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Karrin Hanshew. *Terror and Democracy in West Germany.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 290 pp. $99.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-107-01737-5.

Reviewed by Sarah E. Summers (Ryerson University)

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Terrorism, Violence, and the Transformation of West German Political Culture

In her first monograph, *Terror and Democracy in West Germany*, Karrin Hanshew offers an intricate and intriguing look at the role of terrorism in delineating acceptable violence in a democracy, contesting the legacies of the student movement of the 1960s, and ultimately, legitimating the West German democratic system. Between 1970 and 1977, West Germans confronted a series of terrorist acts performed by a domestic left-leaning terrorist group, the Red Army Faction (RAF). Although authorities captured the first generation in 1972 after killing thirty-four persons, further generations of the RAF continued their attacks, climaxing in the German Autumn of 1977. Members of the RAF kidnapped and murdered Hanns Martin Schleyer, former SS officer and president of the German Employer's Association, while four members of the Palestinian Liberation Organization hijacked a Lufthansa plane and included the release of imprisoned RAF members in their demands.

The RAF has been the subject of uncritical histories and films, scholars have analyzed the RAF as a media event, and memory studies have examined RAF-led events as collective "historical trauma," but Hanshew situates the resolution of the German Autumn and the defeat of the RAF in a much more important place in German history: as the point when West Germans no longer feared, but began accepting the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). The past looms large in Hanshew's monograph. With memories of the Weimar Republic and National Socialism still fresh in their minds, West Germans' responses to terrorism were scrutinized for evidence of whether or not they had learned from their past. Rather than frame her monograph in terms of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* or "coming to terms with the past," Hanshew contends that rooted in the allusions to the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich was a long-term debate "over democracy and its ability to successfully confront a state of emergency" (p. 6). Therefore, for many Germans and the international community, the confrontation with terrorism was "a litmus test for German democracy" (p. 4).

Hanshew views the definition of "violence" as the central debate crucial to the security and stability of the Federal Republic. She argues that the debate over acceptable violence to defend against antidemocratic forces was framed in militant (*wehrhafte*) democracy–the active defense of the political system–and popular resistance (*widerstand*). By analyzing this debate beginning in the early days of the Weimar Republic, Hanshew's work reaffirms recent publications that challenge 1945 as a complete political, social, and cultural break. Perhaps more interesting for readers, however, is her challenge to the assertion that the 1960s were a rupture point in postwar political culture. She argues instead that the 1960s "were a crucial moment in which key conceptions of resistance and militant democracy were reaffirmed" (p. 8). She contends that the German Autumn was a defining moment for West German political culture as "West Germans revised long-standing assumptions about the state of democracy in Germany and acted to combat terrorism (and counterterrorism) accordingly" (p. 8). Ultimately, the successful containment of terrorism in the late 1970s without the collapse of the republic finally proved that West Germany was a "secure and reformable liberal democracy" (p. 14). Hanshew also argues that her analysis finds a more satisfying answer to the role of the New Left in West Germany's transition from the tension and turmoil of the 1960s to the "relatively civil society

of the 1980s" (p. 7). She maintains that the German Autumn reconfigured political alliances both in the major political parties and within the New Left, allowing for the successful integration of an activist population that had previously been a source of tension in West Germany.

The prologue, as well as the first two chapters, establishes the long-term debates over violence and emergency legislation beginning in the Weimar Republic. Chapter 1, "Democracy Made Militant," explores the debate between the left-leaning Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and the conservative Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) faction over the definition of "militant democracy" and the scope of emergency laws in the shadow of National Socialism and burgeoning postwar security risks from the Cold War. Hanshew contends that the Basic Law of 1949 should be seen as "the founders' attempt to realize a militant democracy" (p. 38). The differing views of the major threats to West German democracy and the best safeguards reflected each party's conflicting notions of democracy, the conditions for its success, and the shape of the new state. The SPD contended that if the state were a sound democratic institution, no emergency provisions would be necessary. If the state failed, the SPD believed that ordinary citizens functioned as the best and last means of protecting democracy. The CDU/CSU and liberal Free Democrats (FDP) maintained that emergency situations required different principles, thereby supporting the temporary suspension of democratic institutions. Hanshew argues that by the 1960s, the CDU/CSU became the champion of militant democracy. However, the exact parameters of democratic force and emergency legislation remained in flux until the passing of the 1968 Emergency Laws, which Hanshew demonstrates reflected a compromise between empowering the state and the people.

