

### Chapter 3

#### Listening to White Noise: The Sonic Landscapes of White Power

In 1955, Asa Carter lost his job at WILD radio station in Birmingham, Alabama, bringing to an end his regionally syndicated program, which was sponsored by the American States Rights Association. His firing would also mark the end of his radio career. Rather than rethink his racist and anti-Semitic views, Carter redoubled his commitments to segregation and white supremacy. He publicly broke with longtime ally the Alabama Citizens' Council, organizing the North Alabama Citizens' Council as a visible alternative. The leadership role arguably gave Carter an advantaged position to defend Jim Crow and commandeer media attention. Almost immediately, he directed attention at the evils of popular culture. Of particular concern for Carter and his followers was the rising popularity of rock-'n-roll, which many at the time dubbed "race music." The former radio personality advocated a ban of the musical style, believing its content encouraged moral degradation and race mixing. The music itself and the behaviors said to be promoted by it were perceived to be a grave threat to white culture.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Carter saw in rock-'n-roll a conspiracy by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, "a plot to mongrelize America." As such, "the obscenity and vulgarity," he and others found in the increasing popular genre led them to assert that "rock n roll music is obviously a means by which the white man and his children can be driven to the level of the negro."<sup>2</sup> To combat the animalism evoked by

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<sup>1</sup> Martin & Segrave (1993)

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Garofalo (p. 145)

the banality of rock music, he laid out a plan to work with the owners of juke boxes to remove race music records.

As outrageous as his reading of pop music seems today, Carter was not an isolated voice. His protest escalated locally and echoed nationally. Perhaps dissatisfied with the theatrics of public relations, Carter formed a second group in 1956, the Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy (KKKC), which turned to direct action and violence. They disrupted a Nat King Cole concert, attacking the singer on stage, and “picketed a concert featuring the Platters, LaVern Baker, Bo Diddley, and Bill Haley, with signs reading, ‘NAACP says integration, rock & roll, rock & roll,’ ‘Jungle Music promotes integration,’ and ‘Jungle music aids delinquency’.”<sup>3</sup> Later, members of the KKKC would abduct, castrate, torture, and leave for dead an African American painter.

Racist opposition to rock music manifested itself throughout the country. City councils in Alabama, Arkansas, California, Louisiana, Texas, and Virginia prohibited interracial dances and concerts.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, radios from Pittsburgh and Cincinnati to Chicago and Denver “refused to play rock and roll.”<sup>5</sup> And, perhaps mirroring efforts organized by Carter, protestors in Inglewood, California circulated fliers that depicted the perceived evils of rock music. They featured “pictures of young black men and white women dancing, with captions reading, ‘Boy meets girl...‘be-bop style,’ and ‘Total Mongrelization’.”<sup>6</sup>

Carter eventually turned away from the KKKC, apparently after a falling out over finances in which he shot two associates, and his crusade against pop music, but

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<sup>3</sup> Delmont (2012)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

remained active in (racial) politics. He worked as a speech writer for Governor George Wallace, helping to pen the iconic phrase, “Segregation Today, Segregation Tomorrow, Segregation Forever.” Later, he reinvented himself and became wildly popular, authoring the novel that served as the basis for *The Outlaw Josey Wales* and under an assumed name an equally fictional tale that purported to be the autobiography of Cherokee Indian, *The Education of Little Tree*, which for a time was selected as an official choice of Oprah’s Book Club.

Carter did not stop rock music, any more than local ordinances extending Jim Crow did throughout the body politic. Ironically, much of today’s music that comprises the white power scene derives from early forms of rock-‘n-roll. While this might horrify the former Klansman, demagogue, and crusader, we imagine that he would applaud the creative energies and racist ideologies central to it. Much like his early career in radio, in which he used a popular medium for increasingly unpopular ends, today, musicians, producers, and leaders use popular musical forms to recruit new members, generate revenue, stabilize white nationalist identities and ideologies, and create community. And like Carter, this music scene is vocal and theatrical, wildly unpopular, and primed for volatility and violence.

While in the last chapter, we began to think through the ways popular culture imagines advocates of white power and in turn how they interpret such imagery, with this chapter, we take up equally important aspects of our core project. In particular, we examine white nationalists as creators and producers of expressive culture, which both builds on and arguably distorts popular music. Our effort here is to highlight that white nationalists do not simply consume and criticize popular culture, but, where possible,

actively work to craft popular works in their own right. While their creations are surely vernacular and vulgar, emerging from “the people” (or at least a select subset), they remain unpopular, at the margins of taste and outside of the marketplace (whether defined commercially or intellectually). Nevertheless, we read these as important dialogues around race, music, and style that highlight the interpenetration of the mainstream (more popular forms) and the more extreme renderings of white nationalists. To this end, we offer more than a summary of the white power music scene: we examine and unpack exchanges and interactions as well bridges and barriers.

