



## Feeling Political by Collective Singing: Political Youth Organizations in Germany, 1920–1960

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Weimar, August 1920: On a midsummer's day in this small German town, the melodious opening lines of a soon-to-be-famous song rang through the streets. 'When we stride side by side/and all the old songs sing', sang the boys and girls of the Socialist Workers' Youth, who had gathered for their nationwide youth convention. In the mid-1930s, the same tune could be heard from the tents of the Hitler Youth on their summer camp as they trilled, 'and the forests echo and ring/we feel it must prevail'. And in 1946, at the end of a 'folkloric afternoon' in a crudely furnished and poorly heated room in the Allied Occupation Zones of Germany, the melody burst once again from the energetic throats of the re-established social democratic youth organization, *Die Falken* (The Falcons), as they sang its final line, 'The new time moves with us!' So, too, did the girls and boys of the newly founded *Freie Deutsche Jugend* (Free German Youth) in the Soviet Occupation Zone, as they likewise ventured out from their bomb-destroyed cities to go hiking in the countryside on the weekend of Pentecost in June 1946.

Hardly any other song sung over the course of the twentieth century has been so strongly associated with confidence and hope as *Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'* (When we stride side by side). Written in 1913 by Hermann Claudius as a hiking song (*Wanderlied*) 'dedicated to the new

generation', it was later put to music by the composer Michael Englert in 1916.<sup>1</sup> But it was in 1920 on that summer weekend in Weimar that it became imprinted as an anthem for political youngsters. With such rousing lines as 'The new time moves with us!', the song not only expressed the spirit of socialist optimism and hope in Germany's first democracy. These expectations for the future were skilfully woven together with the powerful contemporary trope of a youthful generation, thirsty for action, and taking great strides forward. Under various ideological auspices, hope and confidence became political emotions that were to be learnt, embodied, and enacted by these young citizens of tomorrow.

This chapter traces the history of the song through the Weimar and Nazi period to the end of the 1950s in a divided, post-war Germany. The 1920 convention seems to be the moment when the act of singing the song acquired the emotional templating it has retained for over a century. The chapter presents a series of case studies in which the collective practice of singing this song played an important role for members of twentieth-century youth associations in terms of learning how to feel political in the correct way, that is, how to hope for the right kind of 'new time' and, depending on the political community, what exactly to feel when striding 'side by side'. An in-depth analysis of how the song was sung in specific institutional contexts reveals how collective singing was choreographed to generate particular thoughts, feelings, and actions for specific political purposes. Hope, optimism, and zest for life were engendered and channelled in line with a desire for a better, happier future.<sup>2</sup>

By examining the institutional frameworks through which feelings of community strength became important emotions for political action, this chapter illustrates in detail how both the institutional templating of future-oriented emotions and the emotional templating within youth associations as 'singing communities' took place. Given their fundamentally different ideological programmes, it is important to investigate whether—and how—the specific meanings and expressions of these emotions also differed depending on the organization, or whether it was only their vision that changed. A trace of these shifts can be recognized in the song itself: even

<sup>1</sup>This dedication was included in the song's first print-run.

<sup>2</sup>This chapter is based on a range of source materials from the 1920s to the 1950s, including educational guides, songbooks, political programmes, logbooks, records of festivals and camps, minutes of youth meetings, and the newspapers and journals of the various youth organizations.

though it seems at first glance to be one song, changes in its meaning and significance can be seen in the numerous alterations that were made to both the lyrics and the melody. Yet it is also important to ask how and why traditions were transferable between different political systems, able to be carried over from one to the next. Which emotions were generated, communicated, and learnt when? How did young people negotiate and navigate these specific forms of emotional templating? Did emotional templating manifest differently depending on ideological perspective and, if so, in what way?

### MOMENT OF EMERGENCE: THE ‘WEIMAR SONG’

On the last weekend of August 1920, around 2000 young people travelled from all over Germany to the provincial Thuringian town of Weimar to take part in the inaugural gathering of the Federation of Workers’ Youth Associations.<sup>3</sup> Initially founded on 25 March 1919, it was the first umbrella organization of the Socialist Workers’ Youth. In Weimar, the governing Social Democratic Party (SPD) jubilantly launched what it saw as a strong party wing for younger workers who, fuelled by hope for the Republic and after four years of war, were elated with a new attitude to life. The gathering became the symbol of a unique spirit of optimism that was linked to a blossoming generation of working-class youth, as indicated by a record of the event published three years later under the title ‘The Young Workers’ Weimar’.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the weekend, participants were to experience and internalize a novel feeling of solidarity and togetherness on the town’s streets, at rallies and meetings, in games, and through sport: a quintessential example of ‘street politics’.<sup>5</sup> ‘The bond of solidarity will embrace us more strongly than ever before’, the Federation’s newspaper enthused.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, the gathering was advertised widely and with emotive appeal as a ‘military show’ of a new generation welded together by an ‘overwhelming feeling of unbreakable solidarity’.<sup>7</sup>

As the birthplace of the first German Republic’s constituent assembly, Weimar was widely seen as ‘the Bethlehem of German culture’. The town’s name stood symbolically for democracy and its main cornerstones,

<sup>3</sup> Schley, *Arbeiterjugend*, 51.

<sup>4</sup> Müller, *Weimar*.

<sup>5</sup> See Chap. 12 by Ute Frevert and Chap. 11 by Caroline Moine in this volume.

<sup>6</sup> Turtz, ‘Reichs-Jugendtag’. Unless otherwise noted, all translations by Kate Davison.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Auf zum Reichsjugendtag!’

expressed in the educational programme of the social democratic youth movement.<sup>8</sup> The legend of the Weimar experience was fed by the fact that it was precisely on this weekend in 1920 that a new sense of togetherness, self-confidence, and common strength was to emerge as the emotional template for SPD's newly founded youth federation. This templating took effect through the practice of collective singing—done while walking, hiking, driving, at rallies, playing games together, or in the evening around the campfire. Though meeting 'for the first time in their lives', they 'looked one another in the eye and their hearts said "*du*"—the German informal address reserved for friends as opposed to the formal 'Sie'—as they 'sang songs, laughed, and shed tears of silent awe, deep within their soul'.<sup>9</sup> In addition, songs themselves acted as conduits for confident and forward-looking emotions to be conveyed and internalized.

Indeed, singing together was already a familiar practice among German youth. Since the turn of the century, they had been hiking and singing in the early workers' youth clubs or the middle-class *Wandervogel* movement.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, there was a special significance in the singing of new songs in Weimar that year, so soon after the end of the First World War. The organizers were well aware that words alone would not suffice to convince younger generations of their socialist vision of the future. Socialism, after all, was 'not merely a matter of critical intellect, but also a matter of the heart'.<sup>11</sup>

Two songs in particular are associated with the Weimar convention: *Wir sind jung, die Welt ist offen* (We are young, the world is open), written by Jürgen Brand in 1914 and put to music by Michael Englert in 1919, and *Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'*. Both had been circulating for several years, but only became hits with the help of the Workers' Youth Associations in August 1920. At that time, only one song from the pre-war repertoire of the organized workers' youth movement was still popular: *Dem Morgenrot entgegen* (*Die Junge Garde*) (Towards dawn—the young guard), written by Heinrich Eildermann in 1907, with music by Andreas Hofer. Yet it was not this militant tune of the 'Young Guard of the proletariat' that raised voices into a 'singing community' in Weimar, but the more recently penned hiking song, which better captured the new spirit of

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Müller, *Weimar*, 5–6.

