



This paper was originally published by Cambridge University Press as:

Häberlen, J. C., & Smith, J. P. (2014). **Struggling for feelings: The politics of emotions in the radical new left in West-Germany, c.1968-84.** *Contemporary European History*, 23(4), 615–637.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777314000344>

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Contemporary European History / Volume 23 / Special Issue 04 / November 2014, pp 615 - 637
DOI: 10.1017/S0960777314000344, Published online: 02 October 2014

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0960777314000344

How to cite this article:

JOACHIM C. HÄBERLEN and JAKE P. SMITH (2014). Struggling for Feelings: The Politics of Emotions in the Radical New Left in West Germany, c.1968–84. Contemporary European History, 23, pp 615–637 doi:10.1017/S0960777314000344

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Abstract

The article discusses emotional politics in the radical left in West Germany from the late 1960s to the early 1980s. The first part analyses radical left-wing critiques of capitalism during the 1970s that focused on the emotions that capitalism allegedly produced. The article argues that activists described an ‘emotional regime’ of capitalism, but in doing so effectively instituted an emotional regime within their own milieu which made the expression of certain negative feelings, such as fear, imperative. The article then discusses emotional practices radical left-wingers developed in order to overcome the alleged ‘emotional void’ of capitalism. The article’s second part then focuses on the urban revolts of 1980–81 (mostly in Berlin). This revolt marked a decisive shift, as the centrality of fear, frustration and boredom was increasingly overshadowed by feelings of joy and ecstatic possibility. The article concludes by proposing that the alternative left contributed to the formulation of new emotional styles and norms in West German society at large.

In February 1977 in an article in the Frankfurt-based left-wing paper *Die Andere Zeitung*, an unnamed author explained why she had decided to throw a Molotov cocktail – called, rather cloyingly, a *Molli* in German – into a department store.¹

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We would like to thank the three anonymous peer reviewers for their critical and productive feedback, as well as Carla MacDougall, Russell Spinney, Marcel Streng, Kimba ‘Allie’ Tichenor and Andrew Tompkins for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article. Research for this article was funded by the Centre for the History of Emotions at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin; a Marie Curie Career Integration Grant from the EU; and the Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies.

¹ Anon., ‘Und dann habe ich einen Molli in ein Kaufhaus geschmissen’, *Die Andere Zeitung* 12, February 1977, 16. The text was republished in *radikal*, 74, 11 Jan.–1 Feb. 1980, 17, in the context of a series of articles on subjectivity and the new left. The gender of the author remains unknown; we will consistently use feminine pronouns.

The reasons for this act, the author explained, were not political in the traditional sense but ‘personal’. Throwing the *Molli* was a spontaneous act emerging from a ‘rather depressed mood, a heavy frustration with the party [*dicken Fetenfrust*]’ which she attended. According to her brief description, people at the party were incapable of communicating with each other because they were too afraid ‘to be misunderstood, to be refuted, or to talk too much about being damaged [*Kaputtheit*].’ Supporting her claims, the author then cited Dieter Duhm’s popular book *Fear in Capitalism* [*Angst im Kapitalismus*],² because it showed that her fears were not isolated but socially based. Duhm’s arguments uncovered an ‘emotional wire’ between the private and the political which enabled her to conceive of her feelings of inferiority [*Minderwertigkeitskomplex*] as systemic products of capitalism. The party’s failure to initiate any sort of positive feelings, then, was indicative not of personal failings but of the bankruptcy of emotions and sociability under conditions of capitalism.

The act of throwing the *Molli* proved to be an emotionally transformative moment. Although the author still felt deeply afraid while carrying the Molotov cocktail to the target, this changed when she finally stood in front of the store. Holding the *Molli* in her hand, she noted, ‘[it felt like] all the fear in me would liquefy and that this liquid would boil over inside me. I light a match, and throw the *Molli* and [with it] all the liquefied fear and damage out of me.’ It was a moment of personal catharsis. After a quick and fearful run home, she hugged her friends and comrades, who all ‘danced wildly and were mighty cheerful’. Apparently, the attack initiated a party that was much better than the boring affair that had led her to throw the Molotov cocktail in the first place. In the end, she admitted that throwing the Molotov cocktail would not advance the ‘cause of socialism’, but this was, after all, not really the point. Rather, she had come to realise that the slogan ‘Destroy What Is Destroying You’ reflected the truth.³ Fear and alienation, according to this logic, was a product of capitalist society which could only be overcome through intense, cathartic emotional experiences that were simultaneously highly personal and imminently social.

This was only one of many texts written by radical, so-called ‘non-dogmatic’ left-wingers during the 1970s that was concerned with emotions.⁴ Drawing in part upon

² Dieter Duhm, *Angst im Kapitalismus: 2. Versuch der gesellschaftlichen Begründung zwischenmenschlicher Angst in der kapitalistischen Warengesellschaft* (Lampertheim: Küber, 1973).

³ The slogan (in German) ‘Macht kaputt was euch kaputt macht’ was the title of a famous song by the political rock band Ton Steine Scherben.

⁴ Throughout the essay, we will use the term ‘radical left’ to describe the activists under discussion. In using this designation – which includes *Spontis*, *Alternative* and *Non-Dogmatic* groups, an altogether amorphous milieu – we mean to differentiate this particular segment of the West German left from the ‘New Left’ more broadly and from the so-called ‘K-Gruppen’ that proliferated in the 1970s. Crucially, this broad definition of an internally diverse milieu is not meant to serve as a marker for a well-defined group. There was, after all, no membership card for this milieu. On the ‘alternative milieu’, see above all Sven Reichardt, *Authentizität und Gemeinschaft: Linksalternatives Leben in den siebziger und frühen achtziger Jahren* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2014) and Sven Reichardt and Detlef Siegfried, eds, *Das Alternative Milieu: Antibürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa 1968–1983* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010).

earlier cultural critics and theorists, such as Wilhelm Reich and Herbert Marcuse,⁵ these authors developed a critique of urban, capitalist society that put emotions at the centre. Capitalism, these radical left-wingers argued, produced only fear, frustration, loneliness and boredom, leaving little space for any positive and intense feelings; it produced, in the language of contemporaries, ‘damaged personalities’. One might read these texts as a critical analysis of what could be called with William Reddy the ‘emotional regime’ of capitalism, that is the possibilities and limitations of emotional expression under capitalism.⁶ However, it would be misleading to consider these critiques of emotions under capitalism as purely analytical. Rather, texts such as Dieter Duhm’s *Fear in Capitalism* instructed readers of how they *should* feel in a capitalist society, namely afraid. In this sense, radical left-wingers did not so much analyse an existing ‘emotional regime’, but created one through the act of descriptive explication.

Importantly, this is not to argue that the ‘emotional suffering’ (Reddy) under capitalism was only imagined. Talking about feelings such as boredom, frustration and loneliness in capitalism was also a form of practical enactment of these emotions.⁷ Explicating the emotionally crippling effects of capitalism, however, also made it possible to develop what we call ‘alternative emotional practices’, practices, that is, which were meant both to ‘fix’ the damaged personalities and to yield the feelings activists so desperately missed under capitalism. Such practices could include violence, as the opening vignette suggests, but also other bodily practices like collective cuddling, experimental communicative practices, or novel forms of living together. Methodologically, then, our article is not concerned with accessing the emotional ‘inner self’ of West German activists. Rather, it seeks to move beyond the unfruitful distinction between true ‘inner’ feelings and the mere ‘expression’ of feelings by focusing on how people *did* emotions (Monique Scheer) and thereby shaped the contours of the self. These enacted feelings are social products, but by no means unreal.

Alternative newspapers and journals from a wide variety of West German cities – most notably the centres of the non-dogmatic left such as West Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich, and Heidelberg, but also from less prominent places throughout West

⁵ See, e.g., Wilhelm Reich, *The Sexual Revolution: Toward a Self-Governing Character Structure* (New York: Orgone Institute Press, 1945) and Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955). It should be noted at this point that while Marcuse and Reich drew on a long tradition of Marxist critiques of alienation in urban life, it is beyond this article’s reach to explore the genealogy of left-wing emotional politics.

⁶ William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). It would certainly be misleading to overestimate the strictness of this regime. Yet, we find the term helpful because it emphasises the prescriptive dimension of the emotional knowledge new left-wingers created and therefore prefer it vis-à-vis the notion of ‘emotional communities’ that Barbara Rosenwein suggested, see Barbara Rosenwein, ‘Worrying about Emotions in History’, *American Historical Review*, 107 (2002), 821–45, and *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

⁷ See Monique Scheer, ‘Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion’, *History and Theory*, 51 (2012), 193–220; Pascal Eitler and Monique Scheer, ‘Emotionengeschichte als Körpergeschichte: Eine heuristische Perspektive auf religiöse Konversionen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 35 (2009), 282–313.

Germany – have proved to be ideal sources with which to trace the critical analysis of capitalism's emotional regime. These papers provide significant insights both into how radical left-wingers in West Germany created and enacted emotional norms and into their attempts to develop alternative emotional practices. In particular the numerous experience reports (*Erfahrungsberichte*) are extremely revealing in this regard. Although only loosely connected with each other on an institutional level, many of these papers were in dialogue with each other and can thus be conceived as the discursive product of a distinct milieu, albeit one with highly permeable boundaries.⁸

Analysing how radical left-wingers critically interpreted the feelings capitalism produced and the alternative emotional practices they developed, our article will reconsider the place of the radical left within the history of the Federal Republic in the post-1968 period. Scholars have often noted the deeply emotional language used by many activists, but have rarely analysed the central role emotions played in theoretical critiques and political practices.⁹ In a way, the radical left 'scene' – with its numerous consciousness-raising and therapy groups – created what might be called a therapeutic community in which talking about 'damaged personalities' helped to give shape both to the problem and the potential solution. In this sense, radical left-wingers can be considered part of a larger 'therapy boom' that included self-help groups as well as a New Age scene which sometimes overlapped with the alternative left-wing milieu.¹⁰ This therapy boom has been, quite productively, interpreted in

⁸ In total, we have consulted some ninety newspapers and journals, though we do not refer to all of them in this article. Some were small and short-lived, others appeared over several years on a bi-weekly basis.

