


other power that tries to underminé its economic and political independence," and saw no difference between the "noxious Yankee domination" and a "no less noxious 'Soviet' domination."

Ramos Latour, then, had to choose between advancing the larger goals of radical change and the risk of turning power over to those who, like Ché, believed that Marxism-Leninism was the proper path for the Latin American future. He chose the "common ideal."

Cantillo, Ramos Latour, and many others chose honorably but in ways that in the long run undermined their most deeply held beliefs. It cost Ramos Latour his life during the revolutionary struggle; it cost Cantillo years in prison. Their stories illustrate the importance of moral and political choices for all of us, and they illustrate, ably and tragically, the paths not taken by Cubans in the 1950s. 

**POWER AND THE PEOPLE:
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT OF
PUBLIC OPINION IN FOREIGN
AFFAIRS, 1897-1921**

by **Robert C. Hilderbrand**

(University of North Carolina Press,
262 pp., \$19.00)

Bruce Miroff

Presidential mastery of public opinion in foreign policy matters usually has been regarded as a characteristic of the cold war era. Robert C. Hilderbrand, an historian at the University of South Dakota, contends that the techniques were developed in the closing years of the nineteenth century, when technological change, overseas expansion, and Progressive ideology compelled presidents to secure broad popular support.

"As the president's interest in popular attitudes increased, so did his efforts to guide and influence them, and one outcome was a clear decline in the public's independence. To an extent unimaginable before the end of the nineteenth century, the executive became a dominant force in the leadership of public opinion; it now exercised subtle control over the efforts of Washington correspondents and employed increasingly sophisticated techniques for directing the public's view of international affairs."

The first major protagonist is William McKinley, whom Hilderbrand

portrays as a subtle strategist carefully orchestrating public responses to his administration's plans for conflict with Spain and retention of the Philippines. He devotes considerable attention to McKinley's innovations in handling the press, such as the extensive use of press releases and the establishment of an office for reporters within the White House. Though the portly president's stiff demeanor and drab character never engaged the press and the public as did Teddy Roosevelt's ebullient persona, McKinley comes off, in Hilderbrand's account, as the more important figure in establishing executive sway over the public mind.

Hilderbrand's portrait of McKinley, extensively documented from manuscript sources, is impressive. However, at times he attributes too great omniscience to McKinley's strategy. When one of McKinley's cabinet members expresses doubts about Spanish guilt in the *Maine* explosion and a second cabinet member contradicts him the next day, Hilderbrand sees neither disagreement nor disarray within the cabinet. Rather, he explains, the first statement expresses the president's anxiety to downplay the threat of war and the second expresses his concern lest the public become too disposed to absolve the Spaniards.

Theodore Roosevelt and Taft receive briefer treatment than McKinley. The single chapter on Roosevelt is perceptive, although one wishes for fuller coverage of this master self-dramatist. Hilderbrand depicts the Roosevelt administration, despite its brilliance at grabbing headlines, as a step backward in presidential news management. Whereas McKinley moved to routinize and bureaucratize the flow of information from the White House, Roosevelt personalized his relationship with the press in a fashion more typical of nineteenth-century executives. The criticism is odd both conceptually and historically. Important aspects of the presidency have always remained personalized, and the presidents who have handled the press most effectively—e.g., the two Roosevelts and Kennedy—have relied heavily on a personal approach.

William Howard Taft is the aberration in Hilderbrand's narrative. His character and convictions led him to eschew the manipulation of public opinion, and his handling of publicity in such areas as "dollar diplomacy" and the English and French arbitration treat-

ties was so lackluster that his most important foreign policy ventures remained obscure to the public. But Hilderbrand's critical view of Taft suggests an underlying ambivalence in the author's own position. While his narrative focuses on the dangers of successful executive management, Hilderbrand chastises Taft for *not* managing public opinion so as to win support for a policy (the arbitration treaties) that the author evidently finds admirable. Taft's case raises a question that Hilderbrand never squarely confronts in this book. Are there executive modes of shaping public opinion that can be characterized as genuine leadership rather than management and manipulation?

The fascinating case of Woodrow Wilson draws Hilderbrand's most extensive narrative and analysis. Wilson's dealings with the press take up half the volume. Even before coming to the White House, Wilson had reveled in the possibilities for executive mastery, writing of the president in 1908 that "he is the only national voice in affairs." In a flush of Progressive enthusiasm as he took office he pledged an open administration of "pitiless publicity." Yet in Hilderbrand's portrayal, Wilson's press relations reflect less pitiless exposure of presidential behavior than pitiless manipulation of the American public.

The most visible innovation of the Wilson presidency was the regularly scheduled press conference. Though moderately successful in this forum, Wilson chafed at the journalists' pointed questions and stopped the sessions in 1915. Privately, he envisioned a more controlled flow of information through a "publicity bureau," by means of which, as Hilderbrand observes, Wilson "hoped to put an end to misunderstandings about the nature of the 'real facts' and to see to it that newspapers had no excuse for failing to print news as they received it." The onset of the world war finally established the necessary conditions for Wilson's "publicity bureau." Hilderbrand offers a detailed picture of the Committee on Public Information, the remarkable wartime propaganda apparatus that George Creel constructed under Wilson's aegis.

