

the mood of the pre-Debsian days when native American left-wingers revered German Social Democracy in the same way as they were later to reverence the icons of the Bolshevik Revolution. But to say it all happened before explains little. Nor does it excuse the later performance.

Moreover, once the American Communists decided, as they did at the 1957 convention that put Richmond on the National Committee, to find their own path to Marxism and their own rationale for a truly American Party, there was little follow-through. Richmond stayed on,

important enough to help write Party programs and unencumbered by the great majority of his former friends, even trial-mates, who departed. One wonders why the mandate to find a true theoretical culture was never fulfilled. And one wonders at what late date his own doubts became formulated with respect to the experience of Czechoslovakia. On that score, his comrades have given him no quarter. Richmond held on, it seems, as much out of inertia as conviction, to a movement whose withering he never analyzes, in a country whose dynamic he may never begin to understand.

West Point: America's Power Fraternity

by K. Bruce Galloway
and Robert Bowie Johnson, Jr.

(Simon and Schuster; 448 pp.; \$10.00)

Laurence I. Radway

Disenchantment with the military is a familiar postwar feeling. But the period piece under review is not a distinguished example of that sentiment. Its authors, a young West Point graduate and an urban planner who soldiered in Vietnam, believe that the United States Military Academy is "one of the most powerful and corrupt institutions in America." Since the time of Sylvanus Thayer, they say, it has produced a closed circle of élitists, automatons, warlords, liars and crooks.

Depicted as victims of an educational process that renders them incapable of independent thought, West Pointers are held to subordinate both individual conscience and the public interest to the narrow ambitions of the "power fraternity." In one breath they invoke their famed honor code to impose Draconian sanctions for relatively trivial collegiate offenses, in another they condone sleazy system-beating practices which foreshadow efforts to cover up major misdeeds in Vietnam.

That miserable war itself is said to be but the most recent episode in a graceful history which includes the repression of American Indians, Filipino insurgents and Latin American peasants. As former Lt. Col. Anthony B. Herbert alleges in the book's foreword, "Vietnam was no accident of fate, but rather the goal toward which our Army had been doggedly headed for years."

In discussing this indictment, I must put two cards face up. One is that I regard myself as a camp follower or sympathetic critic of the armed forces; the other is that I have done considerable research on the service academies and was unhappy to find no notice of it in this book.

Much of what Galloway and Johnson criticize in West Point mirrors charges long familiar to other students of the subject. Cadets do get insufficient time to read. Knowledge is too often distributed in bite-sized, spoon-fed doses. Rhodes Scholarship applicants may very well

be prepared for their interviews as carefully as Soviet athletes are prepared for the Olympics. And—a more original and important point—the sweeping absolutism of West Point's code of conduct, by blurring the distinction between minor and major transgressions, may in the end tempt men to give everything the *appearance* of perfection.

Yet I find the book a caricature, not a likeness. As a caricature it suffers from two defects. First, it gives scant recognition to major changes that have taken place at all service academies in recent years. Second, it displays no understanding of the complex functions of these institutions or of the society or polity in which they must operate.

At all academies the Spartan and insular regimes of yesteryear have been relaxed. They have been modified partly to meet changing military requirements, partly to attract and retain student customers, and sometimes simply because the Joneses at one institution try to keep up with the Smiths and Browns at the other two.

So reveille comes a bit later, hazing is less severe, upper classmen get progressively more privileges, the once uniform curriculum has been modified by the introduction of electives, more attention is paid to preparing students for graduate study, departmental structures become increasingly like those at civilian universities, and faculties become more professional (to the extent that professionalism can be measured by training and research activity). The result is that, while the service academies undoubtedly attract a less cosmopolitan clientele than, say, Ivy League or prestigious state universities, these differences are likely to be narrowed rather than widened by the experience young men have at the academies today.

There are limits to the notion that the academies can or should be made to resemble civilian universities. For one thing they operate in four fields simultaneously: liberal arts, engineering, military science and what can only be called character formation. That is why the students' time

is overscheduled so outrageously. And one of these fields—character formation—has no counterpart at most nonsectarian universities. Its importance derives directly from the persistence of the combat ethos, even in this age of technological warfare. Order, precision, discipline, loyalty and courage are prized by military leaders because they are helpful in the confusion and peril of battle. Such virtues are not much enhanced by the kind of hard study or reasoned argument encountered in conventional education.