⁹ On the New Left and the broader left-wing subculture, see, among others: Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried, eds, *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960–1980* (New York: Berghahn, 2006); Belinda Davis, 'What's Left? Popular and Democratic Political Participation in Postwar Europe', *American Historical Review*, 113 (2008), 363–90; Belinda Davis, Wilfried Mausbach, Martin Klimke, and Carla MacDougall, eds, *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s* (New York: Berghahn, 2010); Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 341–490; Martin Klimke, Jacco Pekelder and Joachim Scharloth, eds, *Between Prague Spring and French May: Opposition and Revolt in Europe, 1960–1980* (New York: Berghahn, 2011); Gerd Koenen, *Das rote Jahrzehnt: Unsere kleine deutsche Kulturrevolution, 1967–1977* (Cologne: Kiepenhauer and Witsch, 2001); Ruud Koopmanns, *Democracy from Below: New Social Movements and the Political System in West Germany* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995); Aribert Reimann, Dieter Kunzelmann: *Avantgardist, Protestler, Radikaler* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2009); Timothy Brown and Lorena Anton, eds, *Between the Avant-Garde and the Everyday: Subversive Politics in Europe from 1957 to the Present* (New York: Berghahn, 2011); Timothy C. Brown, *West Germany and the Global 1960s: The Antiauthoritarian Revolt, 1962–1978* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and Robert Gildea, James Mark, and Anette Warring, *Europe's 1968: Voices of Revolt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹⁰ See for the German context Sabine Maasen, Jens Elberfeld, Pascal Eitler and Maik Tändler, eds, *Das beratene Selbst: Zur Genealogie der Therapeutisierung in den 'langen' Siebzigern* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2011); Uffa Jensen and Maik Tändler, eds, *Das Selbst zwischen Anpassung und Befreiung: Psychowissen und Politik im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2013); Pascal Eitler, "'Alternative' Religion: Subjektivierungspraktiken und Politisierungsstrategien im "New Age" (Westdeutschland 1970–1990)", in Reichardt and Siegfried, eds, *Das alternative Milieu*, 335–52, and 'Privatisierung und Subjektivierung: Religiöse Selbstverhältnisse im "New Age"', in Norbert Frei and Dietmar Süß, eds, *Privatisierung: Idee und Praxis seit den 1970er Jahren* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), 140–56; and Benjamin Ziemann, *Katholische Kirche und Sozialwissenschaften 1945–1975* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2007), 300–14.

the context of new forms of subjectivity that centred around emotions and the body. In many ways, we can see similar forms of a 'somatisation' and 'emotionalisation' of subjectivities within the radical left studied here.¹¹ At the same time, the emotional politics of the radical left contributed to the emergence of new styles and practices of expressing and performing emotions that reached beyond the radical left milieu. Within radical left milieus of the 1970s, the intense labour involved in overcoming 'damaged personalities' was considered to be inherently political. The ultimate goal of self-transformation was, then, not merely therapeutic, but transformational in a political sense. The radical left offers thus another and perhaps particularly extreme example of the ways in which the 'realm of politics and the private sphere' fused.¹²

This 'therapeutisation' of both the radical left and society more broadly did not, however, go uncontested. The late 1970s mark a turning point in this regard as many radical left-wingers increasingly criticised the depoliticising effects of the turn to therapeutic subjectivity.¹³ Facing political and emotional impasses after the brutal battles at Brokdorf in 1976 and the wave of left-wing terrorism and harsh government reactions in the autumn of 1977, some activists wholeheartedly embraced the therapeutic self by turning to a variety of new strategies to 'find' emotions, such as esotericism. Others began to distance themselves from the notion that social and political change required 'fixing' their 'damaged personalities' and turned to more conventional forms of politics. In much of the radical left, however, an altogether different tendency emerged, as the 'preventive sense of general fear' that had characterised much left-wing thought and practice in the mid 1970s receded and gave way to more euphoric forms of political activism. The large Tübingen congress of February 1978 in West Berlin was a first major indication of this shift, which reached its apogee during the youth revolts of 1980–81, the subject of the final section of this article. These revolts presented, we propose, a cathartic moment for the radical left, an exceptional moment of exuberant joy that pushed beyond the predominant sense of fear and frustration that was prevalent during the 1970s. It was a culmination of a long search for exciting and intense emotions, and, at the same time, a revolt against the self-absorbed and increasingly depoliticised 'therapeutic community' to which much of the radical left had turned. These revolts were no longer about 'fixing damaged personalities', but about finding exuberant emotions in liminal moments.

¹¹ See Maasen et al., eds, *Das beratene Selbst*, esp. the contribution by Pascal Eitler, "'Selbstheilung': Zur Somatisierung und Sakralisierung von Selbstverhältnissen im New Age (Westdeutschland 1970–1990)", 161–82.

¹² Till van Rahden, 'Clumsy Democrats: Moral Passions in the Federal Republic', *German History*, 29 (2011), 504. In contrast to van Rahden, however, we are not interested in the 'nexus between democracy and intimacy', but in the relation between the political and the private. See also Geoff Eley, 'Wie denken wir über die Politik? Alltagsgeschichte und die Kategorie des Politischen', in Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt, ed., *Alltagskultur, Subjektivität und Geschichte: Zur Theorie und Praxis von Alltagsgeschichte* (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 1994), 17–36.

¹³ An entire issue of *Carlo Spinti*, Jan. 1977, was dedicated to different forms of therapies. For critical voices, see, e.g., Werner, 'Der Neue Typ, Teil III', *Das Blatt*, 138, 26 Jan.–8 Feb. 1979, 26–7 and Matthias Watermann, 'Wider die Marginalisierung des Subjekts', *Schwarzer Faden*, 1 (April 1980), 9–20. An interesting analytical account of the relation between subjectivity and politics is provided by Anon., 'statt eines Forums: Subjektiver Mischmasch', *radikal*, 11 Jan.–1 Feb. 1980, 16–17.

A world devoid of emotions: radical left-wingers' critique of capitalist emotions

In numerous texts, radical left-wing authors developed a corpus of knowledge about the emotional self and the ways in which capitalism produced 'damaged personalities'.¹⁴ Three aspects are of particular interest for our article. First, radical left-wingers analysed the allegedly omnipresent sense of fear in capitalism; second, they focused on feelings of loneliness and the inability to engage in meaningful social relations; and third, perhaps seemingly in contradiction to the previous two claims, they argued that capitalism created an overly 'rational' world that left no space for the expression of feelings. It was exactly this impossibility of expressing feelings, both good and bad, that created feelings of fear and loneliness. People were, for example, lonely, precisely because they could, in the rational world of capitalism, not talk about this loneliness, nor about their fears. In this sense, the emotional void of capitalism and the predominance of fear and other negative feelings went hand in hand in radical left-wingers' minds. Furthermore we argue that developing this knowledge was itself generative of emotional realities. Radical left-wingers, in other words, both created and enacted their 'damaged personalities' and in so doing set emotional norms. Those who acted and felt otherwise – by, for example, enjoying the vast riches offered by capitalist consumer culture or finding emotional fulfilment in work – were derided as having been duped by capitalist ideology. Such forms of pleasure, radical left-wingers argued, were not reflective of genuine feelings.¹⁵

There were, according to radical left-wingers, multiple social and political problems that gave reason for fear: the danger of nuclear warfare, the destruction of the environment, but also the emergence of a computerised surveillance state. However, it would be misleading to analyse these distinct fears separately. More important was a 'general precautionary sense of fear' (*vorbeugende Grundangsthaltung*) in 'this crackbrained society' that could not be escaped.¹⁶ This general sense of fear was, as Dieter Duhm argued in his widely read book *Fear in Capitalism*, intimately tied to the very structures of capitalism. In capitalism, people treated each other as commodities rather than human beings, were subjected to alienation and seemingly anonymous powers outside their control, and had to constantly compete with each other and perform well on the job. According to Duhm, these features created deep-seated anxiety. Even love relations were caught in the mire of capitalist sociality, since such relationships first required those involved to overcome their alienation and

¹⁴This is not to claim that left-wingers in the 1970s were the first to engage with this subject. The intellectual genealogies of this critique are, however, beyond the purview of this article.

¹⁵See, e.g., New Left novels and plays for children and teenagers, like Werner Geifrig, *Bravo, Girl! Ein Stück für Lehrlinge, Junge Arbeiter, Schulabgänger und ihre Eltern* (Munich: Weismann, 1975) and Helma Fehrmann, Jürgen Flügge, and Holger Franke, *Was heisst hier Liebe? Ein Spiel um Liebe und Sexualität für Leute in und nach der Pubertät* (Munich: Weismann, 1977).