<sup>10</sup> Gruhn, *Musikerziehung*, 167–70.

<sup>11</sup> Müller, *Weimar*, 9.

optimism and came to symbolize precisely this emotional state. As one participant recalled, ‘We sang many songs in the melody days of Weimar: battle songs, folk songs, hiking songs, full of cheek, wit, and contemplation. But it was *Wann wir schreiten Seit’ an Seit’* that could be heard again and again, rising up from our voices, victorious, powerful.’<sup>12</sup>

What gave these two Weimar songs such a special quality? Both were written around the same time within the context of the working-class hiking movement (*Wanderbewegung*) as songs of ‘youthful awakening’.<sup>13</sup> And both got their big break in Weimar in August 1920, aided by the fact that the Hamburg Youth Choir, which provided musical accompaniment at the event’s main rally, opened with *Wir sind jung, die Welt ist offen* and ended with *Wann wir schreiten Seit’ an Seit’* (Fig. 10.1). It was the latter, however, that was branded with the greatest significance when it was introduced by Max Westphal, then youth secretary of the Socialist Youth in Hamburg and soon to be chairman of the Federation of Workers’ Youth Associations, as a future ‘*Bundeslied*’ (anthem) for the movement. ‘Powerful, enthralling, and ablaze with boundless jubilation’, recounted an eyewitness, ‘the chorus resonated throughout the hall: “The new time moves with us!”’<sup>14</sup>

Although the lyrics of *Wann wir schreiten Seit’ an Seit’* romanticized the singing of ‘old songs’, it was through singing new songs that a specific language of emotion was templated within the newly founded youth organization. It was communicated through the familiar practice of collective singing and materialized as a pattern in the new songs themselves. Yet the song lyrics also expressed ambivalence between old and new. The trope of the forest with its ‘lush birch and saplings green’, symbolizing the power of untouched wilderness, reinforced the traditional romantic myth of a special German connection between man and ‘mother earth’. That connection was not lost in the modern world of work; on the contrary, modernity seemed only to make the relationship more intimate, as suggested in the fourth stanza’s cryptic line: ‘as in old eternal times/she binds them together’. This was reinforced in the fifth stanza’s celebration of a new equality between the sexes.

Both the song itself and the practice of singing it collectively exemplified a mixture of continuity and change. The goal was to activate an

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>13</sup> Boock, ‘Wir sind jung’, 137.

<sup>14</sup> Müller, *Weimar*, 24.

## Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit' (When we stride side by side)

composed by Michael Englert  
written by Hermann Claudius



Wanderlied  
(der neuen Jugend gewidmet)

1. Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'  
und die alten Lieder singen  
und die Wälder widerklingen  
fühlen wir, es muß gelingen:  
Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit!
2. Eine Woche Hammerschlag  
eine Woche Häuserquadern  
zittern noch in unsern Adern  
aber keiner wagt zu hadern:  
Herrlich lacht der Sonnentag
3. Birkengrün und Saatengrün  
Wie mit bittender Gebärde  
hält die alte Mutter Erde  
daß der Mensch ihr eigen werde,  
ihm die vollen Hände hin
4. Wort und Lied und Blick und Schritt  
wie in uralt ew'gen Tagen  
wollen sie zusammenschlagen  
ihre starken Arme tragen  
unsere Seelen fröhlich mit
5. Mann und Weib und Weib und Mann  
sind nicht Wasser mehr und Feuer  
Um die Leiber legt ein neuer  
Frieden sich, wir blicken freier  
Mann und Weib, uns an.
6. Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'  
und die alten Lieder singen  
und die Wälder widerklingen  
fühlen wir, es muß gelingen:  
Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit!

*Wanderlied*  
(dedicated to the new generation)

1. When we stride side by side  
and all the old songs sing  
and the forests echo and ring  
we feel it must succeed:  
The new time moves with us!
2. One week of hammer blows  
a week of building houses  
still trembling in our veins  
but no one dares to quarrel:  
The glorious sun is shining
3. Lush birch and saplings green:  
As though in pleading gesture  
the ancient mother earth  
reaches out her hands  
to make humankind her own
4. Word and song and glance and stride  
as in old eternal times  
she binds them together  
her strong arms carry  
our souls merrily along
5. Men and women and women and men  
no longer fire and water  
Around our bodies a new peace  
settles and we, man and woman,  
see each other more freely.
6. When we stride side by side  
and all the old songs sing  
and the forests echo and ring  
we feel it must succeed:  
The new time moves with us!

(Translation by Kate Davison)

**Fig. 10.1** *Wann wir schreiten Seit' and Seit'* by Michael Englert and Hermann Claudius

emotional disposition of enthusiasm and cheerfulness, infused with a hopeful vision of a socialist future that was uniquely youthful. This was captured especially well in the refrain ‘The new time moves with us!’ An upbeat and light-hearted song, perfect for singing while hiking and rambling, *Wann wir schreiten Seit’ an Seit’* harked back to the listening and singing habits of workers’ youth groups before the war (‘and all the old songs sing’). Its author, the neo-romantic working-class poet Hermann Claudius (a grandson of the famous German poet Matthias Claudius), claimed to have written the song while he himself was actually out hiking on an ordinary ‘ramble on the heath with some youths’ in 1913.<sup>15</sup> His choice of words was specific. The song’s subjects do not wander, march, or walk: they ‘stride’ (*schreiten*). This verb alone encapsulates the whole habitus of the song, denoting earnest, measured, self-confident collective movement. Unlike mere walking, it has a strong sense of direction: an active orientation towards the future, driving forward, advancing, taking action.<sup>16</sup>

The success of the song’s declaration ‘The new time moves with us!’ lay not only in its ‘unprecedented seductive power’,<sup>17</sup> but also in its musical interpretation. Its composer Michael Englert made a crucial change to Claudius’ poem by repeating the last line of each stanza. Musically, this was more than a mere repetition, but rather an interplay of building tension, escalation, and the absence of resolution. In the through-composition of the final decisive line, Englert dispensed entirely with the rhythmically advancing changes in the verses. By opting for quarters, halves, and dotted halves, he took the tempo out of the lively walking rhythm and composed a static-sounding exclamation mark. This is underlined by the song’s tonal repetitions. At the same time, its melodic progression breaks this monolithic impression. On its first occurrence in the opening stanza, the line ‘The new time moves with us!’ ends in harmonic limbo on E as a half and over-bound note. Even in the repetition at the end, Englert withheld any resolution of this unusual melodic phrase. Instead, he moderated it with a fivefold tonal repetition on the dominant root note (D), thus allowing the line’s message to more fully resound and reverberate.<sup>18</sup> It is this

<sup>15</sup> Claudius, *Zehn Gedichte*, 15.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Grimm and Grimm, ‘Schreiten’, 1733.