Throughout this chapter, our focus remains on white power rock. While there is diversity of musical styles and aesthetics that encompass white power music, the power of white power rock is evident not just in its resonance with the movement but the ways that its aesthetics and styles mesh with a white supremacist narrative. We build upon the idea that “racist music” becomes a space for community, for disseminating the grammar, tropes, and narratives of white supremacy, and for cultivating a white nationalist worldview. Hate music is not innocuous but part and parcel of the development of the white nationalist movement. The Southern Poverty Law Center highlights its power:

Since the early 1990s, various forms of “white power” music have grown from a cottage industry serving a few racist skinheads to a multimillion-dollar, worldwide industry that is a primary conduit of money and young recruits to the radical right. Although the music originated in Britain in the early 1980s, it is now popular among hard-core racists throughout Europe and the United States.

The music essentially started with the British band Skrewdriver, led by the late Ian Stuart Donaldson, but is now played by hundreds of bands in the United States, Europe (where it is often illegal), and elsewhere. While it was once almost always one or another form of hard-core rock 'n' roll, it has more recently taken all kinds of musical forms, even ballads.<sup>7</sup>

With this in mind, we begin our discussion with a survey of white power music. Against this background, we endeavor to complicate white power music, contrasting songs from the first decades of the 20th century with more recent works. This comparative analysis allows a rereading of popular music as “race music” that lays seeds for more radical harvests. Next, we shift our focus to the use of the sounds and stylings of popular music to reach new audiences, first in the recruitment of new members to the movement and second in an unorthodox effort to create a crossover band, a group that would remain faithful to white power ideals and ideologies and appeal to a wider audience. In closing, we reflect on the scope and significance of unpopular culture.

### **Recentring White Power**

In a recent interview, sociologist Peter Simi, co-author of *American Swastika*, identified music as the cornerstone of contemporary white power:

Music is central to the movement in a lot of ways. It played a vital role in terms of offering opportunities for potential recruitment, offering opportunities for the generation of revenue and then probably most importantly, you know, music pulls

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-files/ideology/racist-music>

people together. It gives them opportunities to get together for music shows, music festivals; small shows, large ones, coming together on the Internet and talking about music shows.

All of these are opportunities for them to share in these kinds of occasions where they're talking, you know, spending time with, communicating with like-minded others who share the same view of the world as they do and talking about, you know, the future and what needs to be done.<sup>8</sup>

As Simi suggests, the white power music scene matters in ways often unrecognized and unexpected from scholars and non-scholars alike. Like all subcultures rooted in expression, style, and performance, it has always been about more than entertainment, parties, fun, and “distractions.” For a movement pushed to the margins, it advances the movement organizationally, facilitates the circulation of ideological positions, anchors interactive spaces (both in-person and online), and establishes a forum for the elaboration of meaningful identities.<sup>9</sup>

White power music covers a diverse range of musical styles. In addition to folk and country,<sup>10</sup> it includes musicians producing hard rock, punk, Oi, hardcore, and metal, notably National Socialist black metal. It is a global subculture. Although most visible in North America and Western Europe, it plays an increasingly important role in cultural politics within Eastern Europe, South America, and Australia. Producers of white power

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=158443990>

<sup>9</sup> Burghart (1999), Corte & Edwards (2008), Futrell et al. (2006), Kim, Simi & Futrell

<sup>10</sup> Although we address folk in our discussion of Prussian Blue, country falls beyond our consideration in this chapter. This reflects its relative size when compared to rock genres, its unique history that would complicate our general discussion, and our familiarity with country music generally and hate country in particular. Good works on these issues include Mann (2008) and Messner et al. (2007).

music have adopted emerging media with swiftness and relative ease, first embracing CDs over albums and cassette tapes and more recently moving onto the internet both to facilitate distribution and seize upon the marketing possibilities of new media, tapping the potential of social media to connect with audiences and increase access to music through streaming audio and internet radio. Not infrequently, labels have ties to established or emerging white nationalist organizations.

Resistance Records offers a great illustration of the scene and its organizational structures and ideological elements. Indeed, as an emblematic label, it has proven to be a vital institution not only within white power music but also for the movement as a whole. Established in Windsor, Ontario in 1993, it operated as a “one-man hate-music distribution operation with a handful of album titles,” but rather rapidly expanded to become the leading hate rock distributor in the US. Legal problems crippled the label, leading to its eventual sale to Willis A. Carto, founder of the Liberty Lobby, and Todd Blodgett, who relocated it to the US and worked to resuscitate it. A year later, the pair sold it to William Pierce, author of *The Turner Diaries* and founder of the National Alliance.<sup>11</sup> Like Carto and Blodgett, Pierce believed Resistance Records had the potential to recruit young people to the movement and more easily and broadly communicate its message. As such, the new ownership expanded the label beyond its historic distribution hub, adding a monthly magazine and established a web presence notable for its scope. While the label has suffered as lawsuits, Pierce’s death, and factionalism devastated the National Alliance, it remains a shining example of the promise of and problems posed by white power music.<sup>12</sup> Labels like Resistance Records

