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978-1-107-01737-5 - Terror and Democracy in West Germany

Karrin Hanshew

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Terror and Democracy in West Germany

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.

Karrin Hanshew is an assistant professor of history at Michigan State University.

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Abbreviations

APO	Extraparliamentary Opposition
AStA	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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SA	Nazi Stormtroopers
SDS	German Socialist Student League
SED	East German Socialist Unity Party
SHB	Social Democratic Student Association
SPD	Social Democratic Party