<sup>17</sup> Brecht, ‘Leben des Galilei’, 1103.

<sup>18</sup> This is also how Johannes Schult described it in *Aufbruch einer Jugend*, 135: ‘The long drawn-out final notes remained at the same level, as though suspended; they offered no reso-

through-composed musical ambivalence of static and dynamic that explains the enormous impact of the song's final line in particular. Whereas elsewhere the song evoked the power of 'old eternal times', both the melodic and textual promise of this final refrain were of new beginnings. Over time, the phrase 'The new time moves with us!' has even become a well-known slogan independent of the song as a whole.<sup>19</sup>

In the 1930s, a new musical interpretation of the song was composed by Arnim Knab, which likewise became famous. A direct comparison of the two melodies, however, convincingly shows that it was Michael Englert's original musical interpretation that catapulted *Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'* to such lasting success as a political song. Arnim Knab limited himself to a rhythmically light-footed melody, consisting almost entirely of tonal steps and offering few surprises in terms of harmony, aside from a brief excursion into the minor key. Not surprisingly, Knab's less musically militant version found favour in the bourgeois youth movement, while Englert's interpretation was preferred in working-class political contexts.

*Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'* contained everything a newly formed youth organization needed: solid roots in mythical traditions and a firm footing in the existing social and political environment—that is, the world in which its young singers actually lived—with a clear nod to progressive change (especially concerning gender equality) and a carefree attitude towards an undetermined, yet promising future. In this way, the song gave various youth organizations at different historical junctures a material anchor in their formation of political institutions through emotional templating.

As a celebration of militant optimism, the 'August days' in Weimar had a knock-on effect on working-class youth organizations. A veritable flood of new memberships flowed in during the third quarter of 1920 as over 10,400 young people joined the Federation of Workers' Youth Associations. This was at least 25 per cent more than in the previous two quarters.<sup>20</sup> For many who attended, the convention remained an

lution, sounding into the distance and gesturing towards the future, and were thus similar in nature to youth itself.'

<sup>19</sup>Hermann Kurzke ('Liedkarriere') rightly emphasizes, however, that this through-composition only applies to the middle lines of the first and sixth stanzas and not those of the other stanzas.

<sup>20</sup>Schley, *Arbeiterjugend*, 53. Organization along political lines was a general phenomenon of the Weimar Republic. In 1927, about 40 per cent of all young people (56 per cent of boys

‘unforgettable experience’.<sup>21</sup> The memories were indelibly imprinted above all else by their experiences of collective singing, dancing, playing, and hiking. In other words, leisure-time activities were the most important in creating a sense of togetherness and solidarity, rather than those more explicitly focused on political education. Recognizing the emotional templating that was taking place through cultural and leisure activities, the Federation began to focus more on shared experiences and less on instruction and education.<sup>22</sup>

In light of the broader political events of 1920, the euphoria about the future displayed at the convention is remarkable and deserves closer examination as the central political emotion of the time.<sup>23</sup> The failed *Kapp Putsch* in March, the serious clashes of government troops with armed workers and the Ruhr Red Army in March and April, and the bitter losses of the SPD in the Reichstag elections of June 1920, which led to a loss of government for the reform-oriented Social Democrats and their Weimar coalition, were all clear signs that the first German Republic was on shaky ground.<sup>24</sup> It is as a response to these uncertainties, not to mention past experiences, that the emotional templating of socialist youth organizations as communities of self-confident, optimistic youngsters that were both future-orientated and rooted in traditions can be understood.

The Weimar Republic was a boom time for ‘youth’, both the concept and the generation of adolescents coming of age in the wake of the First World War. During this time, a particular mythology around youth, youthfulness, and young people developed that valorized strength, *joie de vivre*, and confidence in the future. Youth and youthfulness became increasingly linked to hopes for—and expectations of—better times ahead.<sup>25</sup> Within this cult of youth, the period of adolescence served as a canvas for projecting the ‘expectations, hopes, and fears of the older

and 26 per cent of girls) were members of political organizations. See Mitterauer, *Sozialgeschichte*, 230. In 1923, with the merging of the Independent Socialist Proletarian Youth, the Socialist Workers’ Youth Association swelled to more than 105,000 members, but this corresponded to just 2–3 per cent of the total working youth, according to contemporary calculations; Frobenius, *Jugendbewegung*, 240.

<sup>21</sup> Albert List, ‘Erinnerung’, quoted in Schley, *Arbeiterjugend*, 53.

<sup>22</sup> See the percentage breakdown in Schley, *Arbeiterjugend*, 53. This changed dramatically over the course of the 1920s, when socialist youth organizations were increasingly understood as political educational institutions.

<sup>23</sup> Schley (*Arbeiterjugend*, 60) speaks of an ‘illusory overestimation of social development’.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Winkler, *Revolution*, 352–53.

<sup>25</sup> Stambolis, *Mythos Jugend*, 20–22.

generation' with respect to 'collective self-confidence and the creation of meaning'.<sup>26</sup> The younger generation had a special significance for the future of society as it was envisioned at the time.<sup>27</sup>

The 1920s and 1930s were characterized by an upsurge in the size and number of youth organizations in Germany and an increase in the politicization of their memberships. Despite their varied demographics and occasional conflicts in political and religious orientation, they cultivated similar rituals for collective bonding and public representation.<sup>28</sup> Particular emphasis was placed on feelings of belonging and security among peers and like-minded people beyond the family and school. Within these communities, a 'missionary feeling'<sup>29</sup> developed, or as the contemporary psychologist and educationalist Eduard Spranger diagnosed it, a unique type of 'youthful enthusiasm'.<sup>30</sup> It was precisely these elements of the youth myth that were crystallized in the song *Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'* and, through the practice of collective singing, would ultimately be forming a kind of 'emotional glue' within the Federation.

Considering the historical context, it was truly remarkable that the euphoric enthusiasm for the future expressed by participants at the Weimar convention was so strong. Scarcely two years had passed since the end of the First World War. Aged between fourteen and twenty-one years, these up-and-coming women and men had experienced the war at close quarters. This gave special meaning to lines such as 'we feel it must succeed/ The new time moves with us!' The older adolescents had even fought at the front themselves, and some had returned as invalids. Younger girls and boys had been compelled to work in industrial (war) production due to both the economic hardships faced by their families and the shortage of skilled workers. Overall, the working and living conditions for children and young people during the war had deteriorated rapidly.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Reulecke, 'Jugend', 87.

<sup>27</sup> Benninghaus, 'Die Jugendlichen', 238. Among other things this resulted in an increased attention to educational and social issues facing young people—'youth' was discovered as an independent 'pedagogical province'; cf. Zinnecker, 'Jugend', 483. Hall, *Youth*. Hall was very inspired by the German youth movement.

<sup>28</sup> These rituals included 'large-scale events ..., militarization, disciplinary procedures, and the wearing of uniforms'; Mitterauer, *Sozialgeschichte*, 227.