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.adl.org/resistance%20records/introduction.asp>

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*

are not the only space of dissemination for hate music cultivation. Concerts and music festivals play a pivotal role in the scene, creating what Simi and Futrell dub “free spaces” that allow participants to express themselves without reservation, validating identities and ideologies. Music matters to white power because of the ways in which it advances the movement, communicates its ideological messages, and opens spaces for the creation of social networks and identities.

### **Race, Resentment, and Rage**

White power music has no singular origin. It has multiple roots and takes seemingly endless routes in and out of popular culture. It appears in blackface on the minstrelsy stage, later in the patriotic songs of the Ku Klux Klan,<sup>13</sup> and then in the guise of country and rockabilly.<sup>14</sup> Most famously, it has favored the oppositional worlds of alternative rock--oi, punk, hardcore, and metal.<sup>15</sup> It exemplifies the transnational dialogues stitching together white power worldwide and the increasingly translocal articulation of whiteness that anchors white nationalism. Perhaps ironically, it takes shape in subcultures marked by resistance and known for anti-establishment, progressive, and even anti-racist sentiments.<sup>16</sup>

Contemporary histories of hate rock almost invariably center their accounts around the British band Skrewdriver and its charismatic lead singer Ian Stuart, highlighting the ways in which the band blended class politics, white victimization, British nationalism, and strident racism into a volatile cocktail that drew on the

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<sup>13</sup> Crews (2003)

<sup>14</sup> Messner et al, (2007), Wade (2007)

<sup>15</sup> See Duncombe & Tremblay (2011), Hochhauser (2011)

<sup>16</sup> Duncombe & Tremblay (2011), Home (1995), Sabin (1999)



resentment and rage of punk music and the utopian underground of the skinhead subculture. In a very real way, Skrewdriver racialized Oi music and punk more generally, offering a template of how to repurpose pop stylings and the sentiments of youth subculture. It opened a dialogue first within the UK and then across the Atlantic and into Europe around how music as a cultural technology might be deployed to direct political energies,<sup>17</sup> establishing close ties with the National Front and encouraging violence sonically, and secure niche markets through ideology, founding the record label Blood and Honour. These precedents of invention of genre, exploitation of medium, and ideological opportunism reappear in successive subcultures across national borders: hardcore in the United States, black metal in Europe, and folk in the UK (Sparklen, 2012).

For us, less important than the actual chronology of white power music are the conditions that make it possible for hate rock to take shape and persistently shift in novel contexts. We have in mind what Dunscombe and Tremblay refer to as the “tipping point,” which transforms “inchoate, oppositional rage” into a potent, mobilizable force that targets abject others: where punks had once “allowed their rage against the status quo to slip between those in power and those without it, the White Power punk tips primarily into a hatred of the powerless.”<sup>18</sup> White power music becomes a vector for white resentments associated with globalization, decolonization, deindustrialization, and post-Fordism; a small, marginal, expression of a larger backlash against immigration, multiculturalism, and civil rights. Importantly, according to Dunscombe and Tremblay,

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<sup>17</sup> Brown (2004), Ridgeway (1995)

<sup>18</sup> Dunscombe and Tremblay (2011, p.114)

White Power punk's sense of victimization, its valorization of oppositional solidarity, its creation and mobilization of DIY cultural networks, its understanding of the desire of the forbidden and the shocking, and the simple raw emotionality and anger of its expression are characteristics that *all* punk shares.<sup>19</sup>

These elements were the building blocks for more expansive and penetrating dialogues, enabling hate rock to crystallize, gain traction, and eventually become the cornerstone of the movement and the key ideological conduit for it.

### **Listening to Hate Rock**

Hate rock addresses the preoccupations and expresses the presumptions of advocates of white power. As such, band names and song lyrics clearly illustrate the findings of scholars concerned with the movement more generally. Grounded in concrete notions of naturalized racial and gender differences, they represent a world of constant struggle, especially an ongoing or impending race war; they celebrate pride, honor, and loyalty; they give voice to a hypermasculine and heteronormative worldview; they picture whites (as a people, race, nation, and/or culture) as imperiled; they present dehumanizing portraits of racial others, especially Jews and African Americans; and they offer critiques of the state of society and the relationship to the nation-state. "Some lyrics," according to Peter Simi,

are very, very explicit, you know, advocating, you know, lynchings and beatings and other, you know, violent acts. But then, you know, it is important to point out

