less than Hawke, and is constantly getting ill. Yet by 1991, Keating is worthy of challenging Hawke.

Although Keating believed that the government's best years were likely behind it, he renewed the Labor Party and the government after he was elevated.

While Hawke's federalism reforms were largely shelved by Keating, national competition policy aside, the 1993 election was a vindication of the Keating challenge. d'Alpuget claims Hawke would certainly have beaten Fightback! but this is less than clear. Despite Hawke deserving the lion's share of credit for the 1987 and 1990 victories, Hawke's loss of public and party confidence in 1991 was pronounced. By the end of 1991, it was not clear whether this decline was terminal or whether he could have recovered to win against Hewson.

In addition, Keating finished the tariff reform process, brought in enterprise bargaining, launched a republican process, the superannuation we know today, and responded to Mabo. Hawke may have done some of these things, had he won in 1993, but Keating did them his way.

For many, Hawke is the best Prime Minister in Australian history, and he should let historians decide his fate. Keating has indicated he may write a retaliatory response, but sometimes it is better to rise above the fray. Keating may write a better book, but these protagonist led books are not often reliable accounts of the governments they led or served.

Both were great men but in different ways. Their partnership, complemented by a talented ministry, rescued Australia from a deep economic malaise and helped turn the country towards its Asia-Pacific future. This is the abiding

legacy of the Hawke-Keating era and will always bind them together in a shared project.

Reviewed by Corin McCarthy

The Last Intellectuals: Essays on Writers and Politics

By Peter Coleman

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Peter Coleman wrote the essays in this book over the last 10 years, rediscovering his own voice after many years in politics when his mind was his own but his public voice was not. The result is a collection of essays for connoisseurs: fine writing, simple and direct in style, with no fancy pretensions but often a hint of direct, astringent wit instead.

Coleman has been such a quiet achiever in his lifetime that the result is enlightening—in the volume of work, the range, the depth, and in the persona that emerged when this slow learner (the title of his 1994 memoir) eventually grew up and 'struck a length,' as spin bowlers say.

He has written nine books of his own, was a co-author of two others, and has edited five more, including three important collections of papers. Of course, the bulk is not hard to explain because anyone who spends most of 50 years writing will produce a lot of words. The point is to have something to say. Coleman

has made telling contributions in several fields, including social commentary, memoirs, biography, reflections on writers and writing, and inside views of politics ranging from the international campaign of the Congress for Cultural Freedom to the brawl between the trendies and the uglies in the NSW division of the Australian Liberal Party.

The first thing that many people want to know about a writer is where they are 'coming from.' Coleman's first book in 1974 was a scathing critique of Australian censorship, *Obscenity, Blasphemy, Sedition: Censorship in Australia*. This suggests that he is not a rigid conservative of the kind

that Hayek criticised but inclined towards classical liberalism. This may not be immediately apparent because Coleman has kept out of economic debates, sensibly exploiting his comparative advantage in other areas. However, I am advised of a 'dry'

economist's comment that the treatment of economic issues in *Quadrant* was never better than the period when Coleman was the editor.

The essays fall into four parts (1) Cultural Freedom and the Cold War, (2) Poets and Journalists, (3) Party Games, and (4) What Shall We Do With Our Lives?

Each section has its own special interest and reveals various facets of his knowledge and experience. Some readers may be most interested in the 12 essays in the first part of the book, on the fight-back by the Congress for Cultural Freedom against communist propaganda in intellectual and cultural life.