<sup>29</sup> Trommler, 'Mission', 39.

<sup>30</sup> Spranger, *Psychologie*, 291.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Peukert, *Jugend*; Winkler, *Revolution*, 156.

Nevertheless, the gathering in Weimar is a telling example of how the Workers' Youth movement became a conduit for the Social Democratic project. 'In this song', Erich Ollenhauer observed in 1929, 'young workers rejoice in our newly won freedom. ... At last, after years of oppression, exploitation, and the nameless suffering of a four-year global conflagration, we have finally sighted land and the workers have laid the foundations for a new state and economic order.'<sup>32</sup> With their singing, laughing, and dancing, the new generation left 'all darkness, all hopelessness' behind. With this politically ambiguous, noncommittal, yet enticing promise, and lacking a concrete definition of 'we' and 'us', the song was able to spread beyond the circles of the Workers' Youth. According to Ollenhauer, it was sung 'from the Bismarck Youth through to the Communist Youth League'.<sup>33</sup> Over the course of the 1920s, singing the song had thus become an act of affirmation across a wide spectrum of youth associations.<sup>34</sup> These fertile 'singing communities' filled a dawning era with their own values and ideas. *Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'* lent itself to an ideologically flexible strategy of binding young people together by way of their enthusiasm and cheerfulness around a vague promise of a better age.

### 'THE THIRD REICH MOVES WITH US!': SINGING IN THE 'VOLKSGEMEINSCHAFT'

Even young National Socialists sang *Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'*, and with fervour. This is unsurprising in light of the song's career outlined above, with its ideological ambiguity and political flexibility. It also makes sense in terms of the similarities in emotional templating between these two seemingly dissimilar contexts. In early 1920, just a few months before the young Social Democrats in Weimar celebrated their new beginning, another party had been founded under Adolf Hitler. Like all political parties in the Weimar Republic, the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) tried to establish its own youth wing. First attempted in 1922, it was not until the party congress of July 1926—likewise held in Weimar—that

<sup>32</sup> Ollenhauer, 'Jugendlied'.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> According to Frobenius (*Jugendbewegung*, 275), the 'Weimar song' was soon 'on everyone's lips'—'from traditional folk groups through to the communists .... In the lives of today's youth, however, a new, liberating element is taking hold. When they go out into the woods on Sundays in traditional guild clothing with guitars and mandolins, young people of all ranks and parties feel a newly awakened, overflowing attitude of life.'

numerous, already-existing National Socialist youth groups were finally recognized under one banner as an official wing of the NSDAP: the *Hitlerjugend* (HJ), or Hitler Youth. In June 1930, a corresponding organization for girls was also recognized as an official party wing under the name *Bund deutscher Mädel* (BdM), or the League of German Girls. The ‘Law on the Hitler Youth’ promulgated on 1 December 1936 decreed that ‘All of the German youth in the Reich is organized within the Hitler-Youth’.<sup>35</sup>

The primary aim of National Socialist youth instruction was to mould a sense of belonging among boys through the HJ and girls through the BdM, to then mobilize them emotionally for political action. As with the Social Democrats, the overarching narrative was one of boldly venturing into a ‘new time’, only this time it was towards a promise of National Socialist utopia. In practice, National Socialist youth leaders made use of precisely those collectivizing rituals and leisure activities that had already been tried and tested by other youth organizations of the Weimar Republic. Similar motifs from the mythology surrounding youth were employed for the templating of political emotions: young people became symbolic figures for new beginnings and the inauguration of a ‘new’ state with their hands-on orientation towards the future.<sup>36</sup>

Despite these superficial similarities in the emotional templating strategies of the National Socialist and Social Democrat youth organizations, there are critical differences when it comes to the character of these communities and the precise content of their respective promises for the future. Although equally eager to create the ‘new man’, in the National Socialists’ utopian vision, this ‘new man’ was to be a *Herrenmensch* (a member of the master race) in the prophesied *Volksgemeinschaft* (people’s community). In contrast to the young Social Democrats, for whom ‘community’ meant solidarity, helpfulness, friendship, and equality between the women and men of tomorrow, their National Socialist counterparts sought to promote the idea of community as *Volksgemeinschaft*, which valued self-assurance, combativeness, superiority, a willingness to make sacrifices, obedience, willpower, and strong belief in a leader.<sup>37</sup>

In accordance with the contrasting emotion rules and emotional templating of these two ‘interpretative communities’, the meaning of the song

<sup>35</sup> ‘Law on the Hitler Youth’, 972.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*: ‘The future of the German Nation depends on its youth’.

<sup>37</sup> Schörken, *Jugend 1945*, 203.

*Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'* shifted and changed.<sup>38</sup> Although the National Socialist youth associations sang the very same lyrics as the socialists, the song's ideologically flexible 'we' was interpreted in a different way. It was no longer an invitation for everybody to join in, but instead expressed a mission and an obligation.<sup>39</sup> The racist ideology of National Socialism defined very clearly who did and did not belong to the *Volksgemeinschaft*—that is, who was and was not part of the 'we'—and excluded any boys and girls who did not match the ideal of the *Herrenmensch*. Recent scholarship has come to define *Volksgemeinschaft* as a practice of 'self-mobilization' that identifies 'others' and uses violence to persecute them, while also drawing on 'an experiential dimension or emotions that are repeatedly produced via various media and mechanisms of group formation'.<sup>40</sup> As with the Social Democratic Federation of Workers' Youth Associations, it was essential for newly established National Socialist youth organizations to implement methods of 'self-mobilization' and self-definition as practices of emotional learning.

The question is: were the emotions felt by members while singing together in two such ideologically contrasting communities different, even though they were singing the same song? What observations can we make about the transmission of traditions and practices from one group or generation to the next? The youth associations of the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich were political organizations with starkly different values and rules, yet they were internalized in the same way: through the practice of collective singing and with the same songs. Even if the language of emotion appears to have been similarly based on youthful enthusiasm and hope for the future, it was changed and adapted in subtle ways. Differences can be seen in the political meanings attributed to the emotions, but probably not in the way emotions themselves were actually felt.

Political education through collective experiences mainly occurred during organized leisure activities: sport, social nights, excursions, camps, competitions, festivals, celebrations, and other group events. Countless memories recorded at the time by girls and boys of the National Socialist youth organizations show that the emotional experiences of children and

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Fish, *Interpretative Communities*, 4–5.

