Southern Political Science Association

Military Professionalization and Political Power. by Bengt Abrahamsson

Review by: Richard H. Kraemer

The Journal of Politics, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Feb., 1973), pp. 246-247

Published by: [Cambridge University Press](#) on behalf of the [Southern Political Science Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2129063>

Accessed: 04/02/2014 13:34

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Cambridge University Press and Southern Political Science Association are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of Politics*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Military Professionalization and Political Power. By BENGT ABRAHAMSSON. (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1972. Pp. 184. \$10.00.)

Bengt Abrahamsson has written a valuable albeit brief work on the place of the military profession in contemporary society. While attempting to present a truly comparative study, the unevenness of the available research literature results in heavy reliance on American and Western European authors. The Third World and the Communist nations are barely mentioned.

Abrahamsson's major thesis is that, in the Western World at least, the historical development of the military profession (professionalism₁) and the processes of recruitment, indoctrination and promotion (professionalism₂), have provided the military with the means both for implanting values in the larger society, "normative influence," and with "military political power" for "overcoming resistance to decisions that have (or may have) consequences for the military establishment." The author views military influence and military political power negatively, because the military, like other professions, necessarily has values and objectives contradictory to those of the larger society and the military alone among the professions has the capacity to take over illegally and manage the society for an indefinite period of time. Such a takeover is possible not only because military officers command the armed forces, but because modern military managers are also capable of everything from conducting research to operating an intercontinental retail sales facility.

In expounding this thesis, Abrahamsson has convincingly refuted the comforting conclusion reached by Samuel Huntington some 15 years ago, in *The Soldier and The State*, that increasing professionalism could and would separate the military from politics and render civilian control more effective. On the other hand, the author has developed further the concept of the military mind to which Huntington made a substantial contribution. Abrahamsson concludes that the major components of the military mind are five in number: nationalism, pessimistic beliefs about human nature, alarmism (similar to Yarmolinsky's worst-case planning), political

conservatism, and authoritarianism. These are all shown to be stronger among higher ranks, but to be independent of age.

The work is not without weaknesses. The author's basic orientation and assumptions seem to follow Harold Lasswell's Garrison State Hypothesis, yet Lasswell's great contribution has not been noted. In contrast, Morris Janowitz is mentioned 26 times, all uncritically. More important, on the matter of retired American soldiers employed by the defense industry, the author is apparently unaware of the data gathered by Adam Yarmolinsky (*The Military Establishment*, pp. 62-68) which show that there is little correlation between the number of retired military on the payroll and success in landing defense contracts. Abrahamsson seems to make the logical but inaccurate assumption that such a correlation exists. Finally, the book is marred by occasionally awkward use of language and by an extraordinary number of typographical errors; a final proofreading was badly needed.

None of this, however, prevents Abrahamsson from making a fine contribution in delineating the place of the military in contemporary Western society.

RICHARD H. KRAEMER, *University of Texas at Austin*

Poverty, Politics, and Change. By DOROTHY B. JAMES. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972. Pp. xi, 164.)

Historically, American social philosophy has provided two sharply divergent and highly simplified theories of why people are poor. One argument reflects the influence of Calvin, Locke, and the poor laws of sixteenth century England. It blames the poor for their poverty, finding the cause in individual weakness and depravity. The other argument takes some cues from Saul Alinsky and contends that the social, economic, and political systems of American society create and sustain poverty. The individual is absolved of any personal responsibility for his condition. Obviously, different