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dins are writing the first paragraph of a generally unreported and depressing story.

I recently had occasion to read a seventh-grade curriculum published by the United Church Press, for use by eleven mainline Protestant denominations, including both of the nation's largest Presbyterian churches, the Christian Church and the United Church of Christ. The curriculum concerns "environmental" issues, on which it offers far more about American Indian tribes than it does about church traditions. Here twelve- and thirteen-year-olds learn how they can win an award for Young Preservationist of the Year. Here, too, they are asked to think about their habits—of "letting the water run when you brush your teeth," "grabbing a paper towel to wipe up a spill," and so on. Here, too, they will discover that "there are only 1,200 wolves alive on the earth" and that "most of them live in the Minnesota woods."

This is not stuff that sticks to the ribs of the soul. The cult boom is indicative of a huge educational failing on the part of our churches and synagogues. "By starving the sensibility of our pupils," C. S. Lewis once wrote, "we only make them easier prey to the propagandist when he comes." Physical starvation is not the only kind that deserves the attention of modern clerics.

### What Happened in Iran

ANSWER TO HISTORY. By MOHAMMAD REZA PAHLAVI. *Stein and Day*. 204 pp. \$12.95.

PAVED WITH GOOD INTENTIONS: THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE AND IRAN. By BARRY RUBIN. *Oxford University Press*. 426 pp. \$17.50.

Reviewed by MARTIN KRAMER

**I**F A man can be said to have answered history, the late and last Shah of Iran did so on January 16,

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MARTIN KRAMER, a new contributor, is the author of *Political Islam (a Washington Paper)* and is currently a doctoral candidate in history and Near Eastern Studies at Princeton.

1979, when he boarded a flight at Teheran's international airport on his way to final exile. Although afflicted with a cancer which he possibly knew then to be terminal, he had chosen not to risk bold action in an attempt to reverse the revolutionary tide. His lethargy was perhaps a side effect of medical treatment, but his inability to overcome anxiety was a problem that he himself once made public in confessing to the regular use of tranquilizers. His departure, unlike that of his father almost four decades earlier, was not forced; it was a voluntary act of self-effacement. The Shah preferred to battle the mortal assault launched from within himself. Perhaps in that struggle, finally lost in a Cairo military hospital, he found the courage that failed him in Teheran.

Some will no doubt find it sad that he invested a portion of his short exile in the composition of this final memoir. *Answer to History* is Mohammad Reza Shah at his very worst: he distorts, he accuses, he insinuates, he conceals, and he absolves himself of responsibility for his own demise. As an avid reader of the foreign press, the Shah recognized that many Americans were in a self-flagellating mood over Iran, and *Answer to History* sets out to gratify them. His indictment offers the same theory of causation that reigns in the Islamic Republic of Iran: divine intercession bestows all good fortune, Washington works every calamity. So inept a polemic stirs more disappointment than guilt. And yet we should be glad to have this book, despite its artlessness and inarticulate rambling, for it is a piece of documentary evidence of minor historical importance. Such evidence, even in the distorted form of the memoir, need not meet critical standards to be of interest and value.

"Certainly, I had made mistakes in Iran. However, I cannot believe they formed the basis for my downfall. They were rectifiable with time. My country stood on the verge of being a Great Civilization." The belief that Iran was on the brink of something other than chaos is the thread which runs through *Answer to History*. The

Shah understands the revolution as one long and senseless riot that began just as the social and economic problems generated by an inadequate infrastructure were about to be solved. He once again cites the signal achievements made during his reign in the fields of medicine, housing, education, industrialization, agriculture, and defense, and which provided the material foundations upon which Iran rests even now. There is little new here: the chapters on Iran's modernization under Pahlavi guidance owe much to the Shah's two earlier books, *Mission for My Country* (1960) and *The White Revolution of Iran* (1967), and incorporate borrowings from interviews published in book form as *Mind of a Monarch* (1977). In retrospect, the Shah concludes that uncoordinated planning had created temporary dislocations, but that by 1982 Iran would have emerged a contented workshop, a "Great Civilization." He admits to having made tactical errors along the way, but defends every major policy with conviction.

THE Shah, then, is hard-pressed to account for the revolution which toppled him, and so falls back upon conventional demonology. Responsibility is laid at the door of a "strange confluence of interests—the international oil consortium, the British and American governments, the international media, reactionary religious circles in my own country, and the relentless drive of the Communists." The Shah is convinced that his domestic opponents consistently fronted for foreigners determined to "clip my wings." Thus, Mohammed Mosaddegh, the Iranian premier who presided over the dispossession of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in 1951 and forced the Shah's temporary departure, is suspected by the Shah of having been a British agent. Demonstrations that marred the Shah's visits to the United States were the work of a sinister league: "I cannot help but believe that the oil companies and an organization like the CIA were somehow involved in fomenting and financing this campaign against me." He deduces that the British were secretly behind the Iranian

Communist party, the Tudeh: "First of all, the British meddle in everything. Second, it was and is their policy to have their people everywhere, hoping to exercise some control no matter what happens." Neither was Khomeini all that he seemed, and at the time of his emergence as a figure of consequence in 1963, "he had secret dealings with foreign agents." The Shah's imagination is peopled by an array of such "agents," the leprechauns of the Middle East. What is one to make of these insinuations but that they betray that escapism which continues to characterize the Iranian obsession with "foreign interference"?