<sup>39</sup> *Volksgemeinschaft* in National Socialism meant 'the promise ... of a "völkisch" unity. This meant ... at the same time, the enforcement of new inequalities, namely the inclusion of all racially defined *Volksgeossen* and the exclusion of all *Gemeinschaftsfremde*. This was directly linked to the idea of the use of, or call to violence'; Thamer, 'Volksgemeinschaft', 29.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

young people tied them to the institution and ideology in which the experience was generated.<sup>41</sup> The ‘leisure camps’ organized by the BdM and HJ were particularly memorable events. They took place far away from family and school and were structured around fixed daily and weekly schedules, with collective singing playing a central and formative role.<sup>42</sup> Women who were asked decades later about their music-related memories emphasized that it was singing together that made their experiences with the BdM a positive memory. Some of them even claimed (albeit for different reasons) that collective singing was the only positive experience in all their years of membership.<sup>43</sup> The common refrain in these recollections was that singing was ubiquitous: they sang while marching, before and after meals, in the evenings outdoors, while hiking, and at the beginning, middle, and end of social evenings, and we can assume the same rituals played out for the boys in the HJ. In other words, ‘there was singing all the time’.<sup>44</sup> And yet, as one woman recalled, ‘It was nice that this was so. I never want to forget that time in my life. ... We all really grew together, we were all bound in friendship to one another.’<sup>45</sup> The camp schedules prescribed an hour of singing ‘hymns and confessional songs’ or ‘songs of the movement’ each day and on social afternoons, learning folk songs from the local region. On other days, after some ‘hiking sport’, the girls sat together for two hours to sing ‘hiking songs’.<sup>46</sup> They sang a mixture of traditional folk songs, songs of the *Bündische Jugend* and the new repertoire of festive and doctrinal songs of National Socialism.<sup>47</sup>

Remarkably, for the purposes of emotional templating, it seems to have made little difference what exactly was sung, whether it be a newly composed song or an older, well-known favourite. Nor was the positive and powerful emotional experience of singing together bound to any particular musical genre.<sup>48</sup> National Socialist youth organizations not only mimicked the singing practices and structures of other middle-class and

<sup>41</sup> See also Miller-Kipp, *Auch Du*, 100–1.

<sup>42</sup> See also the biographically qualitative study by Niessen, *Lieder*.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 204. Quotations taken from an interview conducted and transcribed by Niessen.

<sup>46</sup> ‘Weekly Schedule of a BdM Leisure Camp’.

<sup>47</sup> For an analysis of the songs, see Klopffleisch, *Lieder*; Frommann, *Lieder*; Stoverock, *Musik*.

<sup>48</sup> Niessen, *Lieder*, 211: ‘I sang in such a way that I could experience it ... in these folk songs ... the way my imagination went along with it. ... And the National Socialist songs that we also sang ... our mindset went along accordingly, you know?’

party-affiliated associations, but also copied their songs. The musical repertoire of the HJ and BdM originated largely in that of the pre-existing youth movement.<sup>49</sup> This had the advantage that familiar melodies and songs made it possible to build familiarity with the new National Socialist youth organizations very quickly, while also facilitating outreach to youth audiences across a spectrum of social milieus. This was important as the NSDAP saw itself both as a workers' party and a middle-class youth organization.

Several well-known songs were adapted by the NSDAP for emotional templating.<sup>50</sup> *Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'* was one of the most important examples. In the early years of the National Socialist 'movement', it was a standard number within the HJ and BdM. Some National Socialist songbooks simply reprinted the original, only discarding the fifth stanza, which promoted sexual equality. Such ideas had no place within National Socialism's strictly gender-differentiated pedagogy.<sup>51</sup> In other songbooks, only the first two or three original verses were kept, supplemented by three new verses that were formulated to match with Michael Englert's original melody (Fig. 10.2<sup>52</sup>).

In the Social Democratic daily newspaper *Neuer Vorwärts* of 1934, the National Socialist adaptation of the beloved old Weimar song was lampooned by an anonymous author, who wrote, 'The Hitler Youth sings "The Third Reich moves with us!" because even their brownshirt-wordsmiths know that a "new time" is the last thing that moves with them.'<sup>53</sup> It is impossible to determine how significant the modification was for the daily experience of singing the song. What the supplementary stanzas made clear, however, was that the original song's image of peaceful, future-oriented youngsters who valued equal rights and were at one with nature had now been replaced by a call to arms in the 'German fight for

<sup>49</sup> Klopffleisch, *Lieder*, 143. Klopffleisch notes that more than 50 per cent of the songs came from the bourgeois youth movement. But both personal and compositional traditions continued in National Socialist youth organizations.

<sup>50</sup> The best-known and most well-researched is *Brüder, zur Sonne, zur Freiheit*; cf. Eckhard, *Brüder*. For a list of all songs adapted from the social democratic and communist traditions, see Fuhr, *Proletarische Musik*, 252–54; Dithmar, 'Lied'.

<sup>51</sup> Scheller, *Singend*.

<sup>52</sup> Stoverock, *Musik*, 297–98; Dithmar, 'Lied', 27. Another version can be found in the SA songbook in which the social democratic idea of solidarity was even more bluntly replaced with 'bloody hatred and struggle'; cf. Roth, *Massenlied*, 125.

<sup>53</sup> 'Alles muß in Scherben gehen'.

Unsere Herzen sind aus Stahl  
 unser Wille ist aus Eisen.  
 Wo es gilt, den Mann zu weisen  
 wie die rost'gen Klingen gleißen  
 bei dem ersten Morgenstrahlen.

Our hearts are made of steel  
 our will is made of iron.  
 When it counts, to show the man  
 how the rusty blades gleam  
 in the early morning rays.

Unsere Trommeln dröhnen dumpf  
 zu dem letzten Marsch auf Erden  
 Wo wir um die Freiheit werben  
 Wenn wir auch in Gossen sterben  
 in dem deutschen Freiheitskampf

Our drums' dull roar  
 to the last march on earth  
 In our battle for freedom  
 Even if we die in gutters  
 in the German fight for freedom

Brüder, Hitler, führet euch  
 wenn die Stunde reif geworden  
 Hell erglüht der neue Morgen  
 tief im Süden, hoch im Norden  
 Mit uns zieht das Dritte Reich!

Brothers, Hitler, lead us  
 when the hour has come  
 A new dawn glows brightly  
 deep in the south, high in the north.  
 The Third Reich moves with us!

Translation by Kate Davison

**Fig. 10.2** Three new verses of *Wann wir schreiten Seit' and Seit'* in National Socialist songbooks. (Stoverock, *Musik*, 297–98; Dithmar, 'Lied', 27)

freedom'. The old hiking song had become a marching and fighting song, although the precise objectives of such a deadly struggle by steel-hearted, iron-willed youths remained murky. It can be assumed, further, that this more combative variant of the song was sung exclusively by the young men and boys of the HJ. The new 'we' was unmistakably masculine, as indicated in the appeal to 'brothers' and the pledge 'when it counts, to show the man' with hearts of 'steel'.