¹⁶Anon., 'Die Sprache von Bäumen [sic] und Vögeln [sic]', *Autonomie: Materialien gegen die Fabrikgesellschaft*, 10, Jan. 1978, 70–2.

mutual fears.¹⁷ Oftentimes, this discourse about fear was deeply gendered. Boys, for example, a brochure for men, *Mannsbild*, argued, were taught by their fathers that real men knew no fears, except one: 'not being a real man'.¹⁸ The Frankfurt-based student paper *Diskus* explicitly linked men's fear to capitalism, noting that men were forced to compete with one another due to their position as the main breadwinners of the family. Showing feelings in this situation would be impossible.¹⁹

Such fears were, as the text discussed at the beginning of this article indicated, a source of loneliness and isolation. Time and again, radical left-wingers reported that they had gone to bars or parties and failed to engage in genuine communication due to their fear of revealing their true 'damaged self'.²⁰ Teenage boys described their attempts to escape loneliness through state-sanctioned forms of entertainment such as clubs and discos. But these forms of escape proved untenable because the loud music only further accentuated speechlessness.²¹ To a large degree, radical left-wingers held the built environment responsible for this social isolation.²² They claimed that modern cities and especially the monotonous high-rise buildings in the peripheries were constructed in such a way as to prevent any communication and hence solidarity between the residents. Throughout the 1970s, radical left-wingers and their allies constantly drew attention to these aspects of modern cities, bemoaning the lost feeling of wholeness which one could experience in traditional neighbourhood structures. In the Berlin neighbourhood of Kreuzberg, for example, Christian left-wing activists such as Klaus Duntze argued that modernist forms of architecture made it difficult to retain feelings of community and interpersonal warmth. For many of these activists, the answer lay in protecting or reviving older forms of neighbourliness and conviviality.²³ Even work at factories, traditionally considered an alienating experience, gained a positive value in these circumstances, as it kept '[the] erotic alive'. While living in 'modern housing complexes (*Wohnsiedlungen*)' yielded only 'isolation', work in the factory both enabled people to 'talk to each other without being cramped (*ohne Verkrampfung*)', and brought their bodies closer. The alternative

¹⁷ Duhm, *Angst*.

¹⁸ Comic Strip, *Mannsbild*, probably 1976, 26.

¹⁹ Männergruppe Frankfurt, 'Tod dem Patriarchismus [*sic*]: Es lebe der Mann', *Diskus: Studentenzeitschrift aus Frankfurt*, 3, Nov. 1975, 26–8.

²⁰ See, e.g., 6(ma), 'Gedanken vor und während eines Kneipenbesuchs', *radikal*, 75, 2 Feb.–22 Feb. 1980, 14; Anon., 'Gedanken zu Gedanken', *Info-BUG* (Berlin), 32, 11 Nov. 1974, 9; and Horst, 'Bericht der Kontaktgruppe', *HAW-Info*, 1, probably Feb. 1972, 8–9. (from a gay perspective).

²¹ See, e.g., Anon., 'Torschlusspanik um 10', *ABBLDIBABBLDIBIBBLDIBABBLDIBU* [*sic*!], *Schülerzeitung der HCO [Hans-Carossa-Oberschule]*, 2, Dec. 1973, 8–10 and Anon., 'Hoffnung auf Kommunikation', *Sexpol Info* (Hamburg), 2, Sept. 1972, 8–16. Youth books also popularised this notion. See, e.g., Christiane F., *Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo: Nach Tonbandprotokollen aufgeschrieben von Kai Hermann und Horst Rieck* (Hamburg: Gruner und Jahr, 1978). For an explicitly left-wing perspective, see Gerd-Gustl Müller, *Der Job: Roman* (Munich: Weismann, 1977).

²² An important intellectual sources for this argument was Alexander Mitscherlich, *Die Unwirtlichkeit unserer Städte: Anstiftung zum Unfrieden* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1965).

²³ See Klaus Duntze, 'Der Wohnwert alter Stadtquartiere: Referat bei dem Werkbundtag '75 am 23.1.75 in Bethanien', *Evangelisches Landeskirchliches Archiv Berlin* 55.5/1043. See similarly the comments on urban renewal in Heidelberg in *Carlo Sponti*, 24/25, Dec. 1976, 12.

to this 'sensuality stimulated by the factory' was 'frigidity and impotence.'²⁴ As these examples indicate, radical left-wingers thought of emotions like fear, loneliness and frustration not as individual failures, but as deeply rooted social and political problems that affected wide segments of the population.

Beyond specific feelings, capitalist society was also held responsible for producing a general emotional void, since only profits, competition and numbers mattered for capitalist rationality. Children, whom many radical left-wingers believed to be inherently more emotional than rational adults, would only learn in this world 'devoid of feelings' how to work, use superficial consumer products, make money and feel ashamed about their body, but not how to talk about their feelings and sexuality, how to enjoy these and how to love each other.²⁵ Adults, and once again especially men, who were seen as particularly emotionally deprived, were considered incapable of being 'affectionate (*zärtlich*)' with each other, meaning that they could neither talk about their feelings nor express their affection in a bodily way, for example, by cuddling.²⁶ The monotony of cities contributed massively to this emotional void, not only because it prevented real communication, but also because it lacked sensual diversity. Living amidst 'concrete, noise, exhaust fumes, smog, canteen food, phosphate sausages, rubber bread rolls' crippled the senses complained *Diskus*.²⁷ 'Yawning boredom and a sterile lack of stimuli', the Hamburg-based paper *Revolte* noted, produced feelings of 'aggression that people could let out only within the family.'²⁸

Importantly, radical left-wing authors did not merely analyse capitalist society in these terms, but considered themselves and, by extension, their audience – the entire 'scene' – to be deeply affected by these issues. It is these texts that most explicitly created an emotional regime by telling readers how they should feel as well as what feelings they should express. One key rhetorical device in this regard was the utilisation of the first person plural in discussing 'our' feelings. An article in the Berlin-based *Info-BUG*, presumably written by a man, cautioned left-wing men not to act like 'softies' only because it was fashionable. To really and not superficially change, 'we first have to learn to accept our damaged behaviour, not because we like it, but in order to *recognise* it, and thus to deal with it.'²⁹ Being able to express feelings, above all negative ones such as fear, was considered a crucial skill for both women and men. Such expressions of negative emotions facilitated a putatively objective form of self-knowledge and thus created the conditions for an emotional transformation.

²⁴ Matthias Belz, 'Abenteuer in der Fabrik: Geschichten aus der Beziehung zwischen Linksradi-kalen und Arbeiterbewegung', *Autonomie: Materialien gegen die Fabrikgesellschaft*, 9, Oct. 1977, 17.

²⁵ See, e.g., Kinder- und Jugendtheater Rote Grütze, *Darüber spricht man nicht: Ein Spiel zur Sexualaufklärung* (Munich: Weismann, 1973). On the role of children within the New Left political imaginary, see Herbert Röttgen, 'Kinderrevolution', *Das Blatt*, 92, 22 April–5 May 1977, 14–16.

²⁶ See, e.g., the reports about men's groups in the brochures *Mann-o-Mann* (Berlin), Feb. 1975, and *Mannsbild* (Berlin), probably 1976. See also Röttgen, 'Kinderrevolution'.

²⁷ Frauenkollektiv, 'So, so, einen Frauenasta habt ihr', *Diskus*, 5, 20 Oct. 1976, 18–27.

²⁸ Dokumentation: Die Frankfurter Straßenkämpfe, *Revolte*, 6, probably 1973, 12–15.

²⁹ Anon., 'Probleme mit den Normen zum Thema Emanzipation und Mackertum', *Info-BUG*, 99, 22 March 1976, 8.

Writing in the Heidelberg *Carlo Sponti*, a certain Bea demanded that men should be able to communicate with her about their 'fears and insecurities, about expectations, demands and disappointments . . . After all, you are still quite emotionally crippled and underdeveloped – but first, you have to realise this yourselves!'³⁰ As personal ads in radical left-wing papers suggest, at least some men responded to such critiques, and began referring to themselves as 'damaged' or 'frustrated'.³¹ Such texts, as well as numerous first-person 'confessions' about fears, damaged behaviour and personal frustrations, suggest that the 'emotional regime' radical left-wingers created was in a way effective, as many seem to have conformed to its rules.³²

Searching for emotions: alternative emotional practices

As the preceding discussion suggests, radical left-wingers construed their environment as overwhelmingly imbued with negative feelings such as fear, loneliness, frustration or a general emotional void. Talking about these feelings was a way of performing damaged personalities. Yet, this critical analysis of emotions under capitalism which linked specific features of capitalist society to negative feelings also created possibilities for engaging in practices that would yield different and better feelings and thus, in a sense, 'cure' them of their ailments. It would thus be misleading to depict the 1970s in West Germany as an overly fearful decade, as the omnipresent discourse of fear might suggest, because the production of fear in such discourses also created the possibility of self-consciously overcoming this fear.³³ Indeed, these increasingly sophisticated forms of self-knowledge acted as a motivational force, driving radical left-wingers to work on what they perceived to be their own damaged personas. Such practices could take multiple forms. One key goal, as the example from the beginning suggested, was overcoming fear through definitive action. Some left-wing papers even defined the main goal of '*Sponti*'-politics in such terms. Herbert Röttgen writing in *Das Blatt*, noted that they engaged in politics 'to overcome [their] fears, to liberate [themselves] in the act of revolting'.³⁴ Engaging in violence was one means to achieve this end,³⁵ but violence was by no means necessary. Nightly women's demonstrations, for example, were frequently described as moments when women

³⁰ Bea, 'Zur Situation des weiblichen Entwicklungsdienstes in der BRD', *Carlo Sponti*, 36/37, Oct. 1977, 3.

³¹ See, with further references, Sven Reichardt, 'Von "Beziehungskisten" und "offener Sexualität"', in Reichardt and Siegfried, eds, *Das Alternative Milieu*, 267–89.

³² This is of course not to claim that all members of the scene conformed to these rules (which were not entirely strict anyway). But, as these examples suggest, they had *some* force.

³³ See, e.g., Frank Biess, 'Die Sensibilisierung des Subjekts: Angst und "neue Subjektivität" in den 1970er Jahren', *WerkstattGeschichte* 49 (2008), 51–72. Biess focuses on a new fearful (*angstbesetzte*) subjectivity, but mentions new strategies to deal with this fear only briefly.

³⁴ Herbert Röttgen, 'Liebe, Angst und Terror', *Das Blatt*, 73, 2 July–15 July 1976, 4–6.

