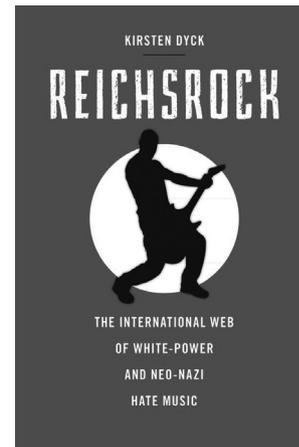


Notes de lecture

Kirsten Dyck, *Reichsrock: The International Web of White-Power and Neo-Nazi Hate Music*, New Brunswick, New Jersey & London, Rutgers University Press, 2017

By Julian Schaap

In *Reichsrock*, ethnomusicologist Kirsten Dyck (James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia) excavates and dissects one of the few musical “genres” (if this can indeed be labeled as such) that has inspired and continues to inspire hatred and discrimination worldwide: white-power and neo-nazi hate music. Although there exists a notable body of work on the topic (e.g. Corte & Edwards, 2008; Futrell et al., 2006), Dyck significantly advances these studies by shedding light on the *global* character of



white-power music scenes and their international ties. While the onset of the white-power music scene dates back to pre-Internet 1970s England, much of this international offline web has found a virtual refuge online, increasingly connecting different national white-power music scenes globally, making such a study all the more urgent. The book sets out to explore various key national white-power music scenes that have become increasingly connected over time. Interestingly, these national case studies go beyond the usual suspects (United Kingdom, Germany, Scandinavia, United States) by also including less-discussed regions (South-America, Australia). This is clearly one of the strongest points of the book, especially considering how the author has aimed to connect each country-specific white-power music network to its region’s specific historical, socio-cultural and ethno-racial constellations. Instead of offering a chronological perspective on how the international scene has risen (and in some places, perished), Dyck decided to structure the book based on the various national case studies, discussing each in order while—at times—cross-comparing with other cases.

Before discussing the specific national cases, Dyck offers a short chapter on the background, origins and conceptualization of white-power music in general. As can be expected with any music scene that is based on ideology rather than aesthetics or musical style, white-power music in fact entails a collection of musical genres, with rock music at its core. Most artists that Dyck discusses are musically in the regions of (hardcore) punk rock and oi! or heavy/black metal; musical genres which—despite their relatively mixed origins—have remained overwhelmingly white (Hamilton, 2016; Schaap, 2015). Nevertheless, examples of notably different musical styles such as country, (neo-)folk and electronic music do exist in the fringes of certain white-power music scenes.

Now, readers with a background in (cultural) sociology or cultural studies should be warned: *Reichsrock* rarely offers sociological or cultural analyses of the actual music and content that white-power musicians provide(d), nor does it apply common theoretical frameworks to this such as reception theory (Holub, 2013) or Hall's encoding-decoding model (Hall, 1980). Although this paves the way for a thorough account of the development of white-power music and its key characters in different national contexts—without being sidetracked by considerations of audience interpretation of specific cases—, it occasionally results in a lack of theoretical depth. Especially people's attraction to 'extreme' music in general, the many potential reasons for flirting with totalitarian symbolism in music and art, and specific cases of ideologically ambiguous artists such as Böhse Onkelz, Boyd Rice and Michael Moynihan, are topics that would have benefited from a

more distanced socio-theoretical and less normative approach.

Chapters 2 to 5 all deal with specific global regions that host white-power music scenes or networks. The chapter on Britain is fundamental since it gave birth to the music scenes in which white-power ideologies took root (oi! music and the skinhead subculture) and to one of the prime artists in the genre's history: Ian Stuart Donaldson of *Screwdriver*. As the subsequent chapters demonstrate—especially those on continental Europe, North-America and Australia—the British underpinnings of white-power hate rock are undeniable. This chapter is followed by a discussion of continental Western Europe (Germany, Sweden, Norway and—briefly discussed—France, Spain and Italy). Dyck's decision to treat each case separately pays off here, as it becomes clear how national contexts (e.g. Germany's history as the cradle of Nazism; Sweden's neutrality during World War Two; Franco's Spain) are consequential to their specific national white-power (music) scenes. I bracket 'music' here, since at times the author actually offers a relatively complete picture of the local white-power networks in general.