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 115

that that's not all of the lyrics, that there is a pretty wide kind of cross section within this genre of, you know, white power and neo-Nazi music.<sup>20</sup>

The most extreme lyrical themes cluster around racism, anti-Semitism, and homophobia. For instance, songs like “Splatterday, Nigger Day” by Grinded Nig, which depicts an attack on an African American, and “Repatriation” by Final War, which launches an invective against immigrants, clearly illustrate the extremes of white power music (ADL). And Midtown Bootboys call for anti-gay violence:

Stop the threat of AIDS today  
Cripple, maim or kill a gay  
We've got to take a stand today  
We've got to wage a war on gays.<sup>21</sup>

Advocacy of violence has led some critics to describe white power music as terrorism,<sup>22</sup> a point substantiated by Aaronson who asserts that between 1987 and 2003, “members of the white power music scene have been linked to 56 murders as well as thousands of acts of vandalism, assault,” and other crimes.<sup>23</sup>

Less extreme, though not innocuous, tropes include songs that wax nostalgic about Nazi Germany and Viking society, linking past to present, while laying claims to a virile and romantic versions of a supreme white masculinity. An overlapping theme hails

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<sup>20</sup> Op cit.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Burkhart (1999: 1)

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Aaronson (2003)

specific heroic figures, often celebrating their sacrifices to the movement and/or race. Other songs extol the virtues of contemporary white nationalism, especially embodied by skinheads, as a way of life. In such music, “There is also a clear emphasis on upholding Aryan values through movement participation, fraternity, kinship ties, and racial loyalty. These lyrics speak of fostering ‘global brotherhood,’ ‘volk,’ ‘white pride,’ and ‘Aryan heritage.’<sup>24</sup> In sum, what is important to note here is that white power music creates an abject, even monstrous, other and an empowered and enlightened self, reiterating some of the most vile and violent imagery directed at people of color, Jews, and gays and lesbians and some of the most romanticized assessments of white (supremacist) agents.

### **Snapshots of the White Power Music Scene**

The social structures and cultural meanings associated with white power music make it ideal for the construction of identity. It not only creates an interactive context for the presentation and articulation of self, but it also provides a set of frames and codes through which individuals can fashion themselves. Futrell et al. offer a number of good examples of identity formation in the white power music scene.

You’d be amazed at how many young white kids [are] looking for an outlet, a space, to sort of be something different where they don’t have to feel guilty about being white or act like a nigger to be cool . . . we [Panzerfaust] give them that opportunity and provide some direction by helping get them educated...<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Futrell et al (2006: 281)

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 284

I listen to white power music and I still have that feeling of being involved with something as a whole. Listening to music like Max Resist, it's something where I can sit at home alone and even though I know the whole world is against me I can pop in a Max Resist CD and listen to it and go not only is this uplifting me but I know the band's behind it and there are people who have the same CD that forms a community and gives us strength. . . .<sup>26</sup>

When I hear [white power music] it ignites something in me. Attending the music shows and being there live is even more powerful. The live shows are energizers for racial pride, they just fill you up with love and hope for the future.<sup>27</sup>

[The festival] was great. We got dressed up [in Aryan regalia] with all these great white families and that's what was really important about this event . . . a chance to build unity and remember why we do all of this, it's for racial kinship.<sup>28</sup>

Music matters to white nationalists not simply for its rhythm or sound, not only because it gives voice to visions and values, but importantly because it provides a material expression to white power. It anchors a scene, opens up space, encourages interaction, fosters the articulation of identity, and creates community. While critics have rightly highlighted the lyrics of hate rock and often linked them to violence, such assessments

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 290

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 291

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 291

threaten to substitute a caricature of the scene, its attractions, and its significance. For clearly, what white power music means for its producers and audiences is multifaceted: part ideological, part, interactional, part identification. While white supremacist music now might be best described as marginal, if not deviant, manifesting many of the features of other oppositional musical subcultures, often interfacing, if not overlapping with them, its present formation differs markedly from its antecedents in tone, content, and reception.

### **Songs for Mary Phagan**

Music extolling white supremacy, advocating antipathy towards blacks, Jews, and immigrants, and promoting the defense of the white race (often from a palpable existential threat) is nothing new. In fact, this might describe much of American popular music up into the 20th century. On the one hand, the minstrelsy tradition, in which actors staged performances in blackface, borrowed and denigrated expressive elements of the African diaspora, used caricature blackness to make commentaries on racial and class politics, and delighted audiences of white men with their song stylings, arguably constitutes a core strand of American popular culture. On the other hand, as urbanization, industrialization, and immigration changed the face of America, scholars set about collecting endangered musical traditions, seeking pure, uncorrupted, and authentic expressions that required disentangling and freezing white from black stylings.<sup>29</sup> This racialized and essentialized splitting would have profound implications

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<sup>29</sup> Taylor and Baker (2007)

for the development of popular music as well as understandings of racial difference that echo down through Asa Carter and hate rock.

