



Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies

Jeremy Peter Varon

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In this first comprehensive comparison of left-wing violence in the United States and West Germany, Jeremy Varon focuses on America's Weather Underground and Germany's Red Army Faction to consider how and why young, middle-class radicals in prosperous democratic societies turned to armed struggle in efforts to overthrow their states. Based on a wealth of primary material, ranging from interviews to FBI reports, this book reconstructs the motivation and ideology of violent organizations active during the 1960s and 1970s. Varon conveys the intense passions of the era--the heat of moral purpose, the depth of Utopian longing, the sense of danger and despair, and the exhilaration over temporary triumphs. Varon's compelling interpretation of the logic and limits of dissent in democratic societies provides striking insights into the role of militancy in contemporary protest movements and has wide implications for the United States' current "war on terrorism."

Varon explores Weatherman and RAF's strong similarities and the reasons why radicals in different settings developed a shared set of values, languages, and strategies. Addressing the relationship of historical memory to political action, Varon demonstrates how Germany's fascist past influenced the brutal and escalating nature of the West German conflict in the 60s and 70s, as well as the reasons why left-wing violence dropped sharply in the United States during the 1970s. *Bringing the War Home* is a fascinating account of why violence develops within social movements, how states can respond to radical dissent and forms of terror, how the rational and irrational can combine in political movements, and finally how moral outrage and militancy can play both constructive and destructive roles in efforts at social change.

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