Chapter 4 and 5 respectively focus on Eastern Europe (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Poland, Greece) and "outside Europe" (United States and Canada, Latin-America, Australia). In its discussion of these regions, the book particularly excels in its treatment of a notorious issue within the white-power music network: different kinds of whiteness and assessing legitimate participation in the music network. Grasping back to different ideologies (e.g. Hitler's Nazism, Mussolini's Fascism), branches of neo-paganism and ideas on eugenics, white-power artists are

often occupied by determining who is, for lack of a better phrase, “the right kind of white.” Highlights in this regard are Dyck’s examinations of Eastern Europe and how the region’s white supremacists negotiate Hitler’s disdain for Slavic peoples, and how Latin-American white-power musicians are typically seen as ‘less white’ than their European or Northern-European counterparts.

Methodologically the book relies on historical analyses conducted by the author, mainly by consulting online sources. The rigorous research conducted by Dyck (including assessing many online forums in various languages) is impressive, especially considering that many of these sources live short online lives as governments and other anti-racist groups aim to take them down. Admittedly however, the decision to exclude the actual content produced by white-power artists because its copyrights are in “dubious legal territory” (10) is regrettable. Although this resolution might have been the (understandable) consequence of the publisher rather than the author, the book at times leans (too) heavily on active forum-writers rather than the actual content created by musicians. On top of that, the author has not studied local scenes herself, keeping the analysis relatively distant. Seeing that websites like *Stormfront* can function as a virtual refuge when offline scenes are lacking (De Koster & Houtman, 2008), the findings could overstate the actual presence of physical/offline scenes.

The book concludes with chapter 6, in which—against my expectations—the author presents a short treatise on the importance of taking white-power music seriously. Admittedly, I found this to be one of the weaker parts of the book as it seems to overstate the influence of white-power (e.g.

Norwegian church-burnings which were primarily related to Satanism and anti-Christianity) or its music (e.g. Anders Breivik’s terrorist attacks in 2011) in a long list of acts of violence and terror. Of course cultural products can play an important—if not, key—role in fostering hate crimes, many of these events would probably have also occurred without white-power music. Related to the aforementioned lack of socio-cultural theories (notably reception studies), the author tends to overemphasize the role of punkers like Henry Rollins or the Sex Pistols (or, for that matter, well-known mainstream rock/metal bands like Rammstein, Slayer or Marilyn Manson) in giving leeway to the rise of ideological extremism, rather than relating this to (young) audiences looking for aesthetic extremism or, simply, provocateurs. Nevertheless, the conclusion highlights the importance of understanding white-power music and its continued relevance to date.

To conclude, *Reichsrock* offers a comprehensive, meticulously studied account of white-power music scenes in a wide-range of countries and regions. In doing so, it provides the reader not only with a detailed treatment of music scenes’ and networks’ key artists, groups, organizations and audiences, but also how these are embedded in specific white-power or nationalists networks. At times, Dyck scoops over topics that demand more attention (e.g. the important role of the Internet as on the one hand causing a lack of funding for musicians, labels and organization due to downloading practices, yet on the other hand fostering intricate global social networks that help spread the music’s ideology). Additionally, some readers might be deterred by the book’s preference for (occasionally rather trivial) detail over meta-level

theorizing. Overall however, *Reichsrock* will prove invaluable to any scholar, journalist or student in need of a broad overview of the international web of white-power music

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Bruno Giner & François Porcile, *Les musiques pendant la guerre d'Espagne, Paris, Berg International, 2015*

Par Luis Velasco-Pufleau

La Guerre civile espagnole (1936-1939), ou Guerre d'Espagne, est sans doute le plus important conflit internationaliste du xx^e siècle. Dès 1936, un grand nombre de volontaires internationaux, pour la plupart des femmes et des hommes avec une sensibilité politique antifasciste, sont arrivés afin de lutter aux côtés des forces républicaines contre ce qu'ils considéraient comme le plus grand danger pour la démocratie dans le monde. En tant que fin observateur du conflit espagnol, George Orwell le décrit en 1946 comme « l'un des événements les plus tragiques et les plus sordides que l'Europe moderne ait connu » (Orwell, 2009a : 83). Il parlait d'expérience puisqu'il avait combattu entre l'hiver 1936 et l'été 1937 aux côtés des milices du Parti ouvrier d'unification marxiste (POUM), fondé en 1935 à Barcelone. Pour Orwell, il fallait que « la véritable histoire de la guerre d'Espagne reste dans nos mémoires comme une démonstration de la folie et la mesquinerie de la politique de puissance » (Orwell, 2009a : 85). En effet,

VOLUME!