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David Clay Large. *Germans to the Front: West German Rearmament in the Adenauer Era.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996. x + 327 pp. $59.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8078-2235-7; $24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8078-4539-4.

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David Clay Large's impressive scholarship examines Konrad Adenauer's struggle to regain a respected place in the West for Germany through the issue of rearmament. In this endeavor, the Chancellor was usually supported by the United States, which wished to use a recent enemy to defend against a recent ally. With the happy ending of 1989, some devotion to detail is required if the reader is to follow the tortuous plot of pushing and pulling in Bonn, Paris, London, and Washington. Although Large's recounting does not change the story's essence, it offers new insights into its players and their complex motivations. The book's value is enhanced by Large's objectivity–all sides receive frequent and serious criticism, except the Soviets, whose off-stage role was the rationale for rearmament.

The process began with the American judgment of military weakness and the nightmare of Russian tanks racing to the sea. Already in 1947, U.S. Army plans included integrating Germany and Japan into American strategy (p. 35). German soldiers were necessary to have a chance to halt Communism, but their integration into an international force was thought necessary to prevent the two-time enemy from threatening again. Franz-Josef Strauss expressed the strangeness of the prescribed rearmament: it was to "deter the Russians but not scare the Belgians" (p. 86). One such solution was to keep Germans as riflemen without modern weapons, but the natural reaction of such riflemen was "ohne mich."

Large accepts the common judgment that Adenauer was more interested in unity with Western Europe than with Eastern Germany (p. 52). The Allied impulse to make decisions over his head dovetailed nicely with his own tactic of keeping the Bundestag and the public uninformed. With only a twenty-four per cent approval of his foreign policy, rearmament would be palatable only if the Allies made some generous gesture. This they resisted for fear of giving him too much leverage (p. 91). Bonn's hard-to-get stance was welcome to Paris, where in 1951, the French detoured the road to rearmament into the ill-fated European Defense Community. Adenauer also had to contend with the Soviet offer of German unity for the price of not joining the West. His rearmament expert Theodor Blank explained candidly: Adenauer needed "to feign flexibility in order to be free to go with the West." A plebiscite could have ended the chancellor's *Europapolitik* and brought down his "dam against neutralist socialism and militant neo-nationalism" (p. 133). He objected to the Soviet insistence on the Potsdam boundaries. "Here again," Large writes, "he was undoubtedly being disingenuous for in reality he cared little for the recovery of these territories, but by demanding their return he could effectively undermine the Soviet initiative without appearing to be un-German" (p. 149).

Adenauer also had to make an honest break with the *Wehrmacht*. This issue involved the "innere Fuehrung," advanced by Count Wolf von Baudissin, who linked the honored Prussian tradition with a more democratic military: "Blank was so concerned with selling rearmament that he used the reform program as a public relations smoke screen to hide less salutary realities" (p. 184). Some famous World War II generals resisted serving with others who had "broken their oath to the Fuehrer." Veterans' criticisms ensured that the *Bundeswehr* would take as much criticism from the unreconstructed Right as the reconstructionist Left.

The German conception was considerably more liberal than the French military, which remained based on unconditional obedience. Blank described its *discipline generale* as "worse than anything the Nazis had tried to do." Nor was the American military a model. "The Americans understood democracy in military organization to mean little more than guaranteeing soldiers' basic civil rights and promotion by merit. They did not countenance any dilution of traditional hierarchical structure....The Korean War suggested to German observers that there were fundamental deficiencies in the American military's

training, discipline and morale" (p. 198).

The French Assembly's rejection of the EDC in August 1954 necessitated a whole new debate. Anthony Eden saved German rearmament by using NATO, which became Adenauer's "ladder out of the pit of the past" (p. 205). Its delayer was Pierre Mendes-France, whom "the great snob" Eden regarded as a parvenu (John Foster Dulles was "a meddlesome bore" [p. 216]). Eisenhower huffed, "The French have not only disturbed the whole free world, they're cutting in on my (golf) lesson" (p. 222). Creating the last hurdle, Moscow offered in January 1955 "a free all-German election." Although unification was more popular than rearmament, on 5 May 1955 the Allied High Commission abrogated the Occupation Statute and, as Dulles announced, Bonn became "a member of the club."

With the Social Democrats pushing for a more democratic army, Bonn devoted extraordinary efforts to create a new kind of army. "Certainly," Larges notes, "it was 'cleaner' with respect to the Nazi past than the judiciary or civil service, not to mention academia" (p. 238). Soldiers complained that some American-made weapons were inferior to those of the *Wehrmacht*, and they soon returned to the old style of saluting and standing at attention, but their barracks were permitted more individuality than were the American. West Point, founded on the Prussian model, was "the last stronghold of Frederick's Prussian discipline" (p. 246). The early chaos stemmed less from the reforms than from the overly ambitious buildup schedule, for "Not even Hitler, some critics noted, had tried to field so many men in so short a time" (p. 247). Adenauer replaced the loyal Blank with the critical Strauss, who bragged he would put rearmament on a realistic basis, even if this meant "dropping his pants" before Bonn's allies (p. 262). He allowed the new army to flounder between the aspirations of the reformers and the restorationist practices of some local commanders. Its lack of popularity led Baudissin to conclude that the *Bundeswehr* had survived a difficult birth only to become an unwanted child. But the child was Adenauer's means to an end. That his ends were reached is one justification. The other is that the *Bundeswehr* constituted no danger to German democracy or any neighbor.

This study will likely be the enduring analysis of this particular aspect of Western diplomacy. The reader will have to wait for similar research based on Soviet archives to judge the true effect of German rearmament on Soviet policy toward Germany and the West.

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