³⁵ See, in addition to the example quoted at the beginning, Joschka Fischer, 'Vorstoß in "primitivere" Zeiten', *Autonomie*, 5, Feb. 1977, 56. He distanced himself, however, from violence in the text.

would not feel afraid of being out at night.³⁶ Others sought to overcome their fears in more private, therapeutic ways. Some activists, for example, joined consciousness-raising groups in which they would learn to talk about their fears and their feelings more generally.³⁷

Given that radical left-wingers considered the built environment a key source for feelings of loneliness and frustration, it is not surprising that activists tried to forge different living conditions by escaping and, in some cases, transforming their environment. A 'tribe' (*Sippe*) of twenty people that had formed a 'rural commune' near Nuremberg, for example, declared that it was the only way for them to escape from the 'aggressiveness of cities'. Living there would make them 'happy', which they considered inherently revolutionary. Crucial in this regard was that they could physically experience nature: 'running barefoot over meadows, [drinking] fresh milk from healthy cows, [eating] food [they] had gathered themselves'.³⁸ In urban environments, activists moved into communal apartments (*Wohngemeinschaften*, *WGs*) to escape from the 'small private hells' of 'couple relations' (*Zweierbeziehung*) and the family. The *Blatt* called for 'collectives' and communal living that would yield 'cosiness, clarity and solidarity' and thus combat the 'Moloch' city. 'We have to establish our community centres (*Stadtteilzentren*) in the concrete deserts of suburbia' and try to form some sort of community awareness among the lonely and isolated human beings.³⁹ Activists also enacted aesthetic interventions in public spaces, a practice which was to become central in the early 1980s. The alternative literature magazine *Ulcus Molle* from Bottrop, for example, approvingly reviewed a book that praised the power of wall paintings. 'Trees and sun on concrete . . . children playing under the sun on the lawn, where no sun shines, where no grass grows' should do away with the boredom of modern cities.⁴⁰ Public gardens, community centres and even petting zoos were all attempts to re-emotionalise the city.

Faced with the depressing belief that they were emotionally stunted, radical left-wingers engaged in diverse practices designed to help them relearn their ability to feel and to express feelings for each other. Communicating about feelings was one

³⁶ See, e.g., Anon., 'Walpurgisnacht', *Pflasterstrand*, 9, 4 May–17 May 1977, 13 and Anon., 'Walpurgisnacht', *Das Blatt*, 94, 10 May–2 June 1977, 6. For a later example, see Anon., 'Gewalt und Gewalt, Walpurgisnacht und 6. Mai', *Info Bremer Unpolitischer Rotznasen*, 54, 11 May 1980, 11–12.

³⁷ See, e.g., Lothar, "'... ich freu mich angefangen zu haben'", *Das Blatt*, 60, 19 Dec. 1975–8 Jan. 1976, 11–12; Die verbliebenen fünf aus der Männergruppe 1, 'Männer – ohne Männlichkeit ratlos?', *Carlo Sponti*, 20/21, May 1976, 8–9; and Anon., 'Erfahrungsbericht aus einer Frauenselbsterfahrungsgruppe', *Die Andere Zeitung*, 16, June 1977, 16–17. A critical history of consciousness-raising groups (*Selbsterfahrungsgruppen*) in the German context remains to be written. For the American context, see Jessica Grogan, *Encountering America: Humanistic Psychology, 1960s Culture, and the Shaping of the Modern Self* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013).

³⁸ Anon., 'Wenn wir glücklich werden, ist das schon revolutionär', *Päng*, 4, probably Spring 1971, 6–7.

³⁹ Anon., 'Nicht wählen, sondern wühlen', *Das Blatt*, 78, 1–14 Oct. 1976, 4–5. Because suburbs were considered the quintessential form of modern cities, activists rarely distinguished between cities (*Städte*) and suburbia (*Vorstädte*).

⁴⁰ Anon., 'Nehmt der Langweile ihren Sinn – es wird krachen, wir werden die Stadt zur Wiese machen', *Ulcus Molle*, Jan./Feb. 1980, 20.

key aspect in this regard.⁴¹ But finding feelings also had a bodily component. On the one hand, activists expressed their desires for ‘feeling their [own] bodies’. On the other hand they considered ‘tenderness’ (*Zärtlichkeit*), touching each other, and physical closeness crucial for developing interpersonal sympathy and friendship. Men were especially eager to learn how to become emotional beings through mutual touching. Members of a men’s group in Berlin, for example, cuddled with each other and slept together (without having sex) in a big bed.⁴² At an exclusive ‘men’s party’ (*Männerfete*) in Berlin, men hoped to overcome their ‘socially instilled’ and putatively rational repression of feelings by engaging in ‘affectionate’ behaviour with one another (though it remained open what that meant).⁴³ Women also participated in such activities. For example, women attending a ‘feminist therapy congress’ in Cologne hoped to ‘feel their body’ and did so by ‘pantomimic dancing’, ‘wild yelling’, or ‘playing birth’.⁴⁴ A ‘Leisure-Time Alternative for Communes’, open to both men and women, provided similar bodily-emotional experiences. They sat in a long row, ‘oiling the back of the man in front, which [increased] in intensity until it [turned] into a massage and [phased] out with petting.’ On other days, they played badminton naked, danced in the rain, and talked in big circles about their ‘social interaction’ (*Umgang*) – especially their ‘issues with sexuality’.⁴⁵ All such practices – the discussions of feelings as well as the more active forms of physical intimacy – can be read as practical attempts to produce emotionally and physically intense situations in a world in which such feelings purportedly had little place. In this sense, we propose that the radical new left can be interpreted within the broader social shift towards therapeutic communities. Analysing emotional problems and their socio-economic contexts was both a way of performing the ‘damaged self’ and a necessary precondition for ‘healing’. Like members of the New Age movement, radical left-wingers engaged in practices of ‘self-healing’. In both milieus, bodies and emotions were critical for this process of self-healing.⁴⁶

⁴¹ See, e.g., new left children’s books in this context, Irene Rodrian, *Viel Glück, mein Kind: Jugendroman* (Munich: Weismann, 1975), Helma Fehrmann and Peter Weismann, *Und plötzlich willste mehr: Die Geschichte von Paul und Paulas erster Liebe* (Munich: Weismann, 1979). Communicating feelings became also extremely important in other social contexts during the 1970s: Marcel Streng, “‘Sozialtherapie ist eine Therapie, die sozial macht’: Therapeutisierungsprozesse im westdeutschen Straftvollzug der langen 1970er Jahre”, in Maasen et al., eds, *Das beratene Selbst*, 265–90, and Annika Wellmann, ‘Instruktionen für ein sensibles Selbst: Sexualtherapie und Zärtlichkeitsregime um 1980’, in Maasen et al., eds, *Das beratene Selbst*, 185–204.

⁴² Anon., ‘Ende eines Traumes’, *Mann-o-Mann*, 1, Feb. 1975, 2. See also Anon., ‘SE-Panik: Bericht einer Selbsterfahrungsgruppe’, *HAW-Info*, 21, March/April 1976, 15–56.

⁴³ Anon., ‘Gedanken zur Männerfete’, ‘Zur Männerfete im Drug-Store am 11.5’, and ‘ML-Genossin auf der Frauenfete’, *Info-BUG*, 10, 13 May 1974, 2–3.

⁴⁴ Elisabeth, ‘Weck die Kraft, die in dir steckt: Feministischer Therapiekongress in Köln, 20.–22. Mai’, *Carlo Sponti*, 34/35, June 1977, 12.

⁴⁵ Elisabeth, ‘[Freizeitalternative für Kommunen 1976]’, *Carlo Sponti*, 22/23, Oct. 1976, 12–13.

⁴⁶ See Eitler, “‘Selbsteilung’”.

'Towards new shores': escaping the impasse of frustration

Interpreting the constant complaints in radical left-wing papers about a boring, dull and frustrating world as an indication that activists only felt about things that way would be misleading. Rather, radical left-wingers developed multiple practices that were meant to, and sometimes did, 'cure' them of their ailments by eliciting different and better feelings. Such attempts often failed, however, to produce the desired results. Radical left-wing papers are brimming with reports about problems in communal apartments, the failure of rural communes (*Landkommunen*), or the inadequacy of violence as a means to overcome fear.⁴⁷ As the sense of frustration and hopelessness reached a climax after the violent battles in Brokdorf in 1976 and the German Autumn of 1977, radical left-wingers faced both emotional and political impasses. In the wake of these defeats, many activists turned to a variety of new therapeutic strategies to escape the emotional void of capitalism. Some stepped away from politics and looked for emotional fulfilment in New Age religions or in sexual communities like the *Aktionsanalytische Organisation*, led by Otto Mühl.⁴⁸ Perhaps most prominent among them was Herbert Röttgen, author for *Das Blatt* in Munich and co-founder of the influential *Trikont Verlag*, which changed its name into *Dianus Trikont Verlag* in 1980 and henceforth published New Age books.⁴⁹ Meanwhile, other radical left-wingers, notably Joschka Fischer, joined the emerging Green Party, and in so doing largely excised therapeutic considerations from political practices.⁵⁰ During the late 1970s, we can thus observe a disentanglement of left-wing politics of societal transformation and the therapeutic project of self-transformation.

At the same time, activists sensed that something else, a new, more exciting form of politics, was on the horizon although they were unable to state precisely what this was. At least in part, the origins of this development in Germany can be traced to

⁴⁷ See, e.g., Detlef Hammann, 'Warum scheitern Wohngemeinschaften?', *Montagsnotizen: Zeitung Hamburger Wohngemeinschaften*, 25, Aug. 1977, 14–16 and Anon., 'Wohngruppenzentrum in Frankfurt', *Pflasterstrand*, 28, 20 April–3 May 1978, 35. For a critique of rural communes, see, e.g., Anon., 'Der Krieg gegen das Unbekannte', *Revolte*, 15/16, June 1976, 3. For a critique of violence, see Fischer, 'Vorstoß'; Willi Hau, 'Kommentar' [about the 'Molli'-Text quoted in the beginning], *Die Andere Zeitung*, 12, Feb. 1977, 17.