After so many successful efforts to dominate public opinion, executive management failed Wilson at the decisive moment. Preoccupied in Paris with the details of the peace settlement and an ocean away from the secretary—

Joseph Tumulty—who had always smoothed his relations with reporters, Wilson saw his press coverage deteriorate badly. He and Tumulty planned to recoup their publicity losses by a whirlwind national speaking tour, but the damage had been done; the aborted trip could not rescue his League.

Robert Hilderbrand has produced an informative and cogent study of the rise of presidential dominance over public opinion in foreign affairs. At times he adheres too closely to his archival material and fails to venture onto promising analytical terrain. Still, his scholarship is solid and his conclusion is important, especially in light of current debates.

"[I]t makes little sense to accuse public ignorance of causing deficiencies in foreign affairs....It should be clear that whatever has gone wrong with America's position in the world remains the sole responsibility of executive officials. They, not public opinion, have had the authority to make decisions; no real power has ever been given to the people." [WV]

THE USSR IN IRAN

by **Faramarz Fatemi**

(A.S. Barnes and Co.; 219 pp.; \$6.95)

Janet Kestenberg Amighi

A reader wishing to fortify his view that history repeats itself need look no further than Iran. In the last century alone, the British, the Russians, the Germans, and the Americans have repeatedly entrenched themselves in Iran, competing with one another for dominance. Iran, in fact, was the first place where the lines of political and economic conflict between Anglo-American and Soviet interests were drawn. Dr. Fatemi's study, though focusing on the brief period between 1941 and 1947, nevertheless encapsulates processes of superpower manipulation and Third World defensive strategy that recur in Iran—as elsewhere.

The first chapter describes the rise in 1922 of Riza Shah after a century in which weak monarchs had allowed Britain and Russia to acquire undue influence. By 1936, Riza Shah began to establish more advantageous technical and trade relations with Germany. Accusing the shah of siding with the Axis powers, Britain and Russia invaded Iran in 1941 and re-entrenched them-

selves—Russia near the oil fields of the north and Britain near the oil fields of the south. They forced Riza Shah to abdicate in favor of his young son, Mohammed, who remained in the background until 1953.

After the fall of the repressive Riza Shah government, a political free-for-all ensued, with pro-Russian, pro-British, royalist, clerical, military, and nationalist factions attempting to determine policy. Chapter 2 considers the disorder produced by internal political change and compounded by the interference of several foreign interests competing for oil concessions.

Chapters 3 to 6 give a detailed and fascinating account of Russian support of an independence movement in the province of Azerbaijan and of the Iranian Government's attempt to dislodge Russia and reassert national control. Britain, fearing that the eviction of Russia from the north might jeopardize its own position in the south, urged the Iranian Government, which changed six times within this period, to cede the province to Russia. Prime Minister Qavam Saltane turned to a third power—this time the U.S.—to neutralize the others. His brilliant use of Russian weakness and American strength led to Russia's withdrawal and the collapse of the Azerbaijan insurgency.

The epilogue covers, in a mere thirteen pages, the aftermath of Qavam's success. In 1951 the nationalist prime minister, Dr. Mossadegh, turned his attention to nationalizing the British oil companies in the south. In response, America joined Britain in a boycott of Iranian oil and the freezing of Iranian assets abroad. By the end of 1953 the CIA had engineered the fall of Mossadegh's government and the reinstatement with full powers of Mohammed Shah Pahlavi. The last five pages deal with the rule of Mohammed Shah from 1953 to 1979, painting a vivid picture of mounting political repression.

A fuller understanding of the relationship of Russian and Anglo-American conflict to the fall of the shah and the 1978-79 revolution would have been gained had the epilogue continued the story of foreign investment in Iran past 1953. Also missed is a discussion, however brief, of the political role of the Moslem clergy and of the malfunctioning of the economy prior to the fall of the shah. If it fails to provide a "historical background of the Iranian revolution," this is nonetheless a clearly

written and absorbing work on a less frequently covered issue—the divisive effect of foreign interference on Iranian nationalism.

Dr. Fatemi utilizes Persian reference materials and his own interviews with political personalities to produce a highly detailed and often suspenseful narrative interspersed with insightful analysis. The knowledgeable reader may find an analogy between the events of 1941-53 and the present unstable political situation in postrevolutionary Iran. [WV]

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Briefly Noted

SOLZHENITSYN: THE MORAL VISION

by **Edward E. Ericson, Jr.**
(Eerdmans, 237 pp.; \$12.95)

Ericson of Calvin College, Michigan, delineates the religious thematic of Solzhenitsyn's vocation, thus accenting a dimension of his work that either embarrasses or outrages more secular critics. He convincingly demonstrates that Solzhenitsyn's "heresy" with respect to contemporary culture is to insist on the primacy of the spiritual over the political. He takes each of Solzhenitsyn's translated works in turn, and the result is therefore somewhat repetitious. Nonetheless, the crucial point is well made. Foreword by Malcolm Muggeridge.

—Richard John Neuhaus