

BOOKS

THE POLISH CHALLENGE

by Kevin Ruane

(BBC, Parkwest Publications; xvi + 329 pp.; \$17.95)

THE POLISH REVOLUTION

by Timothy Garton Ash

(Charles Scribner's Sons; xix + 388 pp.; \$17.95)

Julian Crandall Hollick

It is almost three years since General Jaruzelski began his Blitzkrieg against the Polish people to protect Soviet interests. In the words of Timothy Garton Ash, "the grey fog has once again descended on Poland," progressively cutting it off from the West, to which it rightly belongs.

The epic of Solidarity is the epic of a people rediscovering their dignity as human beings and striving to reassert national independence against the traditional enemy, Russia. As Solidarity begins to disappear from the Western agenda, many, perhaps, in the corridors of Western power secretly heave a sigh of relief. For suppose that somehow Solidarity's vision had succeeded and Poland had become a self-governing social democracy where religion, the nation, and socialism were all equal partners in a new political experiment. The comfortable certainties of the postwar division of Europe would have been put in question. The Soviet Union might have felt so vulnerable as rashly to provoke a crisis, and the West would have been forced to act in accordance with its principles. As Ash argues toward the end of *The Polish Revolution*, that was something no Western government really wanted to have to contemplate.

Both Ruane and Ash have excellent credentials for their respective inside accounts of the rise and fall of Solidarity, having worked in Poland for the BBC and *The Spectator*, respectively, from early 1980 to the present. In many respects both books are similar in their general thrust, though Ruane's is spoilt by an inane introduction that is completely at odds with the book, painting an idyllic picture of pre-Solidarity Poland and placing the blame for the events of December 13, 1981, on the shoulders of Solidarity for failing to control strikes. As a source book, Ruane's is excellent, partly because he has decided to use extracts from the Polish media, as monitored by the BBC,

to show how Poles of all sides viewed the events of 1980-81. To find out the sequence of events and who said what, when, this well-researched and sober book should prove indispensable.

Ash, on the other hand, gives not only the facts but large doses of local color so that the various actors in this Polish drama come alive. *The Polish Revolution* gets behind the communiqués in a way that Ruane never hints at, although both men must have been present at the same events. We see the good qualities and the faults of the Solidarity leaders and the government and Party bigwigs in such vivid light that the reader really does feel he's there.

Ash presents Solidarity's epic as one of a long line of Polish attempts to secure national independence from Russia. His portraits of ordinary Poles and the leaders of Rural Solidarity make clear the depth of nationalist renewal and hatred of Russia in present Poland. But if Solidarity drew its nationwide strength from patriotism and a longing for an end to mediocrity under the incompetent rule of the Polish Communist party, the very premises for national renewal contained within themselves the seeds of Solidarity's fall. Quite simply, Solidarity could never hope to be just a trade union movement. There was no corresponding sense of the need for reform and renewal within the Communist party, and the Party's intellectual and moral bankruptcy meant there was also a power vacuum that had to be filled if Poland was to both reform itself and avoid the fate of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

As Jacek Kuron of KOR said: "Solidarity had to be a self-limiting revolution." There were political limits beyond which it could not go without provoking a Soviet invasion. Indeed, one thing that emerges clearly in *The Polish Revolution* is that the members of KOR, later to be pilloried as inciting Solidarity to counterrevolution, were in

many respects the most politically aware and moderate of all the principal players.

But the logic of the Polish situation dictated that Solidarity be forced beyond its political limits. No real ideas for reform came from within the Party; indeed, it is now quite clear that even the so-called liberal members of the Party and Politburo, notably Mieczyslaw Rakowski, never had any real intention of implementing the spirit or the letter of the 1980 Agreements. With tame courts in their pockets and the media under the control of the hardline Stefan Olszowski, they equivocated and generally acted in bad faith. From the very beginning it was deliberate policy to create friction within the ranks of Solidarity and provide the grounds for a subsequent crackdown.

How brilliantly they succeeded! Solidarity was drawn across the thin dividing line in Marxist ideology that separates orthodoxy from heresy into the exhilarating freedom of democratic debate. After March, 1981, there was never any doubt within the Party what had to be done to protect their own privileged interests and those of the Soviet Union. It was just a question of when and how. Did Solidarity go too far? Could the West have helped more and maybe prevented the war of December, 1981?

Garton Ash presents us with a picture of Solidarity as a coalition of very different temperaments and interests, a real Polish parliament, with Walesa constantly under sniping attack for trying to curtail debate in the name of political efficacy. Solidarity was about freedom and democracy, but the laws of power—where there's a vacuum it must be filled—pulled Solidarity into politics and heresy. However, there could have been no other way.

Could the West have helped this "civil crusade for national regeneration"? Ash argues that there was a "window of opportunity" when a massive aid program, confined to the economic sphere, could have bolstered the Party moderates and contained popular rage at the Communists. But this seems the weakest part of his argument. That aid would probably have been misappropriated and used to shore up the Party. Without internal Party reform, Solidarity was doomed to be the political enemy of the authorities, for whom reform meant only "consultative authoritarianism." The new unions would merely have acted as transmission belts for tiny reformettes.