Interestingly, the earlier versions by both Michael Englert and Arnim Knab can also be found in some National Socialist songbooks. Englert's original was sung more often in schools and within National Socialist organizations for adults, while the youth groups tended to prefer Knab's melody. This is perhaps due to the fact that the HJ and BdM had adopted the song from the middle-class youth movement, for which Knab had composed his version. His name and that of the original lyricist, Hermann Claudius, can also be found beneath other songs and poems in National Socialist songbooks, and both had at least some ideological sympathies in

that direction. Claudius even composed a prayer for the *Führer*.<sup>54</sup> More important, however, was the fact that their songs and poems were well matched to National Socialist collective singing practices. There were no difficulties integrating the beloved song of the Federation of Workers' Youth Associations into the repertoire of the BdM and HJ, and even changing it altogether. Curiously, the girls seem to have continued to sing the original text (with Knab's music)—except, of course, for the fifth stanza—since it was included in at least some BdM songbooks under the title 'Youth hiking song'.<sup>55</sup> In some cases it was even compulsory for them to learn it.<sup>56</sup>

The categorization of *Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'* as a hiking song or something to be sung on cosy evenings gave it an apolitical air. Yet this apparent detachment from ideological demands was precisely what made it so attractive, as has already been shown in relation to the Young Workers' Clubs. The feeling of belonging to a chosen milieu, with whom a 'new time' was moving—whatever shape that might take—and whose self-confidence was derived precisely from this dynamic, was experienced by girls and boys in the Social Democrat and the National Socialist youth movements alike as they sang at leisure camps, on hikes, or at social evenings and developed emotional bonds in their new 'singing community'. Recorded memories illustrate the extent to which National Socialist youth organizations also met young people's needs for belonging, community, future prospects, integration, and orientation. These needs were addressed and satisfied through the ritual of collective singing.<sup>57</sup>

In stark contrast to these girls' memories of social evenings, youth leisure camps, and hikes, *Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'* was also heard and sung in other contexts during the period of the Third Reich. In concentration camps, prisoners were forced to sing German folk songs during roll call or while being marched off for heavy labour. Being forced to sing on command served to discipline and humiliate prisoners and allowed the SS guards to demonstrate power not only over their voices and ears but over their bodies and minds.<sup>58</sup> In the Börgermoor concentration camp, prisoners were forced to sing as an accompaniment to punitive sports. At the

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Klee, *Kulturlexikon*, 98–99.

<sup>55</sup> Reichsjugendführung, *Wir Mädels singen*, 120.

<sup>56</sup> Kulturabteilung des Obergaues Westfalen, *Pflichtlieder*, 19–20.

<sup>57</sup> Rosenbaum, *Kinderalltag*.

<sup>58</sup> Brauer, *Sachsenhausen*, 91–106; Brauer, 'Torturous'.

whim of the SS, the unofficial hymn of the German Empire, *Die Wacht am Rhein*, would be played and—as if to mock the Federation of Workers' Youth Associations—*Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'*.<sup>59</sup>

Under such conditions, the line 'The new time moves with us!' acquired an entirely different meaning. Instead of certainty about the future, the forced singing of this song stood for destroyed hopes, emotional isolation, and the loss of future life. For prisoners who in earlier years had sung this very song full of hope and enthusiasm in the youthful, politically engaged communities of Workers' Youth Associations, the command for them to sing it in the concentration camp must have been especially bitter. The fact that they had previously been politically activated through the emotional templating of collective singing now made them doubly prisoners of the National Socialist regime. In the 'universe' of 'absolute power' that was the concentration camp system,<sup>60</sup> their optimistic and upbeat strides of earlier times now took on the tormenting rhythm and relentless pace of prisoners marching in columns.<sup>61</sup> Conversely, 'The new time moves with us!' could also often secretly be heard in the barracks of German political prisoners. Even when commanded to do so, prisoners could comply with the guards' orders while also using singing to muster hope or recall the optimism they had felt at Workers' Youth events. Although it was used by the SS for humiliation, the song's emotional significance for the political prisoners was so great that they continued to sing it throughout their years of imprisonment, alongside other songs of the labour movement such as *Die Gedanken sind frei*.<sup>62</sup>

#### 'NEST WARMTH' AND VISIONS OF THE FUTURE: SINGING AMONG THE *FALKEN* AND THE FREE GERMAN YOUTH

At the end of the war, the generation of young people sworn through their membership of the HJ and BdM to the values and principles of the *Volksgemeinschaft* felt betrayed, disillusioned, and hopeless. 'A feeling of deep bitterness and abandonment held the upper hand for a long, long time', recalled nineteen-year-old Hilde P. in 1950, summing up the

<sup>59</sup> Fackler, *Stimme*, 134.

<sup>60</sup> Sofsky, *Terror*, 17.

<sup>61</sup> Brauer, 'Torturous', 11–12.

<sup>62</sup> Brauer, *Sachsenhausen*, 157–62, further examples in Fackler, *Stimme*, 225.

prevailing mood of her generation after 1945.<sup>63</sup> Allied observers attested to the widespread ‘political apathy and non-conformism’ among younger people in all parts of Germany. ‘In fact, large numbers of youths appear to have lost not only their belief but even their faculty to believe in anything’, said the German émigré and future US diplomat Henry Kellermann in 1946.<sup>64</sup> The deep traces of militarism and nationalism in the minds and hearts of German adolescents that the Allies documented led them to diagnose an ‘overwhelming feeling of hopelessness’ and ‘a deep crisis of meaning’.<sup>65</sup>

These examples show how far removed post-war youth were from the enthusiastic and optimistic emotional templating that had characterized the 1920s and 1930s. Across Germany, initiatives designed to offer children and young people in political communities a new foothold were adopted in all zones of occupation. The implementation of this new youth policy, however, differed profoundly in the East and West. In the Allied Occupation Zones, the revival of political youth work was uneven and haphazard. On the one hand, it was characterized by the requirements and permissions of the occupying powers and, on the other, by immense material hardship. The founding of party-aligned youth organizations was not permitted until 1947.<sup>66</sup> From the middle of 1947, the youth associations of the SPD were able to commence work under the name Socialist Youth Movement—The Falcons (*Sozialistische Jugendbewegung—Die Falken*).<sup>67</sup>

In the Soviet Occupation Zone, things were vastly different. Young people, seen to be the ‘standard-bearers of a new era’, were obliged to be cheerful, enthusiastic, and hands-on.<sup>68</sup> Given their actual emotional state, however, this amounted in plain terms to a total emotional re-education; *joie de vivre*, dedication, and spiritedness were still a long way off. The desired ‘education of new people’ required effective strategies and an institutional framework for implementing them. Detailed plans for a post-war youth policy in the Soviet Occupation Zone had already been drawn up in Soviet exile. From as early as the summer of 1945, ‘anti-fascist youth committees’ were founded across the zone, designed to guarantee uniform and consistent anti-fascist education, and that was made more

<sup>63</sup> Hass, *Schicksal*, 77; cf. Schörken, *Niederlage*, 19.

<sup>64</sup> Kellermann, *German Youth*, 4.

<sup>65</sup> Füssl, *Umerziehung*, 58–75, quotes 104.

<sup>66</sup> See *ibid.*, 120–47.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Brücher, *Jugendbewegung*.