⁴⁸ On New Ageism, see Eitler, 'Alternative Religion'. For the *Aktionsanalytische Organisation* (AAO), see *Das AA-Modell*, (Neusiedler See Austria: AA-Verlag, 1976); *Aktionsanalytische Organisation für Bewusste Lebenspraxis, AAO, pro and contra* (Nuremberg: AA-Verlag, 1977); Herrmann Klinger, *AAO: k.o. oder wie wir uns Befreiung nicht vorstellen! Zur Theorie der aktionsanalytischen Organisation bewusster Lebenspraxis (AAO) und ihre Umsetzung in 'alternative' Lebensformen* (n.p.: Living-Guerrilla-Commune, 1980); Andreas Schlothauer, *Die Diktatur der freien Sexualität: AAO, Mühl-Kommune, Friedrichshof* (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1992) and Robert Fleck, *Die Mühl-Kommune: Freie Sexualität und Aktionismus: Geschichte eines Experiments* (Cologne: König, 2003).

⁴⁹ See Herbert Röttgen and Christiane Thurn, 'Die höchste Ehre der Rebellion? Trikont-Verlag nennt sich Dianus und erklärt', *Das Blatt*, 184, 7–20 Nov. 1980, 20–1. Uwe, a member of the editorial staff, criticised this as a depoliticising turn to privacy, see *ibid.* 21.

⁵⁰ On the early Green Party, see most recently Silke Mende, 'Nicht rechts, nicht links, sondern vorn': *Eine Geschichte der Gründungsgrünen* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011).

Italy, which had witnessed a year of massive protests in 1977.⁵¹ Fascinated by a large congress in Bologna, which in fact marked the end of the Italian movement, activists from Berlin reported on the ‘*buone vibrazioni nell’aria*.’ [Good vibrations in the air.] They described the scene as a huge party, where men and women painted themselves with the ‘craziest colours’ as they ‘clowned about and played Indian throughout the city’.⁵² Inspired by the ‘*Indiani Metropolitani*’, activists who dressed up as Native Americans and declared war against urban, industrial society, similar groups became more prominent in West German cities.⁵³

The congress in Bologna was also an inspiration for the Tunix Congress in Berlin in February 1978.⁵⁴ To everyone’s, including the organisers’, surprise, some 20,000 *Spontis*, alternative and other non-dogmatic left-wingers from all over West Germany gathered in Berlin to bid farewell to ‘model Germany’. Assessing the event’s impact remains rather difficult. Many complained about overcrowded and often boring lectures, and few seemed to be interested in what celebrities like Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari had to say. And yet, despite multiple critiques, there was a sense among many of those who attended the congress that a new dynamic and new movement was emerging. One activist from Berlin, for example, noted after a demonstration that ended with (minor) riots that he had, for the first time in a long while, not felt frustrated at the end of a demonstration.⁵⁵ Writing in the Frankfurt paper *Pflasterstrand*, Joschka Fischer aptly summarised the impact of Tunix. When he and his comrades in Frankfurt had considered organising a large European congress in Summer 1978, they ‘stood with [their] backs to the wall, isolated, looking for political perspectives, speechless and helpless in the light of the Schleyer abduction,

⁵¹For contemporary accounts see Alberto Benini, ed., *Indianer und P 38: Italien, ein neues 68 mit anderen Waffen* (Munich: Trikont, 1978) and Luciano Capelli and Stefano Saviotti, eds, *Alice ist der Teufel: Praxis einer subversiven Kommunikation: Radio Alice (Bologna) / Kollektiv A/Traverso* (Berlin: Merve, 1977). A historical analysis is provided by George N. Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics: European Autonomous Social Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1997).

⁵²Anon., ‘Italien: Kongress in Bologna, 23.–25. September’, *Info-BUG*, 176, 10 Oct. 1977, 7. On the radical left in Italy, see, e.g., Antonio Negri, *Books for Burning: Between Civil War and Democracy in 1970s Italy* (New York: Verso, 2005); Phil Edwards, *More Work! Less Pay! Rebellion and Repression in Italy, 1972–7* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009); Maude Anne Bracke, ‘Building a “Counter-Community of Emotions”: Feminist Encounters and Socio-Cultural Difference in 1970s Turin’, *Modern Italy*, 17 (2012), 223–36, and Rebecca Clifford, ‘Emotions and Gender in Oral History: Narrating Italy’s 1968’, *Modern Italy*, 23 (2012), 209–221.

⁵³On *Stadtindianer*, see Geronimo, *Feuer und Flamme: Zur Geschichte und Gegenwart der Autonomen: Ein Abriss* (Berlin: Edition ID-Archiv, 1992); Sebastian Haumann, ‘“Indiani Metropolitani” and “Stadtindianer”: Representing Autonomy in Italy and West Germany’, in Klimke, Pekelder, and Scharloth, eds, *Between Prague Spring and French May*, 141–153; Benini, ed., *Indianer und P 38*; Katsiaficas, *Subversion* and Capelli and Saviotti, eds, *Alice*. The *Stadtindianer* were also present in Gorleben, see Dieter Halbach and Gerd Panzer, *Zwischen Gorleben und Stadtleben: Erfahrungen aus drei Jahren: Widerstand im Wendland und in dezentralen Aktionen* (Berlin: AHDE, 1980).

⁵⁴On Tunix, see, with further references, Sabine von Dirke, *All Power to the Imagination! The West German Counterculture from the Student Movement to the Greens* (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 105–142, and Michael März, *Linker Protest nach dem Deutschen Herbst: Eine Geschichte des linken Spektrums im Schatten des ‘starken Staates’, 1977–1979* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2012), 203–244. See also the collection at APO-Archiv, FU Berlin, Boxes 1134 – 1135 Tunix.

⁵⁵Anon., ‘Tunix’, *Info-BUG*, 185, 30 Jan. 1978, 10.

Stammheim and Mogadishu. We felt individualised and powerless, exposed to the omnipresent state terrorism.' Yet, then came Tunix, and a 'new normality' emerged, even though Fischer criticised this as an 'illusion of warmer feet'.⁵⁶ Illusion or not, Tunix suggested to activists that it was possible to escape not only from the depressing 'model Germany', but also from the equally depressing dynamics of terrorism and repression. 'New shores at the beach of Tunix' seemed in sight.

Tunix was the clearest indication that a major shift within the radical left was underway. After Tunix, numerous grass-roots projects came into being, most famously probably the German left-wing daily *die tageszeitung (taz)*. More generally, the sense of despair and the focus on damaged personalities receded into the background. By separating the practices and discourses surrounding emotional exuberance from the therapeutic language of the self, Tunix represented a first step away from the 'therapeutic community' of the radical left. To significant segments of the radical left, which included both old and experienced and new activists, it became increasingly apparent that external rather than internal boundaries were the primary obstacles standing in the way of emotional fulfilment. This distancing prepared the stage for the wave of youth protests that raged throughout West Germany in 1980–81, during which activists found, albeit only for a brief moment, the euphoric feelings they had been looking for during the 1970s.

The glacier melts: cathartic emotions in the revolts of 1980/81

Over the course of 1980–81, youth revolts broke out in cities across West Germany as well as in Switzerland, thus indicating that the movement was not contained within the borders of the Federal Republic. In Bremen, massive riots erupted during a public military recruitment ceremony on 6 May 1980.⁵⁷ In Switzerland, two nights of rioting in Zurich on 30–31 May 1980 followed in the aftermath of a demonstration against state subsidies for the municipal opera.⁵⁸ In Freiburg, the residents of the squatted building commonly known as the 'Dreisameck' were evicted on 8 June 1980, an event which led to violent demonstrations and riots in the city.⁵⁹ In West Berlin, the centre of the movement in West Germany and the location on which we will primarily focus for the remainder of the article, riots after the forced eviction of

⁵⁶ Pflasterstrand-Redaktion, 'Anmerkungen zum Artikel von Joschka', *Pflasterstrand*, 28, 30 Jan. 1978, 15.

⁵⁷ See Anon., 'Karneval in Bermen', *radikal*, 79, June 1980, 18–19. On the youth revolts of 1980–81, see Hanno Balz and Jan-Hendrik Friedrichs, eds, 'All we ever wanted . . .' *Eine Kulturgeschichte europäischer Protestbewegungen der 1980er Jahre* (Berlin: Dietz, 2010); Katsiaficas, *Subversion* and Hans-Eckehard Bahr, ed., *Wissen wofür man lebt: Jugendprotest: Aufbruch in eine veränderte Zukunft* (Munich: Knaur, 1982).

⁵⁸ See, e.g., Heinz Nigg, ed., *Wir wollen alles, und zwar subito! Die Achtziger Jugendunruhen in der Schweiz und ihre Folgen* (Zurich: Limmat, 2001) and Hanspeter Kriesi, *Die Züricher Bewegung: Bilder, Interaktionen, Zusammenhänge* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1984).

