

on the part of the South Vietnamese in the face of the growing American determination to abandon them to their fate.

Todd makes some points that even specialists will enjoy pondering. For instance, he thinks the Southern forces missed their major opportunity for survival in April 1975 by not withdrawing from Saigon into the Mekong, where the Communists had traditionally lacked popular support and where the North Vietnamese army could have followed only with great difficulty. He grasps the fact that the superb eleventh-hour defense of Zuan Loc by troops that nobody ever called first-class occurred mainly because the soldiers there knew that their families were to the south of them, that is, in the rear (unlike the forces in the northern regions whose understandable anxiety to get their relatives to safety resulted in the disintegration of whole divisions).

Many small touches give the book immediacy and vigor: the real nuggets gathered from the want ads and personal columns of the Saigon press; a brief sketch in acid of Nelson Rockefeller as an insensitive buffoon; the identification of TIME magazine's principal Vietnamese correspondent as a Hanoi agent.

Cruel April is valuable not only as an account of the last days of America's abandoned ally but also as an almost clinical look at what individuals and bureaucracies perceive and how they behave on the verge of an historic debacle.

Todd maintains that the agony of South Viet Nam provided time for most of the other states of South East Asia to get their houses in order, and that today nobody in the region is ignorant of what life is like in Communist Viet Nam. This may be true. Today everybody agrees that the Hanoi regime is awful, but so what? The real question is why were so many, including the well-informed and the highly placed, so blind to the truth about Hanoi at the time? Up to now, nobody has succeeded in giving us an answer to this question that we can use in the future.

Anthony James Joes
Saint Joseph's University

Pinkney, Robert. *Right-Wing Military Government*. London: Frances Pinter, 1990

Robert Pinkney's book is part of a series on Right-wing ideology and politics. It was therefore inevitable that military government would have to be considered, despite the fact that the concept of Right-wingery is perhaps especially complex in developing countries where after all, almost all recent military governments have occurred. Another complexity is that the countries which have suffered Right-wing military regimes themselves vary greatly both in terms of cultural background and level of socio-economic develop-

ment. It is a common error made in the developed democracies to think that the Third World is relatively homogenous. In fact (to take two examples from the book), Chile has more in common with Spanish-speaking Europe than it does with Indonesia.

The author does fully understand these problems and wrestles with them manfully. Even he is forced to a highly agnostic conclusion as to the conceptual value of the category which (one presumes) he was landed with by his publisher. It is certainly true that military regimes, where sufficient military unity exists, can impose rule which is effective in the short run even on quite highly developed societies. It is also true that, as Pinkney points out, Right-wing military governments rarely build institutions which outlast them; they are followed either by a transition to a quite different form of government, or by a relapse into chaos. Beyond these conclusions, there is essentially variety and multiplicity.

This reviewer fully shares the agnosticism, but also agrees that the book was worth attempting despite the limited conclusions which can be drawn from so broad a theme. A possible alternative treatment might have consisted of a detailed study of a few specifically counter-mobilizing military regimes such as Franco's Spain, Pinochet's Chile and (possibly) Zia's Pakistan. However this may be, Pinkney fully brings in the reader in his efforts to battle open-mindedly with the evidence. This, in itself, is something from which students can learn.

Moreover, even though the theme itself is very broad, Pinkney does have many interesting things to say about his chosen topic. His has read the secondary literature closely and writes well. Students and even academics reading this book will learn a good deal about the politics of specific countries and the role of the military within them. This, in itself, makes the book a very useful contribution to the literature.

George Philip
London School of Economics

Cammack, Diana. *The Rand at War, 1899-1902*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990.

The outbreak of the Boer War in 1899 created storm of controversy at the time, and has led to frequent and heated debate on many occasions since. Nevertheless, the traditional British view has been that a war was forced on the reluctant imperial government by the intransigent republican government of Paul Kruger. A government which was, moreover, denying basic civil rights, such as the right to vote, to a mainly British Uitlander population living on the Rand. According to the legend, it was the united appeals of these Uitlanders which led first to negotiations and when these broke down, to a war