Chapter 2, "Disobedient Germans," follows the simultaneous discussion over the role of resistance and violence in the left after World War Two. Hanshew contends that the concept of resistance became the counterpart to militant democracy for those who believed West Germany's continued fascist potential. The failure of democracy in 1933 still loomed large for the left and they connected the weakness of German efforts to resist to the nation's lack of democratic political culture. Resistance was thus seen as important to a democracy, a means of checking the violence inherent in the democratic system. While the left remained aligned with the SPD in the 1950s in opposition to Konrad Adenauer's chancellorship, Hanshew demonstrates that when the SPD attempted to redefine itself in the 1950s, it split the left into two factions. Those left out of the party formed a "negative alliance" around the concept of civil disobedience and resistance against state violence. The New Left developed a concept of legitimate counterviolence when it connected the class struggle in Europe with the anticolonial movement in Vietnam and the experiences of militants in South America, Asia, and Africa. The concept of civil disobedience developed from their knowledge of the civil rights movement in the United States. Their interpretation of events around the globe stressed the need for defensive violence–by staging mass demonstrations and happenings, the left could bring out the violence inherent in the state and turn public opinion in their favor. The concept of violence was reinforced by the brutal responses of local police forces during demonstrations in the late 1960s. Hanshew is quick to refrain from making a strong connection between debates over violence and resistance in the New Left and the creation of the RAF. Rather, she demonstrates that the New Left debated extensively defensive versus offensive violence, the latter, for the majority, not fitting the aims of resistance.

Chapter 3 analyzes how the SPD turned its theories of militant democracy into practice after the party assumed the parliamentary majority after the 1969 election. To distance their counterterrorism measures from the CDU and CSU who now owned "militant democracy," the SPD proceeded with policies under the new phrase of "internal security." Hanshew argues that the SPD viewed terrorism as a product of wider social ills and intentionally responded by reforming resources already available rather than defying established norms and violating its stance on emergency laws. The SPD's rationalization of the West German police force, she notes, must be viewed in the context of the SPD's "coterminous goals" of democratization and modernization of society. Hanshew demonstrates that the party's tripartite policy of rationalization of the existing policing system, seeking new avenues of international cooperation, and education nonetheless elicited strong criticism both from the far left (even within its own party) who argued that technological advances went too far in creating fear and terror, and the right who felt that the SPD's policies did not go far enough to combat terrorism. The SPD's attempt to reign in this dissent, argues Hanshew, "made clear the SPD's schizophrenic relationship to state power and its increasing relevance to the party's future" (p. 151).

Chapter 4 unpacks the New Left's complicated relationship with the RAF and its effects on debate over violence. Hanshew argues that the members of the New Left

did not actively support political violence. Many in fact saw the RAF's actions as unwarranted and morally reprehensible. She contends, rather, that the discussion about armed resistance was mostly "hypothetical," and the "uneasy relationship" between the RAF and the New Left was maintained by the belief that solidarity was necessary for the future of their political movement (p. 153). Hanshew contextualizes the sense of solidarity within the anti-institutional characteristics of the New Left. The government's treatment of the original imprisoned RAF members and the SPD's general project of reform invoked the Orwellian "Big Brother" and led many in the New Left to question West German democracy and acceptable defense tactics. The left forged new protest networks, such as with the ecological movement and the women's movement. Hanshew argues that these "peripheral" movements challenged the postwar extraparliamentary left's concepts of violence and resistance as they became increasingly associated with violence and terrorism. The result was a "hairline crack in the negative alliance and [was] critical to leftists' later reorientation" (p. 154).