⁵⁹ See the 1980 brochure, *Daß uns der Tod lebendig findet und das Leben uns nicht tot – Dokumentation zum Dreisameck*, available at the Archiv für Soziale Bewegungen, Freiburg.

a squatted house on 12 December 1980, sparked a series of occupations and often violent street demonstrations during the following months.⁶⁰

Compared to the forms of radical left-wing politics during the 1970s, these revolts constituted a significant change. While activists continued to argue that urban capitalism had emotionally crippling effects, engaging in practices that would yield 'euphoric' feelings now came to overshadow the sense of 'preventive fear' that had characterised the 1970s. Few of the emotional practices of this period were entirely new: activists still engaged in violence to overcome fear and lived communally in squatted houses to escape loneliness just as they had in the 1970s. And yet, the revolts of 1980–81 were qualitatively different. Activists in the 1970s constantly emphasised their 'damaged' personalities and tried to 'fix' them, most notably in the context of numerous self-help and self-experience groups. During these years, the search for (positive) emotions and the ephemeral moments of joy were intrinsically linked to the 'preventive sense of general fear' that dominated the left-wing scene. By the early 1980s, however, many activists jettisoned the manifold therapeutic strategies designed to 'fix' their 'damaged' personalities. Instead of painstakingly changing the world by changing their inner selves, the activists of 1980–81 celebrated the exuberant and intense emotions generated when transgressing external – though, still self-constructed – social boundaries. Two practices, squatting houses and rioting during demonstrations, allow us to gain a better understanding of these joyful emotions.

Squatting, that is the illegal occupation of empty buildings, was a defining feature of the revolts of 1980–81. Hundreds of houses were, for a more or less extended period of time, occupied in cities all over West Germany, with particular hotspots in West Berlin and Freiburg.⁶¹ Scholars so far have interpreted these squats mostly from the perspective of a crisis in urban housing and urban renewal. While these are certainly important issues to consider, in this article we seek to highlight another aspect of the 1980–81 squatting movement, namely that intense emotional communities were formed in the reorganised and (re-)aestheticised domestic spaces of collectively inhabited squatted houses.

⁶⁰ See, for example, Joseph Scheer and Jan Espert, *Deutschland, Deutschland, alles ist vorbei: Alternatives Leben oder Anarchie? Die neue Jugendrevolte am Beispiel der Berlin 'Scene'* (Munich: Bernard and Graefe, 1982) and Andreas Suttner, *'Beton brennt': Hausbesetzer und Selbstverwaltung im Berlin, Wien und Zürich der 80er* (Vienna: Lit-Verlag, 2011).

⁶¹ On squatting in different European cities, see Erci Duivenvoorden, *Een voet tussen de deur: Geschiedenis van de kraakbeweging, 1964–1999* (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 2000); Sebastian Haumann, *'Schade, daß Beton nicht brennt . . . ' Planung, Partizipation und Protest in Philadelphia und Köln, 1940–1990* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2011); Andrej Holm and Armin Kuhn, 'Squatting and Urban Renewal: The Interaction of Squatter Movements and Strategies of Urban Restructuring in Berlin', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35 (2011), 644–658; Lynn Owens, *Cracking under Pressure: Narrating the Decline of the Amsterdam Squatters' Movement* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009); Thomas Stahel, *Wo-Wo-Wönige: Stadt- und wohnpolitische Bewegungen in Zürich nach 1968* (Zurich: Paranoia City, 2006); Suttner, *'Beton Brennt'*; Freia Anders, 'Wohnraum, Freiraum, Widerstand: Die Formierung der Autonomen in den Konflikten um Hausbesetzungen Anfang der achtziger Jahre', in Reichardt and Siegfried, *Das alternative Milieu*, 472–498; Carla MacDougall, '"We too are Berliners": Protest, Symbolism and the City in Cold War Germany', in Davis et al., eds, *Changing the World*, 83–101, and 'In the Shadow of the Wall: Urban Space and Everyday life in Berlin Kreuzberg', in Brown and Anton, *Between the Avant-Garde and the Everyday*, 154–73.

In many ways, both the critique of modern, urban life and the practical goals of communal living in squatted houses were reminiscent of the 1970s. As a text by the Netzwerk Selbsthilfe, a non-radical left-wing group that supported squatted houses, put it:

Concrete silos rise from the landscape, square and grey; divided into small living cubicles. They are the building blocs of a machine which, initially, does not intend to break us physically, but instead to act systematically on our psychic perceptions. Separation [*Vereinzel(l)ung* – which suggests that apartments equalled prison cells] and hopelessness are fostered in order to create an atmosphere of fear, which robs us of all the power and trust needed to form solidarity with others.⁶²

The very organisation of the built environment was believed to prevent genuine social interaction and communication that would overcome isolation and foster solidarity. Such modes of communicative and emotional engagement, squatters argued, could only emerge in relatively unstructured spaces, for example, ‘when talking at the grocery store, in the stairwell or in a bar.’ The authors went on to argue that ‘uncontrollable communication amongst affected populations is the basis of any resistance.’⁶³ Such arguments for politicised communication were, of course, also a central element of radical left-wing politics during the 1970s. However, in the 1970s such forms of interpersonal communication were meant to cure damaged personalities, whereas in the revolts of 1980–81 they turned into a means of resistance. Creating and defending autonomous spaces was thus deemed to be essential for the development of intense emotions and novel forms of solidarity outside the constraints of capitalist society.

Squatted houses represented a space that would enable individuals to live communally and develop emotionally intense relations. Reducing the practice of squatting during these years to a mere struggle for ‘the preservation of living space (*Wohnraum*)’ is thus impossible. As the Besetzerrat Schöneberg declared:

We wanted to **live and work together** again. We wanted to put an end to the separation and the destruction of communal living. Who in this city does not know it, the **agonising loneliness** and emptiness of everyday life that emerged in conjunction with the ceaseless destruction of traditional relationships wrought by urban renovation and other forms of urban destruction? . . . Many of us have, **for the first time, found a true home (*Heimat*)** in the squatted houses . . . In the houses, we try to realise something that does not exist anymore in society: **Relationships and Hope. Don’t you dream of it as well**, of relationships and love, instead of the quotidian monotony?⁶⁴

Indeed, squatters and their allies often described a ‘genuine warmth’ that was attached to the squatted houses. In contrast to the anonymity that reigned in large apartment buildings, people knew each other in these houses – ‘a cool Turkish family, a nice communal apartment or some other nice (*dufte*) people – and these are all people you really know, people from whom you can borrow something to

⁶²Netzwerk Mitglieder Rundbrief, Nr. 10, August 1980, Papiertiger Archiv, Ordner Häuserkämpfe, 1970er / 1–8/1980.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Schöneberger Besetzerrat, ‘Offenen Brief an die Bürger Berlins’, 8. Dec. 1981, Papiertiger Archiv, Ordner Häuserkämpfe, 11/81 and 12/81. Emphasis in the original.

eat when the stores are closed, sit down with in the backyard and gab on a Saturday afternoon, and collectively accomplish something together in the house.’⁶⁵ Squatted houses thus became spaces of genuine communication between diverse people. To a large degree these feelings of emotional warmth were understood as emerging from the architectural peculiarities of older houses and traditional neighbourhoods.⁶⁶ At the same time, however, some squatters sought to further improve communication within the houses by rearranging the inner layout. They tore down walls and created ‘functional rooms’, such as big sleeping rooms, living rooms, etc., and abolished private spaces deemed to be isolating. In extreme cases privacy was only accessible in circumscribed areas such as ‘love rooms’ where people could have sex.⁶⁷

Another key element of the squatting movement was the attempt to radically transform the outward appearance of the houses. Again, this had already been discussed and practised during the 1970s, yet, the sheer quantity of squats allowed activists to transform entire neighbourhoods into autonomous enclaves of emotional intensity. These ‘colours against the dull grey in the backyard’, as the Berlin magazine *tip* referred to them, ranged from idyllic scenes of life in nature to militant depictions of resistance.⁶⁸ Colourful images both reflected the emotional values of the movement, and demarcated the borders of radical spaces, providing a stark contrast to the emotionally vacuous visual landscapes of normal urban life. According to the *Stadtzeitung für Freiburg*, ‘Graffiti’ acted as ‘tattoos of the city’, which ‘do not convey any meaning or messages. They uncover the waste and dullness of urban deserts with their emptiness and lack of meaning. Graffiti win their power through subversion, by making dead matter come to life – by pointing out destructive architecture and elevating life that had been imprisoned in concrete.’⁶⁹ Writing in the twilight of the movement in 1983, another Freiburg activist pointed to the significance of these visual cues, expressing her hopes that ‘new graffiti will turn the concrete city into a jungle, everywhere fires will be fuelled, where the untameable will gather – and one day we will have banded together as a horde of barbarians that will again dare to storm the cities.’⁷⁰ The visual transformations of the built environment, these authors suggested, disrupted the rationality of thoroughly planned capitalist urban life-worlds. Inscribed onto the landscape of the city, these

⁶⁵ Klaus Pokatzky, ‘Hausbesetzen ist ein Full-time-Job: Der schöne Traum der jungen Leute von einer Idylle inmitten der Großstadt Berlin’, *Die ZEIT*, 13, 20 March 1981, 66.

⁶⁶ See, e.g., Duntze, ‘Der Wohnwert alter Stadtquartiere’.

⁶⁷ Interview with D.Z. by Joachim Häberlen. See also Willi, ‘Vom Beton zum Leben’, in Volker Ludwig and Detlef Michel, eds, *Alles Plastik: Theaterstück für Menschen ab 14. Mit Texten von Jugendlichen, Hausbesetzern und anderen über das Leben zwischen Beton und Traum* (Munich: Weismann, 1982), 100–103. For a related argument about the inner spaces of squatted houses in the 1990s, see Alex Vasudevan, ‘Dramaturgies of Dissent: The Spatial Politics of Squatting in Berlin, 1968’, *Social and Cultural Geography* 12 (2011), 283–303.

⁶⁸ ‘Berlin wird bunt’, *tip*, 11 – 24 Sept. 1981, 26–31.

⁶⁹ Anon., text fragments, *Stadtzeitung für Freiburg*, Special Issue, April 1981, 41–2.