It is Poland's tragedy to lie between Germany and Russia. Iran was able to break free of its superpower embrace precisely because it could not be reoccupied militarily by the U.S. Unless the West had been prepared to stand up for its ideals and defend

Solidarity at the risk of provoking an international crisis, there was never any real chance that the Soviet Union would not intervene to quash the Polish heresy.

And what now? "Normalization," or the restoration of abnormality, has descended on Poland for the foreseeable future. Solidarity as an institution melts daily away while Walesa has ceased to have any meaningful political importance. In fact, Walesa has entered Polish national mythology within his own middle-age, as a symbol, along with the Catholic Church, of the Polish struggle for national dignity. But one thing remains, a "revolution of the soul." For Poles know what freedom tastes like. And one day, unless the Party reforms itself out of all recognition, the thirst for freedom and independence will burst open all the carefully constructed ideological safety hatches so that "Poland can be Poland." **WV**

**HAPPINESS, JUSTICE & FREEDOM:
THE MORAL & POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN STUART MILL**
by Fred R. Berger

(University of California Press; 354 pp.; \$24.95)

William J. Long

John Stuart Mill's reputation as a philosopher has known good days and bad. During his lifetime he was considered Britain's foremost liberal thinker. Heir to the utilitarian tradition of his father, James Mill, and its mentor, Jeremy Bentham, the younger Mill was credited with transcending both men's narrow conception of human happiness as the simple avoidance of pain and the pursuit of pleasure. He accepted the proposition that happiness is the end of life and the ultimate test of all rules of conduct; he went on, however, to specify that happiness was not directly attainable but was only a by-product of other ends, such as the happiness of others, self-improvement, the pursuit of art and beauty, or activity for its own sake.

In a way that was consonant with his own idealism and the increasing liberalism of his age, Mill's moral theory rescued utilitarian ethics from the constraints of its pleasure/pain calculus. But scholars in later generations have criticized Mill's attempted expansion of utilitarian moral theory. They have called it inconsistent with basic utilitarian principles and have cited the inconsistency as evidence of the failure of utilitarianism to provide a basis for liberalism.

Ironically, what contributed so much to Mill's reputation in the nineteenth century has contributed greatly to the decline of his reputation in the twentieth.

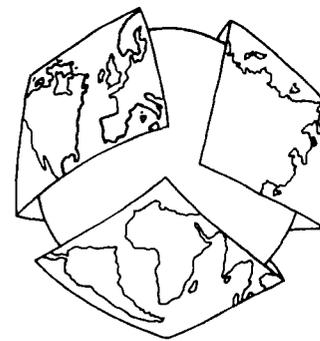
Professor Berger's new book begins a third stage in our estimation of Mill. Like previous scholars, Berger acknowledges that Mill's enlarged conception of human well-being, including such notions as the intrinsic goodness of autonomy, integrity, and dignity, was a significant contribution to moral philosophy. Unlike the current orthodoxy, however, Berger's work attempts to show the consistency of Mill's conception of happiness with his theories of justice and freedom.

He finds the link in the important role of rules in Mill's philosophy. Berger demonstrates how Mill's moral theory was grounded on what the author terms a "strategy conception of rules." This essentially utilitarian concept holds that useful rules should determine our moral duties in most situations, but in exceptional situations the moral rightness or wrongness of an act should be determined not solely by an appeal to the letter of the rules but by a consideration of specific consequences.

Thus, justice for Mill consisted of society's rules governing punishment and reward for actions that harm or help society, but the rules were to be applied in light of specific mitigating circumstances. Mill's theories of justice also included informal sanctions and intrinsic rewards. Freedom—a condition Mill believed was imperative to man's happiness and to society's utility—had to be defined and protected by using the same sort of liberal-utilitarian rule: Interference with an individual's freedom is only justified when to do so would protect a superior right of someone else. Since there were few values more essential than freedom in Mill's system, such interference was highly circumscribed.

In the final section of his book, Professor Berger uses the reformulated framework of Mill's liberal-utilitarian philosophy to reply to Mill's critics and to demonstrate that Mill's political and economic analysis was also consistent with his basic philosophy. While Berger's insights are numerous, his resuscitation of Mill's view of equality is particularly noteworthy.

Mill has often been criticized by modern liberals for his lack of commitment to equality. While there is evidence in Mill's writings to support such attacks, Berger's painstaking scholarship leads him to conclude that Mill possessed a generally unrecognized "baseline" conception of equality, encompassing the idea that substantive inequalities of wealth, education, or power



**"...underdevelopment today
is not a natural condition,
but an unnatural one,
a social state which is
the product of history;**

not a passive condition, but the consequence of conscious action; not something that just happened, governed by the logic of an impersonal system, but something that was done to people by other people."

In *THE THREE WORLDS*, Peter Worsley considers the historical events, the actions, the systems that have served to confine the majority of humankind to what we know as the Third World. In this work of extraordinary scope and vision, he surveys the whole range of theories of development from the Marxist approach to that of the social anthropologists. He points out that the terms "underdeveloped," "developed," "communist," and "capitalist" do not explain everything about real-life international groupings. Relationships between major groups within any given country (classes, ethnic groups, religious communities, etc.) are left out of the picture. To neglect the element of culture—the ideas by which people live—is, in Worsley's opinion, to take a one- or two-dimensional view of human society that simply ignores most of human behavior.

The Three Worlds

Culture and World Development

PETER WORSLEY

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