In chapter 5, focusing on the German Autumn of 1977, Hanshew demonstrates that the escalation of RAF activities forced the left to simultaneously confront its conceptions of resistance and militant democracy. She maintains that the German Autumn exposed the limitations of the New Left's discussion of violence. As the West German public continued to associate the New Left and the RAF, the left became further divided as advocates of self-critique attempted to revive the image of the New Left by bringing questions of solidarity with the RAF and violence to the forefront. While self-critique fell on deaf ears in the general public, the move effectively ended the "negative alliance" of the New Left, allowing for new relationships to develop in the FRG. The continued general frustration with RAF sympathizers also turned many liberal scholars (who had previously supported the left) into what Hanshew defines as "liberal conservatives" who called for strong state action against radicalism. The kidnapping of Schleyer and the hijacking of the Lufthansa flight in October 1977 also led the SPD to apply tactics they had previously deemed too extreme. The kidnapping resulted in the creation of the grand advisory committee, a bipartisan committee that effectively became the ruling body for six weeks. When the Lufthansa flight was hijacked, the SPD deployed the anti-terrorism GSG-9 unit. The successful retaking of the plane effectively "rehabilitated violence" in West Germany, confirming the SPD's own self-made image that their decisions differed greatly from the National Socialist state and even from what the FRG had been ten years before.

Hanshew explains the effects of the German Autumn spring on West German political culture in her concluding chapter. While she maintains that the changes in strategy for the New Left in the wake of Schleyer's murder were not monolithic, she nonetheless argues that a strong faction developed in the New Left that sought to reengage the political mainstream and support nonviolent tactics. For all the negative experiences of the New Left and the challenges to its civil liberties, she notes, the German Autumn proved to many members of the New Left that West German democracy was in fact a legitimate project of reform and reassessed the fascist potential of the government. The New Left replaced the image of victimhood with discourse to create a political culture focused on tolerance and plurality, as could be seen in the creation of the left mainstream newspaper *Tageszeitung* and the Green Party in the early 1980s. Furthermore, these new tactics incorporated former SPD members who split from the party due to its responses to terrorism. Hanshew also offers a connection between the German Autumn and West Germany's conservative turn in 1982 with the election of the CDU/CSU to the parliamentary majority. While protest was no longer seen as a threat to the republic, Hanshew contends that the German Autumn cast off the last vestiges of outdated platforms based on "security and freedom" and allowed for the full implementation of reforms started by Helmut Kohl and Karl Biedenkopf in the early 1970s. The CDU attempted to create a conservative community based in a strong sense of identity and shared values around family and nation. Furthermore, the CDU benefited from the incorporation of liberal conservatives, bringing a sense of "pragmatic decisionism and sober realism" to the CDU (p. 255). The fragmentations influenced by West Germany's experience with terrorism transformed both the right and the left in West Germany, thereby ushering in a political culture of civility that emphasized nonviolence as the only credible form of protest.

Hanshew's monograph makes an excellent case for the transformative effects of terrorism and fear and the importance of debates over security and violence to West German political culture. Her work is an interesting addition to a growing body of literature on West German civil society and political culture, as well as literature on the 1970s. Furthermore, her work is relevant to scholars of terrorism and counterterrorism. As a scholar who has also faced similar frustrations over the lack of evidentiary explanations for the New Left's influence, I find Hanshew's argument for the relationship between

terrorism and the transformation of the New Left very sound. While terrorism was not the only crisis faced by West Germans (recession, unemployment, birthrate decline) that finally allowed the CDU to wrestle control back from the SPD/FDP, Hanshew's explanation for the transformation of West German conservatism wrought by its experience with terrorism is an important addition to the understanding the causes of the conservative turn in the early 1980s. Hanshew's work is a stellar first monograph.

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