<sup>68</sup> Zentralrat der Freien Deutschen Jugend, ‘Aufruf’, 1.

attractive by offering leisure activities such as sports, sewing (for girls), reading circles, or dancing in newly established clubhouses.<sup>69</sup> In addition, both boys and girls were introduced to new, post-Nazi ideologies and values—at least that was the idea.<sup>70</sup>

At first glance, the situation in the Soviet Occupation Zone and the early German Democratic Republic (GDR) seemed to resemble that of the Weimar Republic. According to reports in daily newspapers and programmes of political events, *Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'* was the most sung song in the decade from 1945 to 1955. In the early 1950s, the three radio stations in the GDR even used the refrain '*Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit*' as an interval jingle. Just like the *Falken* in the Allied Occupation Zones, the GDR's early anti-fascist youth committees and from March 1946 the newly established Free German Youth (FDJ) offered an active and age-specific community life to a generation of girls and boys disoriented by the war. Daytrips, music, singing, games, folk dances, parties, celebrations, working groups, and even career guidance were all part of the programme, as was political training and education. Communist youth functionaries were eager for these 'sincerely happy and free youngsters' to resume singing, hiking, and building from as early as September 1945.<sup>71</sup> In 'colourful costume ... with songs and games', they were to roam the new homeland.<sup>72</sup> According to one commentator, young girls and boys felt a 'sacred seriousness in their hearts when they sing "The new time moves with us!"; even we old people can still learn a lot from their faith, devotion, and commitment'.<sup>73</sup> In the Communist imagination, it was imperative for young people to develop a cheerful, enthusiastic, and hands-on attitude in order to fulfil their 'most fundamental destiny': building the new future.<sup>74</sup> The fortune of the new socialist state was in the hands of its youth.

<sup>69</sup> This was regulated by an order issued on 31 July 1945 by General Georgij Konstantinovič Žukov. Cf. Noack, 'Jugendpolitik'.

<sup>70</sup> Landesjugendausschuss Sachsen, 'Richtlinien für die sozialpolitische Tätigkeit der Jugendausschüsse, 16. Oktober 1945' and 'Hauptpunkte demokratischer Jugenderziehung, Dresden, den 20. Oktober 1945', Communal Archive Bautzen (CAB), 63004-715, Bl. 219, 215.

<sup>71</sup> König, 'Jungen': 'We, the Antifascist Youth, we have understood that a new, truly joyful, and free generation can only flourish in a democratic Germany.'

<sup>72</sup> Antifaschistisches Jugendkomitee Magdeburg, 'Jugend'.

<sup>73</sup> Pawlowitsch, 'Jugend'.

<sup>74</sup> Hornecker, 'Neues Leben': 'If youth is the future, then it must not be cheated of its very purpose.'

This belief explains the special attention devoted to winning the hearts of this generation and the vigour with which spokeswomen and men urged it to ‘move’ in a specific direction. The emotional templating of young people in the Soviet Occupation Zone and the early GDR matched the Communist vision of self-confident progress towards a ‘new time’. In contrast to youth groups in the Western occupation zones, the FDJ was less concerned with creating community than with activating its members politically. This was done by harnessing the enthusiasm they perceived and generating a feeling of certainty in line with a vision of socialist utopia, a familiar scheme that dated back to the 1920s and 1930s. Schoolchildren in the Soviet Occupation Zone and the early GDR learnt and sang workers’ songs with titles such as *Wir sind das Bauvolk der kommenden Welt* (We are the builders of the world to come) composed by Fritz Brügel and Hasso Grabner in 1929 and *Der Zukunft entgegen* (Towards the future) composed by Dmitri Shostakovich in 1932, along with *Wir sind jung, die Welt ist offen*. At the top of the list, in schools, at public rallies, and at other political events was always the song of Weimar, *Wann wir schreiten Seit’ an Seit’*.<sup>75</sup>

A decree issued by the Erfurt District Education Office in December 1948 exemplifies its popularity. It specified in detail how local schools were to be opened in January 1949 with a ‘ceremony in keeping with the two-year plan’. As an introductory song, one school council suggested *Brüder, zur Sonne, zur Freiheit* (Brothers, to the sun, to freedom) ‘or another suitable song of the FDJ’. The ceremony was to end, however, with ‘the singing of *Wann wir schreiten Seit’ an Seit’*’.<sup>76</sup> Reports from several Erfurt schools show that they adhered to these instructions. The final line ‘The new time moves with us!’ seemed especially fitting for the desired emotional template of the ‘new spirit’ in the post-war years. It was an unsurprising choice, since teachers with links to the Communist Party (KPD) and the SPD knew the song from their own childhood and teenage years and may even have been present at the Weimar convention. The same went for party functionaries who had likewise received their own emotional templating in the early years of the Weimar Republic, such as

<sup>75</sup> Cf. T. H., ‘Auftakt’: ‘The impressive ceremony ended with the joint singing of the song *Wann wir schreiten Seit’ an Seit’*, at the end of which the meaningful words resounded: “The new time moves with us!”; Werner, ‘Pfingstgruß’; A., ‘Programm’; U. I., ‘Schulbank’.

<sup>76</sup> Kreisbildungsamt Erfurt, ‘Brief an alle Schulleiter, 31 December 1948’, in Communal Archive Erfurt (CAE) 1-5/36-16450.

Erich Honecker, the first chairman of the FDJ, who had had his first taste of political leadership in the 1920s through the communist youth association. Still others remembered the song from their time in the HJ or the BdM.

For this generation of teachers and functionaries in the Soviet Occupation Zone, the song was a powerful reminder of the enthusiastic mood and the certainty about the future they had felt in their younger days. Such feelings were sorely needed after the catastrophic experiences of the Second World War.<sup>77</sup> Yet, even if the words, melody, and rhythm were the same, it must have felt very different for the young people singing it now compared with the summer of 1920. Despite its antiquated lyrics and the now-destroyed illusion of a unity between man and nature, the song's promise of a 'new time' in which humanity would 'stride side by side' was more necessary than ever before. Still, it did not seem quite right for this 'new time', and while it did not disappear altogether from the repertoire, towards the end of the 1940s it was replaced by new songs written for a new generation in the newly established GDR.

In the Western occupation zones, political youth work was at first a far cry from the pre-war emotional templating of unconditional optimism. In light of the material hardships, high unemployment, and psychological conditions among children and young people, youth welfare was a primary task of the Social Democrats.<sup>78</sup> Providing children with 'safety—security—love' or nest warmth (*Nestwärme*) was one of the first goals of their youth wing, the *Falken*.<sup>79</sup> The focus was less on looking to the future and more about building a political community in the here and now. 'Join your community!' appealed the Braunschweig chapter of the *Falken* in 1947; 'Learn once again to shape your own young lives together in a free and democratic way'.<sup>80</sup> As new as the post-war situation was, the practices adopted by the *Falken* were familiar. Again, it was communal singing that structured group life within the association; any seeming continuity with the National Socialist youth associations' use of the practice was of little concern.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Brauer, 'Disciplining'.

<sup>78</sup> Gröschel, 'Tradition und Neubeginn', 27–28.

<sup>79</sup> Heydorn, 'Nestwärme'.

<sup>80</sup> SJD—Die Falken, Gruppen Aufwärts und Lichtstürmer, 'Gruppenbuch 1946–1948', Archiv Arbeiterjugendbewegung (AAJB), SJD-BS-BS, 22/001.

