In 1970, the Red Army Faction declared war on West Germany. The militants failed to bring down the state, but, this book argues, the decade-long debate they inspired helped shape a new era. After 1945, West Germans answered long-standing doubts about democracy's viability and fears of authoritarian state power with a “militant democracy” empowered against its enemies and a popular commitment to antifascist resistance. In the 1970s, these postwar solutions brought Germans into open conflict, fighting to protect democracy from both terrorism and state overreaction. Drawing on diverse sources, Karrin Hanshew shows how Germans, faced with a state of emergency and haunted by their own history, managed to learn from the past and defuse this adversarial dynamic. This negotiation of terror helped them to accept the Federal Republic of Germany as a stable, reformable polity and to reconceive of democracy’s defense as part of everyday politics.

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Abbreviations

APO  Extraparliamentary Opposition
ASa  Student Government
BBU  Federal Association of Citizens’ Initiatives for Environmental Protection
BfV  Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution
BGS  Federal Border Guard
BKA  Federal Criminal Office
BMI  Federal Ministry of Interior
BMJ  Federal Ministry of Justice
BND  Federal Intelligence Agency
BPB  Federal Office for Political Education
BUU  Lower Elbe Environmental Protection Citizens’ Initiative
CDU  Christian Democratic Union
CSU  Christian Social Union
FBI  U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation
FDP  Liberal Democratic Party
FRG  Federal Republic of Germany
GDR  German Democratic Republic
GG  Basic Law
IRA  Irish Republican Army
KBW  West German Communist League
KPD  German Communist Party
MfS  East German Ministry for State Security
NATO  North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PFLP  Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
RAF  Red Army Faction
RC  Republican Club
RZ  Red Cells
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<thead>
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Nazi Stormtroopers</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDS</td>
<td>German Socialist Student League</td>
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<tr>
<td>SED</td>
<td>East German Socialist Unity Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHB</td>
<td>Social Democratic Student Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPD</td>
<td>Social Democratic Party</td>
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