A measure of the centrality of white supremacy to popular music in the early 20th century can be found in Ku Klux Klan (KKK) sheet music. While the KKK has the rightful reputation of being a violent vigilante group that used terror to police racial boundaries and put African Americans in their ascribed social place, the group remade itself in 1915 as a fraternal organization committed to 100% Americanism. In the following decade, the KKK skyrocketed to prominence across the US, promoting family values, patriotism, and tradition, while campaigning against modernity, immigration, and progressivism. Public pageantry, from parades to socials, and ritualized secrecy were fundamental to the success of the reborn KKK, particularly its political influence in local and regional elections and the passage of immigration reform at the national level. Not surprisingly music played a key role, communicating values and principles, creating community, and crafting identities of white Americans. In the songs collected by Crews one sees a celebration of America, Christianity (Protestantism), whiteness and, to a lesser extent, denigration of Jews, immigrants, Catholics, and African Americans.<sup>30</sup> As the reformed KKK collapsed under the weight of corruption and disillusionment, most Americans forgot its 100% Americanism and the music which accompanied it – so much so that a recent episode of *History Detectives* on PBS featured a segment sleuthing the origins of a KKK recording discovered by a surprised and disgusted antique collector at a yard sale.

After the Second World War, two fundamental shifts reinforced one another: first, American society began a slow and incomplete journey toward racial equality and

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<sup>30</sup> Crews (2003)

second, consumerism and media culture began to reshape self and society. Asa Carter's campaign discussed at the outset of this chapter represented a backlash against these twin forces. In keeping with these deeper shifts in racial thinking and cultural production, the terrain of the popular shifted as well, destabilizing the acceptability and in many cases the utterability of overtly racist music. In essence, white power music has become unpopular and yet has remained a vital means through which advocates seek to expand the base of the movement and the purchase of their ideological claims.

Two songs clarify these broader shifts in white power and popular culture, offering keen insight into the scene and its strategies. To foster deeper understanding, we select two songs about Mary Phagan, a young factory worker, killed under mysterious circumstances in the Atlanta area in 1913. The subsequent investigation led to Jewish factory manager Leo Frank being charged with the murder. Labeled the American Dreyfus, an obvious reference to the fraudulent, anti-Semitic trial of a French officer at the end of the 19th century, Frank was convicted and initially sentenced to death, which was later commuted by Governor John M. Slaton. Outraged, a group of local citizens, including many community leaders, formed the Knights of Mary Phagan (KMP) to avenge the girl and defend the race. As one speaker said to assembled members of the group:

This sainted girl...who, true to her inherent high breeding and the teachings of her devoted mother, gave up her own life rather than surrender that Christian



attribute--the crown, glory, and honor of true womanhood into the threshold of which she was just entering.<sup>31</sup>

Shortly thereafter, members of the KMP kidnapped Frank from the prison housing him and lynched him. None of the participants were ever convicted for their roles in the ritual killing. Frank was pardoned in 1986.<sup>32</sup>

A folk ballad, "Little Mary Phagan," began circulating after the trial. It was played at rallies calling for the execution of Frank. Largely a narrative of key events, it paints the young woman as an innocent and virtuous victim, while casting the accused killer as cold, calculating, and alien, an individual who defiled both a young woman and the traditions of region since he took advantage of her vulnerability and did so on Confederate Memorial Day.<sup>33</sup>

Leo Frank he met her  
With a brutish heart, we know;  
He smiled, and said, "Little Mary,  
You won't go home no more."  
  
Sneaked along behind her  
Till she reached the metal-room;  
He laughed, and said, "Little Mary,

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<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Dinnerstein (1968: 136)

<sup>32</sup> Importantly, the Knights of Mary Phagan would be central to the rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan, comprising its core membership at its public unveiling in 1915 (Dinnerstein, 1986).

<sup>33</sup> Snyder (1918). Complete text here: <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/frank/frankballad.html>. Audio here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hP2ue9hNJJQ>

You have met your fatal doom.”

While the ballad paints a morality tale, pivoting on familiar themes of good and evil amplified by references to the inhumanity and marginality of the perpetrator, it does not invoke overt anti-Semitic slurs or celebrate the impending violence of retribution. It does not have to. The audience knows that the ballad is as much a racial drama as it is a morality play because media coverage and popular sentiment have already framed it as a young, virginal and honorable woman mercilessly murder by a racial other and outsider – a Jew, an industrialist, a transplanted Yankee (though born in San Antonio, Texas). It was one more text in a broader dialogue about racial justice and social order in which the execution of the former would ensure a return to the latter.