<sup>81</sup> This is shown by entries in group/branch books from AAJB, from 1947 to the end of the 1950s.

Yet the emotional templating among the *Falken* was much more reserved than in the early years of the Weimar Republic. They met away from the public eye in closed rooms and went hiking in the countryside. It was only on special occasions such as the Socialist Youth Day in Hamburg in 1950 that they actively made themselves audible and visible. Their enthusiasm seemed stifled. A sense of confidence in the future played much less of a role than the prevailing feelings of belonging, mutual aid, and support. Singing seemed equally less important, despite its role in determining group life within the *Falken*. The minute books from the first ten years after the war meticulously documented what was sung and when, yet their scribes did not refrain from making ironic remarks about these singing rituals. At the beginning of group evenings, as a farewell, or even in the midst of proceedings, many old and some new songs helped loosen the mood. Some gatherings were explicitly organized as an ‘afternoon of song’.<sup>82</sup> As with the FDJ, the ‘Weimar song’ was by far the most popular in the *Falken* songbooks of the post-war decade.<sup>83</sup> It was typically sung as the finale at a ‘relaxed afternoon’ recital, following a lively mixture of folk songs, old *Falken* songs and workers’ songs, or appeared regularly in schedule proposals for political events, such as the annual celebrations on 1 May.<sup>84</sup>

Curiously, however, there are hardly any references in the *Falken* chronicles to the emotional power of the song’s last line, once considered so poignant. One exception can be found in the recollections of retired school councillor and SPD member, Johannes Schult. At the age of seventy, he still remembered singing *Wann wir schreiten Seit’ an Seit’* at the Weimar convention in August 1920, when he was secretary of the SPD youth wing. In an essay published in 1956, Schult romantically glorified this pivotal moment in the formation of a strong and serious youth movement: ‘The effect of the song was tremendous. One had to experience it, it cannot be described. Tears ran down the cheeks of hard men, and the eyes of the all the young participants shone brightly.’<sup>85</sup> Almost forty years

<sup>82</sup> Gruppe Ost Rote Falken, ‘Protokolle und Fahrtenberichte’, entry from 24 November 1949, in AAJB, Gruppenbücher (Ursula Krause-Scheuffler), SJD-BW-StO 1–6.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Brauer, *Zeitgeföhle*, 96–105; cf. also Jobs, ‘Liedkultur’, appendix 3.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. ‘Gruppenbuch: Tagebuch der Jugendgruppe Die Falken, Ortsgruppe Schwabach, 1946–1948’, in AAJB SJD-MF-SC(Beck, Gerd97/9)22/0001; Werner Ortmann, ‘Gruppenbuch, Falkengruppe Oberkassel, Wanderfalken: Programmorschlag, 1. Mai, März 1947’, in AAJB SJD-NR 22/08

<sup>85</sup> Schult, *Aufbruch einer Jugend*, 35.

later, the memory was as stirring as ever. Yet despite the song's resonance for veterans like Schult, post-war communal singing among the *Falken* could no longer connect with the emotional templating of the early Weimar Republic. The same observation can be made here for the Soviet Occupation Zone: the song primarily evoked positive memories for older SPD politicians whose formative political experiences had been in the early socialist youth movement. This was particularly the case for the former youth leader Erich Ollenhauer. After the Second World War, he became leader of the SPD and the party spokesperson in the Bundestag.

As for the *Falken*, we do not know what hopes and dreams they now harboured while singing the song. Like their contemporaries in the fledgling GDR, many of their members would have been familiar with it from their days in the HJ and the BdM. Over the course of the 1950s, however, communal singing was gradually replaced by collective listening to new pop music. It was not until the growth of the pacifist Easter March movement in the 1960s that communal singing was rediscovered as a form of protest. This time, however, the predominantly young demonstrators sang new songs that were less vague in their promises for the future and instead expressed concrete political criticisms in the present.

## CONCLUSION

Over the course of the 1960s, the popularity of *Wann wir schreiten Seit' an Seit'* declined in both East and West Germany, albeit for different reasons. In the GDR, new songs that corresponded more closely with the country's 'new spirit' were promoted and learnt with great diligence. In the Federal Republic, the practice of collective singing steadily declined as the 1950s wore on. The song never completely disappeared from the repertoires of hiking and sport clubs, the *Bündische Jugend*, or the scouts, but it had lost much of its earlier power as a means for political mobilization. Despite its decline, it still came to be considered the unofficial anthem of the SPD. From the 1980s onwards, it was routinely heard at party congresses. The emotional templating accomplished through its collective singing over several decades was so lasting that, towards the end of the twentieth century, a new, youthful generation of singers was no longer necessary. Even today, aging social democratic 'song lovers' still sing it shoulder to shoulder with their likewise aging party leaders with full-breasted euphoria about the future. So it was on 19 March 2017 when, accompanied by a small choir from the Berlin-based group *Vorwärts-Liederfreunde*, the

‘song troupe of German Social Democracy’, the party’s unanimously elected new leader Martin Schulz triumphantly sang ‘The new time moves with us!’<sup>86</sup> A century after its creation, the song’s familiar lines and melodies can still unleash the same old rousing, youthful and forward-looking, collective magic.

This chapter has shown how emotional templating took place within youth organizations in twentieth-century Germany. Emotions were given an institutional framework through feelings of community, which became important for political action. Besides the song itself, collective singing played a crucial role in the establishment of political communities among young people. This collective singing is an emotional practice through which ‘singing communities’ emerged as political institutions in concrete contexts. Collective singing offered a framework for political youth organizations to use bodies, language, spaces, and other media to ensure that their young members internalized hope for ideologically specific visions of a better future and became motivated to self-confidently demand this future for themselves. Collective singing involved learning, negotiating, and modifying emotional templates in specific situations. Political experiences became emotionally charged through singing and can thus be understood as ‘embodied experiences’.<sup>87</sup> In the tangible contexts in which it was performed, ‘interpretive communities’ attributed meaning to one specific song as a form of emotional templating.

What is striking is the tenacity with which different singing communities at different times held firm to *Wann wir schreiten Seit’ an Seit’*. These were always situations of new discovery and creation in which the song sounded special. The aim in these situations was to bind girls and boys to new institutions—political youth organizations—by engendering shared feelings. Although over the decades verses were omitted or added, alternative melodies sung, and the meaning attributed to the lyrics changed, the final line ‘The new time moves with us!’ retained its emotional appeal. Yet the ‘we’ in the song’s title was a social entity that had to be continually redefined: lacking specificity, it always invited new groups to find themselves reflected in it. This underscores the emotional significance that was gained by individual songs through the concrete practice of singing: its ‘spatial configurations’, ‘temporal experiences’, or ‘interpretive

<sup>86</sup> ‘Wann wir schreiten Seit an Seit—vorwärts-Liederfreunde’; Vorwärts-Liederfreunde, ‘Info’.

<sup>87</sup> Corness, ‘Embodiment’.

communities'.<sup>88</sup> Through their use and the way they were interpreted and performed, the songs themselves became channels for emotional templating.

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