

Soldiers in Revolt: The American Military Today

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SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: THE AMERICAN MILITARY TODAY by DAVID CORTRIGHT. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday. Graphs; bibliography; appendices; index. 1975. Pp. ix + 317. \$7.95 cloth.

The greater portion of this work is a compilation of unsubstantiated accounts of in-service military resistance and violence. Collected from underground anti-military newspapers, these stories purport to convince the reader that the "GI Movement" was responsible for, among other things, the withdrawal of United States troops from Viet Nam, the end of the draft, and the liberalization of several of the armed services. Why the author would expect the mature observer to believe, for example, that a handful of protesting servicemen caused complete divisions to lose their military effectiveness is a mystery. While the immediate rationale given for most of the incidents is the alleged abuse of enlisted men in the nation's defense forces, Cortright is not hesitant to exclaim that such activities will continue as long as the United States maintains its "imperialistic" and "interventionistic" ways.

The author's honesty is commendable, but the nearly outright admissions of his socialistic inclinations cloud the objectivity of his efforts. Defending drug abuse, supporting the actions of stockade prisoners regardless of the reasons for confinement, encouraging treasonous counter-intelligence efforts, and bragging of GI sabotage to military equipment are illustrative of the writer's uninhibited ideology. Perhaps the most incredible statement is the justification of "fragging" officers, *i.e.*, maiming and killing by use of hidden grenades. This, says Cortright, is an "essential tool of soldier democracy." No doubt many servicemen have legitimate complaints of their treatment in military hands, but the author's attempt to tie all in-service activism to the political "GI Movement" is ridiculous. Racism within the uniformed ranks, a valid concern, is described fairly well. However, most Americans recognize the fact that racism did not originate in the services.

At the end of the book one finds several proposals for military reform. The reader cannot help but wonder, however, if the author has read his own words. At one point Cortright complains of the high cost of recruiting, and then later suggests an elaborate incentive which would guarantee all servicemen four years of fully paid vocational or academic training. Further, a volunteer armed forces is demanded while an end is sought to high school Junior ROTC.

The only legitimate purpose of military service, according to Cortright,

is personal benefit from the experience; the duty to serve in the nation's defense is not mentioned. This work is not a true synopsis of "The American Military Today." It is merely an exhaustive, yet careless, effort by the author to justify his political views by swamping the reader with inaccurate and irrelevant material. For those sincerely interested in understanding military reality, this book is not recommended.

C. H. Morrison, Jr.