Seventy-five years later, the white power band Achtung Juden would release *Reich Songs, Volume Two*, which featured a photo of the lynching as its cover. The CD, featuring 14 tracks, opens with “The Knights of Mary Phagan,” and also includes original songs like “Keep on Fighting,” “Burn the Books,” and “Our Pride is our Loyalty” and covers of “classic” songs by Skrewdriver, “Hail the New Dawn,” and No Remorse “Son of Odin.”<sup>34</sup> The song is a simple, fast-paced, and hard-driving rock anthem marked by forceful guitars and drums and guttural vocals. Key passages follow.<sup>35</sup>

Fetch the Rope

String up the Jew

Punish the Abraham

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.micetrap.net/shop/catalog/achtung-juden-reich-songs-volume-p-2564.html>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6xGPJO1Dc0>. Lyrics transcribed by King.

Leo Frank at the End of a Noose

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We are the Knights of Mary Phagan

We are the Knights of Mary Phagan

.....

Kill the pedophile

Reclaim our nation

.....

Destroy ZOG, before they destroy you

.....

We are the Knights of Mary Phagan

We are the Knights of Mary Phagan

Where the ballad reported a current event, here, the author and listener becomes one of the Knights, empathizing with, endorsing, and enacting the lynching. Violent in imagery and sound, the song celebrates the killing, legitimating the deed through anti-Semitic language and assumptions, which were absent from the ballad. This should not be too surprising given that the name of the band itself translates from German as Attention Jews and makes a fairly explicit reference to Nazism, a reference reinforced by the CD title (*Reich Songs, Volume Two*). To make Frank and the impropriety of his actions stark to contemporary listeners, the band foregrounds the killing and the pathological character of the killer. And more, it reminds listeners that this is not an isolated or historical act, but rather an ongoing campaign by the Zionist Occupational Government (ZOG, or more

generally, the Jews). Finally, where the KMP and the ballad itself called for defense of the race and the honor of its women, the track calls for the reclamation of the nation, suggesting that necessary action goes beyond defense to recuperation and renewal.

These two songs highlight a number of important shifts in white supremacy and popular culture. First, where racially charged songs were once accepted and applauded (regionally, if not universally by 1915), today, they are unpopular, marginal, and taboo. Indeed, white supremacy, formerly a shared value and natural fact, has become contested, a persistent structure held under erasure by colorblindness, new racism, and multiculturalism. Second, in contrast with the common sense narrative or recitation of the ballad, “The Knights of Mary Phagan” offers an argument, rather explicitly advancing racialized rhetoric to make claims about the current condition. Third, the language, tone, and style of the songs expose profound changes. Not only does hard rock (somewhere between punk and metal) replace the fiddle and folks stylings of yore, but the imperiled state of whiteness is more urgent, the action depicted more vulgar and violent, and the references to difference more denigrating and starkly anti-Semitic. Fourth, the regional and racial references in “Little Mary Phagan” give way to a new imagining of race and nation, in which whiteness has more global and trans historical referents, can be seen as the foundation for a nation distinct from and opposed to the USA, and in an existential struggle with ZOG (Jews). What we see here is the trajectory of white nationalist deployment of music as a site of propaganda and identity, ideological meaning and community, which in spite of changes in technology or the visibility of white nationalist movements, sits at the core of the movement into our present moment. We also see how the changing place and presence of mainstream popular culture and the dialectics

between cultural integration and white nationalist formation compelled a continued emphasis on counter cultural production from white supremacist spaces.

### **Isn't It Ironic**

Asa Carter, whose career and critique opened this chapter, seized upon what he understood to be a fundamental contradiction that many think should make hate rock unthinkable. Rock music emerges from a hybrid space, mixing sonic traditions, cultural behaviors, and racialized bodies.<sup>36</sup> For Carter and many others in the late 1950s and early 1960s, these polycultural patterns of integration challenged the rule of Jim Crow and threatened their understanding of race relations, the boundaries of whiteness, and the social order. By and large, producers and consumers of popular music do not consider this origin story when writing, recording, performing or listening to a recent release or personally meaningful song. And much the same is true for participants in the white power music scene.

On the one hand, the commercial music industry, beginning at roughly the moment of Carter's campaign, whitened popular music, reworking its polycultural beginnings for increasingly discrete, if not segregated, niche markets defined by race, class, and gender. As a consequence, rock music does not so much conjure a multiracial social scene or musical style, as refer to white artists – the Beatles and Rolling Stones, AC/DC and Rush, Led Zeppelin and Aerosmith – while soul, RnB, urban contemporary, Latin and so forth mark music by and for people of color.