The Shah describes these hostile forces as having combined to saddle him with a liberalization program unsuited to Iran, and which he regrets having implemented. Forces of clerical "Black reaction" and "Red destruction," intractable opponents of the Shah's own "White Revolution," were then free to conclude their "unholy alliance" without fear of retribution. An already disjointed narrative deteriorates yet further, reflecting the Shah's own indecisiveness in the crucial months that followed the Tabriz uprising.

The contradictions are unresolvable. Suggestions that "stronger action on my part could have saved my throne and my country" are rejected, for he writes that he was not prepared to order measures liable to result in massive bloodshed. The Shah claims that a direct appeal to his people—an appeal discouraged by Western ambassadors—could have turned the tide: "I could have won such a contest." But the Shah also seems to have considered a firmer response, for he claims to have unsuccessfully sought further confirmation of Zbigniew Brzezinski's November 1978 telephone assurances, in which the National Security Adviser urged him to establish law and order first and continue the liberalization process later. He was in fact a man without a policy, an inert ingredient in a brewing revolution. In placing the blame for the "disaster" upon "short-sighted or nonexistent policy and unresolved conflicts within the Ameri-

can government," the Shah curses his own mirrored reflection.

*Answer to History* describes at some length the Shah's subsequent wanderings and the spread of his cancer. Again he accuses others of failing to stand up to the revolution which he had fled. Political exile is woven of indignities, and the Shah suffered his share; but his litany of complaints, while interesting, is not important. Here as throughout the book, the Shah does not share with us whatever critical self-appraisal he permitted himself during his final year. As long as there is the slightest chance of a Pahlavi restoration, whatever confessions he made will remain a family trust. But *Answer to History's* lack of candor may yet serve its purpose, should the book win sympathy for a tendentious version of events already in wide circulation among Iranian exiles.

AN INFINITELY more balanced and disinterested appraisal of the American role is offered by Barry Rubin,

who builds a subtle but effective argument in support of his study's title, *Paved with Good Intentions*.

Rubin opens with a full historical account, enriched by citations from documents declassified under the Freedom of Information Act or released through the presidential libraries. He documents the complexities of the royalist coup of August 1953; only devotees of intrigue still maintain that this was a purely American deed, given the indignant enthusiasm and support upon which it drew. The Eisenhower/Dulles and Kennedy policies of the following decade did address Iran's domestic affairs, by vigorously advocating not oppression but reform. The Department of State considered Iran's political and economic structure too fragile to support the military expenditures necessary for a wider regional role; the Shah was pressed, instead, to strengthen Iran's "social fabric" through a series of political reforms and economic programs sustained by generous American aid. During this period of con-

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struction, the United States was prepared to assume Iran's defense from external aggression.

The Shah was in constant rebellion against this division of responsibility, for military self-reliance was always his primary concern. He finally had his way. Rubin rightly points to the Vietnam war as the turning point in Iranian-American relations. The successive administrations which waged the war realized that the commitment of American forces to the defense of Iran and the Persian Gulf had become impossible; the Shah, already chafing to place Iran in the role of regional power, was graduated by Washington to greater responsibilities, and given access to the best of the American arsenal. Rubin concludes that Iran then gained the upper hand in the "special relationship." All barriers to arms transfers were lifted in May 1972. No effective protest was lodged when the Shah fully supported the move to higher oil prices after 1973. The Shah reacted to American apprehensions over Iranian oil pricing and armaments procurement with the wry observation that he could sell his oil and buy his weapons elsewhere.

Another recent book on Iran—Amin Saikal's *The Rise and Fall of the Shah*—portrays Iran as a dependency of the United States; Rubin writes convincingly of an American dependence upon Iran. Since the Shah's evidently successful style of reform was thought to have secured Iran from unrest at home, serious American interest in the direction of Iran's domestic political evolution was abandoned. On the eve of the revolution, the American Embassy in Teheran was principally a listening post for developments within the Soviet Union; the fifty thousand members of the American colony were simply paid hands, unaware of the warning signs all about them.

*Paved with Good Intentions* describes the consequences in a vivid and well-written narrative. Government agencies responsible for monitoring Iran were unprepared, organizationally and intellectually, to diagnose Iran's ills or formulate a ready response. The same constraints affected the American media, to which Rubin devotes an interesting appendix.

The author attempts too much in his description of the origins of the revolution; such a task de-

mands an intimate familiarity with Iranian political and religious institutions which he evidently does not possess. But he does credit the revolution with breadth, and reminds us of our limitations. The debate over responsibility for the "loss" of Iran has now begun in earnest, and it has regrettably been distorted by American partisan politics. There are certainly lessons to be learned from the Iranian experience on how to respond to crisis. Greater professionalism would have permitted intelligence analysts to have anticipated political change in Iran, and here Rubin calls bureaucracy's prejudices and preconceptions to account. In the opinion of some, as he points out, this is not a sufficient reprimand. But to believe that the revolution could have been arrested or managed by Americans, without the support of a determined Shah and resolute Iranians, is to subscribe to a set of myths not too different from those now aired in the revolutionary *Majlis*. Modern Iranian history has been made, on the whole, by Iranians; responsibility for Shah and revolution they alone must bear, and realistic Americans should concede.