Perhaps our academies shouldn't try to do four jobs at once. Perhaps part of their work should be subcontracted to civilian universities. Perhaps it is unnecessary to imbue the entire officer corps with combat virtues. But Galloway and Johnson give little indication that they are interested in these larger issues.

Nor do they really come to terms with the argument for the very existence of service academies. The argument may not be fully persuasive, but neither is it trivial. Its first assumption is that America is a great power and, as such, requires a sizable corps of able officers. The second is that America is also a liberal society in which young men of talent and ambition do not flock to military careers. How, then, are we to get and keep officers of the quality and quantity required? Galloway and Johnson cite figures that prove that the academies find this hard enough. Yet the academies do better than ROTC. One wonders what would be the effect of destructive criticism of the service academies combined with a continuing assault of the kind that has been mounted against ROTC at some of the country's more famous educational institutions.

The balance of this book can be dismissed more briefly. Page after tedious page is devoted to the influence of West Pointers in defense industry, the mass media and the higher reaches of government. To prove that this influence has been used to promote militarism, reaction and bigotry, Galloway and Johnson sermonize on historical events, e.g., "West Pointers immediately prac-

ticed their professionalism against the American Indians, but those heathens were eliminated all too quickly." They also quote at length from the West Point alumni magazine, blissfully unaware that comparably lurid stuff could be culled from the alumni magazines of some distinguished civilian institutions. Indeed, one of the many flaws in this study is its failure to distinguish between attitudes unique to military leaders and those shared by society at large.

The absence of this distinction reflects the theoretical emptiness of the work as a whole. Data it has aplenty. One can almost see the tall stacks of file cards laden with biographical information on prominent West Point alumni. But with the guiding design so fragmentary and insubstantial, one is left with the ironic conclusion that Galloway and Johnson are given to at least one vice often attributed to the military: a disposition to saturate the target with firepower instead of a discriminating effort to relate means to ends.

Better books in the same area? Try Ward Just's *Military Men* (Knopf, 1970) or William L. Hausser's *American Army in Crisis* (The Johns Hopkins Press, 1973).

Frantz Fanon: A Critical Study by Irene L. Gendzier (Random House; 300 pp.; \$10.00)

Donald L.W. Howie

Fanon's social and political thought has been distorted by detractors and panegyrists alike. His ideas have been invoked by both professional ideologues and serious scholars either to celebrate or condemn the violence of the oppressed. The depth of his very special analysis and vision of political reality has thus been reduced to his concern with political violence. This obsession with the

idea of violence, ironically imputed to Fanon, does violence to the intellectual and social integrity of Fanon's works as well as to the cardinal ideals of critical analysis. Professor Gendzier's "critical study" is to be welcomed for its departure from this customary simplification.

This political biography analyzes Fanon's intellectual and political development in three main phases, culminating in his "majestic" *Wretched of the Earth*. First, says Gendzier, is Fanon's "search for roots"; then his psychiatric experience in colonial Algeria; third is his active participation in the Algerian National Liberation Front. Fanon's identity crisis was caught up in his attempt to synthesize his West Indian (Martiniquean) heritage, the intellectual influences of European dialecticians (Hegel, Marx, Sartre) and his psychiatric training. This embryonic phase of his development reveals intellectual eclecticism as a crisis of identification, adaptation and commitment.

Acting upon the more radical premises of psychiatry, Fanon decided to practice psychotherapy in colonial Algeria. But the totalistic domination of human relationships and self-concepts by the colonial system of rule compelled him to recognize that psychiatry was futile without revolutionary action. Thus driven toward political activity, Fanon resigned the practice of psychiatry and fully embraced revolutionary struggle. Fanon's "militant phase" emerged with his immersion in the FLN. His services ranged from medical assistance to official representation of the FLN in Africa. His revolutionary participation in the Algerian struggle became the empirical, historical basis of his speculative analysis and revolutionary prophecy in *Wretched of the Earth*.

Concluding with the analysis of that book, Gendzier properly assesses the role of violence in Fanon's system, recognizing the more enduring dimensions of his enquiry into the nature of the colonial universe. Gendzier focuses especially on Fanon's analysis of the pitfalls and limits of nationalism and political indepen-