On the other hand, the racial politics of popular music shifted after rock-'n-roll became white. Over the past two decades, the normalcy of rock has been contrasted with

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<sup>36</sup> See Lipsitz (2001)

the deviancy, hypersexuality, and violence of hip-hop and the oppositional waves of (white) alternative music. In common with many pundits and parents, hate rock holds the former in contempt, viewing it as a degenerate genre and social ill. At the same time, it engages with the latter, drawing on punk, metal, hardcore, and even neofolk to communicate its ideology and hail prospective adherents to it.

While we do not wish to set aside the irony of white separatist and white supremacist music policing racial boundaries and reiterating racial hierarchies, we do think it important to stress two other elements crucial to the white power music scene. First, commercial music came to make and market the same racial categories that Carter sought to defend in his campaign. Second, where whiteness came to displace the polycultural foundations of rock music, blackness remained a social problem and source of moral panics over the past half century.

### **Remapping the Musical Landscape**

One map of the contemporary American musical landscape might suggest a rather deep, if not complete, separation between various popular styles, whether rock, jazz, alternative, roots, or hip-hop, and white power rock. After all, the latter centers on hate, a coming race war, and imperiled whiteness--themes rarely found in the pop charts, not to mention polite conversation. Such a rendering would, however, misconstrue the contours of mainstream music and its entanglements with race and racism. We do not have room for a detailed history, offering in its place three fragments toward an impressionistic portrait.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> See Burghart (1999) for more examples.

Writing in the late 1970s, musician and critic Lester Bangs offered a scathing assessment of the place of race in the underground music scene.<sup>38</sup> Lifting the veil off hipster life and its extremities, he probes an emerging contradiction in the wake of the civil rights movement; most hipsters, like most white Americans “don’t have to try at all to be a racist.” He recounts a series of incidents and observations that should trouble the Avant-garde, but do not. For instance, he notes, in the shadow of the Vietnam War, a long forgotten band Shrapnel regularly played a song “Hey, Little Gook!” and describes Iggy Pop introducing a song, “Our next selection tonight for all you Hebrew ladies in the audience is entitled ‘Rich Bitch!’” His concern goes beyond shock value and pushing limits:

I opened up a copy of a Florida punk fanzine called *New Order* and read an article by Miriam Linna of the Cramps, Nervus Rex, and now Zantees: “I love the Ramones [because] this is the celebration of everything American--everything teenaged and wonderful and white and urban”....the same issue featured a full-page shot of Miriam and one her little friends posing proudly with their leathers and shades and pistol in front of the headquarters of the United White People’s Party, under a sign bearing three flags “GOD” (cross), “COUNTRY” (stars and stripes), “RACE” (swastika).<sup>39</sup>

This linkage of America and whiteness slides with disturbing ease into an embrace of white power imagery, which Bangs insists is about more than getting a rise through

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<sup>38</sup> Bangs (1979), Kennedy (2012)

<sup>39</sup> Bangs (1979)

performance art. Like the use of Nazi imagery in British punk in the same era, these limit projects do more to show the limitlessness of white privilege and the limited capacity of hipsters to revalue white racist imagery. But then, as others in the underground scene suggest, perhaps ascribing sincerity to much of their culture work is giving them too much credit. As Bangs observes, Nico, member of the acclaimed Velvet Underground, who performed “Deutschland über Alles” at CBGB, lamented the loss of a record contract in a later interview:

I made a mistake. I said in *Melody Maker*...that I didn't like negroes. That's all. They took it so *personally*...although it's a whole different race. I mean, Bob Marley doesn't resemble a *negro*, does he? ...He's an archetype Jamaican...but with features like white people. I don't like the features. They're so much like animals...its cannibals, no?<sup>40</sup>

At the close of the short catalog of opinion, utterances, and encounters, Bangs has resigned himself to a rather troubling conclusion: “When I started writing this, I was worried I might trigger incidents of punk-bashing by black gangs. Now I realize that nobody cares. Most white people think the whole subject of racism is boring.” Of course, for the artists he discusses and many other hipsters at the time racism was fun, racism was powerful (both as it reinforced and held the promise of upsetting the system. This power, of course, is an unrecognized bridge between the hip, fashionable, and proper experiments of the avant guard on one side and the vulgar, uncouth, and unacceptable stylings of white power on the other.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, emphasis original



Speaking in 1997, as a punk and metal icon and a founding member of The Misfits and Samhain before embarking on a successful solo career, who had emerged from the same context Bangs describes, Glenn Danzig (*né* Glenn Allen Anzalone) sat for an interview with Steven Blush of *Seconds* magazine. While much of the discussion centers on his musical endeavors and business ventures, near the end, the conversation swerves to race, after the interviewer asks him about his past statements that he did not think that there was anything “wrong with being proud of being white.”<sup>41</sup> Danzig replies,

Why would I not be proud of being White? ...I'm a mix of a bunch of different stuff and so is everybody else. There is no "original" race anymore. As far as me being an Aryan or a racist, anyone who knows me knows that's bullshit. But if there's a race war, what I am going to do? Twenty Black guys with guns aren't going to care that I'm not with anybody.