⁷⁰ Anon., ‘Lebensgefühl zwischen organisierten Widerstand – was mit unserer Geschichte tun? Schwarzwaldhof Prozesse’, *Stadtzeitung für Freiburg – extra* (13), 1983.

disruptions were also understood as potential catalysts for the future radicalisation of society.⁷¹

In contrast to the communes formed by activists during the 1970s, squatted houses were rarely (even though it did happen at times) 'therapeutic communities', meant to support squatters in repairing their damaged selves. Instead, they represented free spaces for the expression of genuine emotions and, as such, needed to be defended at all costs. It is no surprise that squatters developed deep emotional attachments to 'their' houses that came especially to the fore during forced evictions, which is certainly one aspect that contributes to an explanation of the massive violence during the revolts. An eviction was, one squatter said after 'their' house had been cleared and immediately afterwards destroyed, 'perhaps comparable with the death of an acquaintance. It is the loss of something that has a key meaning for you, which only becomes clear later on.'⁷² Another squatter stressed that forced evictions were not only significant for housing politics (*wohnungspolitische Bedeutung*), but that they also destroyed 'relations between people . . . the state assaults people in their private spaces, brutally destroys their way of living – that can create an insane amount of rage.'⁷³ Tellingly, the statement invokes a sense of 'wholeness' activists claimed to have found in their houses. There was no longer a sense of 'damaged' personalities that required work, but of a state that assaulted autonomous spaces populated by presumably undamaged people.

In squats, social feelings of sympathy, 'warmth' and intimacy were to become mainstays of emotional experience. Yet, any one-sided romanticisation of life in squats should be avoided. For many squatters, who often continued practising some form of collective living after the movement's heyday, it was certainly a momentous, life-changing experience. Others, however, soon developed different ideas about their preferred style of living. On the outskirts of Berlin, in places such as Spandau, some squats were even abandoned, because too many residents moved out.⁷⁴ Young couples with children, especially, and single mothers came to long for the quietness of normal apartments or complained about the permanent dirt in squatted houses.⁷⁵ In some squats, the good feelings, the cordial and open forms of interpersonal communication, all but vanished. In the beginning, a squatter remarked in March 1982, everything had been 'prickling with adventures. Everything was, if possible, to be done at once, that's how much fun we had with everything we did. Getting to know each other was just as much fun. Yes, there was trouble, but that never lasted long and nobody sulked for long because of it.' But then, people fell back to their

⁷¹ See also Büro für anti-utopische Forderungen, *Betonzeit – Ein Pamphlet gegen die Stadtlandschaft und ihre Verbesserungen* (Cologne: Selbstverlag, 1980).

⁷² 'Interview mit ehemaligen Besetzern eines Hauses in der Mittenwalder 45', *taz*, 3 July 1981.

⁷³ mb, 'Ein von Räumung bedrohtes Haus: "Zwischen Kampf Stimmung und Resignation"', *taz*, 4 Aug. 1981.

⁷⁴ Anon., 'Spandauer Besetzer: Zwischen Mittelalter und Landkommune', *Schwarzer Kanal*, 3, 21 April 1982, 24–5.

⁷⁵ See, for example, Johann Christoph Wartenberg, *Kreuzberg, K36, Leben in (der) Bewegung: Kreuzberg inside bis zum Fall der Mauer* (Bockenem: Lühmann, 2003), 247–49 and AG Grauwacke, *Autonome in Bewegung: Aus den ersten 23 Jahren* (Berlin: Assoziation A, 2003), 65–8, 104–5.

old habits – ranging ‘from complete indifference with regard to anything happening in and around the house, to ‘chauvinism’ (*Mackertum*) that makes you want to puke’ – stopped listening to each other’s problems, and used ‘actions’ to ‘paper over’ their problems and frustrations. ‘Honestly, I’m sick of being alone, even though I’m not [really alone]’, the article ambiguously concluded.⁷⁶

In part, the wave of squatting in 1980–81 fulfilled radical left-wing dreams from the 1970s of overcoming loneliness and frustration. Yet, this was a short-lived success. On the one hand, increasing state pressure was certainly crucial in cracking the movement. While some squatted houses in West Berlin received legal contracts, others were forcibly evicted by the police. City authorities also erased the visual representations of the movement, most famously the painting over the walls of the squatted Kunst- und Kulturzentrum Kreuzberg, known as KuKuCK. On the other hand, however, the internal dynamics outlined above signalled an end of the emotionally exceptional situation of the oft-fetishised ‘Movement’. By late 1981, a widespread sense of ‘stagnation’ (*Stillstand*), as opposed to ‘Movement’, had taken hold.

The severity of the shift between the late 1970s and the youth revolts of 1980–81 is even more visible in the practices of street violence, a second defining feature of the revolts early on. Activists from different cities described the riots as a deeply liberating experience, which was inherently emotional. For ten years, an anonymous author in the Zurich-based paper *Stilet* wrote, the youth of Zurich ‘had been in hiding and thereby gained a nice package of rage and frustration as they incessantly ran up against walls.’ With ‘fearful eyes’ and ‘silenced voices’ Zurich’s youth snuck through ‘soulless street canyons’. Then came the riots of 30 May, a ‘medicine for heart and soul’. ‘A joy, as if life had just started . . . One could see how good it was for totally ordinary people to let their normally caged inner animal run free. The long years of darkening and dulled life rhythms loosened, like a persistent cough that finally comes rumbling from the throat. One could breathe again . . .’⁷⁷ Writing in October 1981 and thus already looking back at nearly a year of often violent struggles, the Berlin paper *radikal* analysed the ‘liberating feeling’ of rioting, ‘when you get rid of your fear for the first time, when you hit back and the pigs [police] are running from you and not the other way round.’⁷⁸

It would be a simplification to interpret such texts as evidence that activists were merely enjoying violence, an insight that would hardly be surprising. Instead, we propose to use these texts to interpret rioting as an emotional practice that yielded euphoric and intense emotions. The key question, then, is how, exactly, rioting facilitated these exuberant feelings. For participants, the riots created the sense of

⁷⁶ Anon., ‘Ein Jahr Anarchie und Glück: Bericht über das Zusammenleben’, *Schwarzer Kanal*, 2, March 1982, 26.

⁷⁷ Anon., ‘En heissä Summer – aber subito’, *Stilet: Organ der aufgehenden Drachensaat*, 56, June 1980, 2. See similarly Anon., ‘Aus dem Tagebuch eines Pflastersteins’, *Subito*, 1, n.d., probably summer 1980, no pages.

⁷⁸ Anon., ‘Frieden schaffen, oder: Sie wollen nur unser Bestes – aber das kriegen sie nicht’, *radikal*, 98, Oct. 1981, 10–12.

being in an exceptional situation in which the perceived 'normal' social power relations were reversed. An incident that occurred in Berlin in October 1980 provides an example. Normally, protestors ran away from the police during riots. But this time, a column of police vehicles was so heavily assaulted in the aftermath of a demonstration that it had to turn back. 'This time, no panic, no paranoia, no arrests and the cops radioing for help. On the street an awesome [*geiles*] feeling, and the stones beat rhythmically', the paper *Akut und Praktisch* wrote.⁷⁹ It was this rather unexpected situation during a riot that the 'other side' was afraid and yearning for help that created the 'awesome feeling'. In this case, the normality activists joyfully transgressed, that is the normality of usually being overpowered by the forces of order, was not merely a constructed normality, but a very real one.

A different and arguable more self-constructed set of norms was disrupted when activists succeeded, according to their own reports, in overcoming the isolation and loneliness that typically characterised urban capitalism. The riots in Berlin-Kreuzberg after the police forcibly prevented the occupation of a house on Fraenkelufer 48 on 12 December 1980 are a case in point. 'This night, order has been turned head over heels in Kreuzberg. The streets are full of people, barricades are built, time and again groups of people engage in discussions with each other.'⁸⁰ Along similar lines, an article in the *taz* noted the 'liberating laughter of a freak in overalls', 'when a Turkish boy handed him box of gummy-bears, saying "This is fun, right?"'⁸¹ At least that night, it seems, the social boundaries that separated the 'scene' from 'ordinary' residents collapsed. Former participants confirm this impression, stressing that 'old ladies' opened doors to help people fleeing from the police, or that Turkish pool halls offered their pool tables to treat wounded activists.⁸² These social components of the riot – and it remains somewhat unclear if this was a unique feature of the riots on 12 December 1980 – are crucial to understanding why riots felt 'liberating' and joyful. Here, at last, radical left-wingers felt that they had truly overcome their (self-imposed) isolation and merged with 'the people' in their fight against capitalism and state violence.

This focus on breaking through a self-constructed normality had interesting consequences for the temporalities of politics. At least for some activists, the 'moments of crossing boundaries, of movement, of change', were the only situations in which freedom existed. Such freedom emerged, they argued, during riots, in 'the short moment from picking up the stone until it hits'.⁸³ Importantly, this also meant that the feeling of 'breaking through' itself became one of the central goals of radical politics. Suggesting that radical activists wanted only to 'feel good' but did not care about politics would thus be misleading. Instead, the feelings of liberation, of

⁷⁹ *Akut und Praktisch*, Oct. 1980, in Papiertiger Archiv Berlin, Ordner Häuserkämpfe, 9–11/1980.

⁸⁰ Jürgen, 'Kreuzberg lebt', *taz*, 15 Dec. 1980, 5.

⁸¹ Albrecht Salamander, '6 Strumpfhosen gegen 10 Smarties – ein Freudegeplünder', *taz*, 15 Dec. 1980 [no page available].

⁸² Interview with G.U. by Joachim Häberlen.

⁸³ Anon., 'Anarchie als Minimalforderung', *radikal*, 97, Aug. 1981, 10. The text was reprinted in *Stadtzeitung für Freiburg*, 61, Oct. 1981, 36–7, where it caused a vivid debate.

empowerment, of overcoming fear and frustration when rioting became inherently political.⁸⁴ A problem, however, emerged when there were no new boundaries to be crossed, as activists writing in the paper *radikal* pointed out. Crossing boundaries and experiencing such ‘moments of liberation’ was tied to doing something for the first time: spraying, throwing a stone at a demonstration, or engaging in a ‘decentralised action’ (*dezentrale Aktion*). Yet, as most people did not want to take the next step and pick up a gun, they faced a conundrum. They tried to find other terrains, to overcome new boundaries, but in vain. Thus, the cycle of protests ‘which had first been articulated with the music of the Sex Pistols and which reached an apogee in 80–81’ arrived at an impasse.⁸⁵

A key problem in this situation, and one that activists were very well aware of, was the ritualisation of rioting, as exemplified by the debates in the run-up to the demonstration against the visit of US President Ronald Reagan on 11 June 1982. For some, the ‘street pogo’ lost its attraction with ‘every warrant and every smashed skull’ as activists ceased feeling like ‘living actors of an unleashed force (*lebendige Akteure einer Entfesselung*)’.⁸⁶ The riots at the demonstration against Secretary of State Alexander Haig in September 1981 were celebrated as the ‘biggest action (*Äktschn*) in the post-war era, [a moment] when the violence imposed on the city fell victim to the incalculable subversion of a Moloch-like movement’. But any attempt to reproduce these riots in a more organised way during the Reagan visit would, some activists predicted, only end in defeat because it lacked spontaneity.⁸⁷ In fact, the demonstration against Reagan ended in heavy and quite unforeseen riots at Nollendorfplatz.⁸⁸ Police forces attempted to cordon off the demonstration before it started, but protestors succeeded in breaking through police barriers. For some, the riot created a ‘a zone which was partially liberated of any control, of any power and any law, in which encounters developed, complicities, manifold games against a world that controls all wishes and diverts them into production and consumption.’⁸⁹ Others, however, bemoaned the feeling ‘of being a planned, unpaid and unconscious statistic in a production whose logic was opposed to [their] own spontaneity, which was furthermore never so incalculable for us and so controlled for the opposing side.’⁹⁰ Ultimately, those who proclaimed the end of the ‘movement’ as they knew it turned out to be right. Just as we have seen in the case of squatting, in late 1981 a sense of ‘stagnation’ emerged with regard to street action. While a more durable *Autonomen* movement emerged from the squatters’ scene, the revolt of 1980–81, with

⁸⁴ See also Tomas Lecorte, *Wir tanzen bis zum Ende: Die Geschichte eines Autonomen* (Hamburg: Galgenberg, 1992), 81.

⁸⁵ Anon., [no title], *radikal*, 106, July 1982, 10.

⁸⁶ Anon., ‘Käseklau und Bombenbau’, *radikal*, 104, May 1982, 10.

⁸⁷ Anon., ‘die schlacht absagen’, *radikal*, Nr. 105, June 1982, 12.

⁸⁸ For a collection of press reports, see Papiertiger, Ordner Anti-Nato-Bewegung.

⁸⁹ Die aufbrechende sado-marxistische Internationale, ‘Nicht stehenbleiben’, pamphlet, in Papiertiger Archiv, Ordner Anti-Nato Bewegung. Of course, there were also numerous traditional anti-imperialist pamphlets.

⁹⁰ Anon., ‘Das inszenierte Szenario’, *radikal*, 106, July 1982, 11.

its focus on ephemeral moments of ecstatic transcendence, had come to a definitive end.

Conclusion

In the late 1970s, the left-wing scene faced an increasingly frustrating impasse. The hard labour involved in 'repairing' the 'damaged' self and thereby changing the world, failed to yield the expected and hoped for results. This situation led to a rupture in the emotional politics of the 1970s. In some cases activists turned away from politics by, for example, engaging in New Age religions or simply embracing de-politicised therapeutic practices such as yoga or self-help groups. Others, however, abandoned the therapeutic project altogether and turned their attention more fully to conventional forms of politics. Neither the emerging Green Party nor those involved in the revolts of 1980–81 were known for working on the self. Nevertheless, as the urban revolts of 1980–81 demonstrate, emotions continued to play a central role within radical left-wing politics. The euphoric and intense emotions exhibited in 1980–81 were not the products of a careful cultivation of the self, but of wilful transgressions of personal, social and political boundaries. In 1980–81 external rather than internal impediments came to be seen as the primary obstacle to emotional expression.

To conclude this essay, we will briefly reflect on how radical left-wing emotional politics can be integrated into larger narratives of post-1968 West German history as well as their potential to alter such narratives. Radical left-wingers' 'search for emotions' was part of a larger 'therapy boom' during the 1970s. Historians and sociologists have productively interpreted this therapeuticisation of society in terms of new forms of subjectivity, emphasising aspects such as fear, the search for authenticity and the emergence of a 'counselled self'.⁹¹ It was also, however, a transformation of the social styles and norms of performing emotions. As we have argued in this essay, radical left-wingers did not simply break free from the hegemonic emotional norms of the 1970s; they also formulated a new corpus of emotional norms. By focusing on the transformation, rather than eradication, of emotional norms, this perspective can help historians avoid adopting the liberationist narrative championed by many radical left-wingers of the period. Similar to what Joachim Scharloth has argued with regard to new communicative styles that emerged in the wake of 1968,⁹² different emotional norms were by no means more 'liberal' or 'permissive', even if protagonists explicitly promoted such an 'emotional' liberation. Ultimately, this approach might offer an alternative to the highly teleological and, even more problematic, moralising narratives of liberalisation and democratisation that still dominate much of the

⁹¹ See Biess, 'Sensibilisierung'; Maasen et al., eds, *Das beratene Selbst*; Sven Reichardt and Detlef Siegfried, 'Das Alternative Milieu: Konturen einer Lebensform', in Reichardt and Siegfried, eds, *Das Alternative Milieu*, 9–24, and Andreas Reckwitz, *Das hybride Subjekt: Eine Theorie der Subjektkulturen von der bürgerlichen Moderne zur Postmoderne* (Weilerswist: Velbrück, 2006).

⁹² See Joachim Scharloth, *1968: Eine Kommunikationsgeschichte* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2011).

historiography of post-war Europe. Norms and rules of emotional styles changed in the late twentieth century, and we might prefer new rules to old rules, but these new rules are by no means less powerful.

The revolts of 1980–81 prove even more troublesome for the narrative of social, cultural and emotional liberalisation in post 1968 West Germany. Whereas the radical left of the 1970s contributed to the ‘therapeutisation’ of society and the creation of new emotional norms, the revolts of 1980–81 represented a revolt against both the norms of the therapeutic society and the compulsion to work on and ‘cure’ the self. Instead of deliberate steps towards self-transformation, the revolts of 1980–81 created ephemeral moments of exuberant joy, moments in which the transgression of diverse boundaries became an end in itself. The revolts constituted an exceptional situation in which normality collapsed, at least for the activists. It is precisely their status as an exceptional moment that makes the revolts of 1980–81 so difficult to integrate into any narrative of post-war German history.

**Se battre pour des sentiments: La
Politique des émotions chez la
nouvelle gauche radicale en
Allemagne de l'Ouest, d'environ 1968
à 1984**

Cet article traite de la politique émotionnelle chez la gauche radicale en Allemagne de l'Ouest de la fin des années 60 au début des années 80. Une première partie analyse les critiques gauchistes du capitalisme pendant les années 70, centrées sur les émotions soi-disant produites par le capitalisme. Selon cet article, les activistes décrivaient un ‘régime émotionnel’ du capitalisme, mais ce faisant instituaient dans leur propre milieu un régime émotionnel qui rendait impérieuse l'expression de certains sentiments négatifs, comme la peur. L'article se penche ensuite sur les pratiques émotionnelles élaborées par les gauchistes pour surmonter le soi-disant ‘vide émotionnel’ du capitalisme. La seconde partie de l'article s'intéresse de plus près aux révoltes urbaines de 1980–81 (surtout à Berlin). Cette révolte a marqué une évolution décisive, la centralité de la peur, de la frustration et de l'ennui cédant progressivement la place à des sentiments de joie et de possibilités extatiques. En conclusion, l'article avance que la gauche alternative a contribué à la formulation de nouvelles normes et de nouveaux styles émotionnels dans la société de l'Allemagne de l'Ouest en général.

**Ringens um Gefühle: Die
Gefühlspolitik der radikalen Linken
in Westdeutschland, c.1968–84**

Der Aufsatz diskutiert die Gefühlspolitik der radikalen Linken in Westdeutschland von den späten 1960er bis in die frühen 1980er Jahre. Der erste Teil analysiert von der radikalen Linken in den 1970er Jahren formulierte Kapitalismuskritiken, die sich auf die Gefühle, die Kapitalismus angeblich hervorbrachte, konzentrierten. Der Aufsatz argumentiert, dass Aktivisten ein ‘emotionales Regime’ des Kapitalismus beschrieben, dabei aber effektiv selbst ein solches Regime innerhalb ihres Milieus schufen, das den Ausdruck bestimmter negativer Gefühle, wie etwa Angst, verlangte. Der Aufsatz diskutiert dann die emotionalen Praktiken, die radikale Linke entwickelten, um die angebliche ‘emotionale Leere’ im Kapitalismus zu überwinden. Der zweite Teil des Aufsatzes behandelt die städtischen Revolten 1980–81, vor allem in Berlin. Diese Revolte markierte einen einschneidenden Wandel. Die zentrale Bedeutung von Angst, Frustration und Langeweile wurde nun zunehmend von Gefühlen der Freude und des Rausches abgelöst. Der Aufsatz schließt mit dem Argument, dass die alternative Linke zur Entwicklung neuer emotionaler Stile und Normen in der westdeutschen Gesellschaft insgesamt beitrug.