Here, Danzig makes an interesting move: I am not pure, but I am white, and in the face of difference I will stand against blacks with whom a future conflict is inevitable.

SECONDS: If you stand for anything, you're considered a racist.

DANZIG: They can suck my dick and die. There's so many double standards. If you're proud and White, all of a sudden you're racist That's not the case and anyone with half a brain knows that. Unfortunately, we live in a world where a lot of people don't have half a brain. People try to acquiesce to certain groups and then that becomes a reverse inequality.

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<sup>41</sup> <http://www.the7thhouse.com/news/Articles/seconds44.htm>

Double standards and reverse racism, classic code words of white resentment encourage Blush to further redefine racism and Danzig to replace white supremacy with black power.

SECONDS: The ultimate racism is a White person saying to a Black person, “Hey man, you've got so much soul,” and patting them on the back.

DANZIG: What is Black? To be honest, Black people aren't black. We're all different shades of brown. Calling yourself Black and calling somebody White has already set up a division. So don't moan about the division later, okay?

SECONDS: The racists aren't the problem anymore; it's the virulent anti-racists who cause trouble.

DANZIG: I'm going to say something very controversial: if you are African-American and you don't want to live by White people, that should be your choice...The flipside of that is why shouldn't there be areas a Black person can't go? If a White person doesn't want to live with Black people, that's their decision. This is America; do what you want to do.

SECONDS: We teach everyone to love each other and maybe we're being disingenuous; maybe it's okay to hate. Why can't you dislike someone...?

As Danzig and Blush conclude they have completely reframed racism, advocating racial segregation and separation (Jim Crow style) in the rubric of colorblindness and abstract liberalism (everyone can make an individual choice). This blend is at once in keeping

with much of what neoconservatives say about race and racism amid a neoliberal backlash against the civil rights movement and an endorsement of white nationalists' embrace of heritage, love of one's people, and defense of one's race. Not surprisingly, discussants on Stormfront love this interview and hold Danzig in high regard.<sup>42</sup>

Although not as effusive, in a 2010 *Playboy* interview, popular singer/songwriter John Mayer also invoked themes more familiar from white nationalist discussion forums.

PLAYBOY: If you didn't know you, would you think you're a douche bag?

MAYER: It depends on what I picked up. My two biggest hits are "Your Body Is a Wonderland" and "Daughters." If you think those songs are pandering, then you'll think I'm a douche bag. It's like I come on very strong. I am a very...I'm just very. V-E-R-Y. And if you can't handle very, then I'm a douche bag. But I think the world needs a little very. That's why black people love me.

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PLAYBOY: Do black women throw themselves at you?

MAYER: I don't think I open myself to it. My dick is sort of like a white supremacist. I've got a Benetton heart and a fuckin' David Duke cock. I'm going to start dating separately from my dick.

Following his invocation of Duke, the former Ku Klux Klan leader and longtime white power provocateur, we have our doubts that quite as many black women loved John Mayer after this was published. His hasty apologies suggest he thought the broader public would not like the man behind the media persona, when they read of his

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<sup>42</sup> <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/t131232/>

multicultural heart and “David Duke cock.” It is quite telling that one can have a schizophrenic relationship with race, embracing, but not desiring, diversity, accepting difference as a fashion statement or marketing campaign, but rejecting it as a pathway to intimacy and carnality. What’s worse, it is not simply that Mayer so easily compartmentalizes race, desire, and aspects of himself, but that he so comfortably refers to the central marker of his masculinity in this conversation as an infamous white supremacist: what does it mean to internalize such an identification and declare it so openly to the world? What does it mean that the rhetoric, grammar, and tropes of race, sexuality, and otherness within the mainstream and extreme so often mirror one another?

The point of this remapping is not to argue that John Mayer inspires hate rock, or to locate its origins within the hipster scene of the late 1970s. Rather, we see in these passing comments and deeply held sentiments deeper, ongoing dialogues about racial difference, dialogues that call into question progressive narratives of being beyond race and comfortable dissociations around taste and style. Indeed, it may be the case that these anecdotes reveal how shifting racial mores have dictated a renegotiation of frontstage and backstage performances, of public and private codes of conduct, and how these in turn dictate racial etiquette and self-presentation in a society committed to colorblindness. In turn, they likely suggest how and why producers and performers of white power rock continue to find in pop music the promise of conversion of and crossing over to the mainstream.

## **Recruitment**

On a purely instrumental level, music is about getting people into the movement. For white nationalist activists and leaders the chief appeal of hate rock has been its promise of enhanced recruitment. It offers a hook to draw disaffected white youth into the scene, introducing the key ideological positions of white power to them in an attractive, enjoyable, and approachable form.

In 2004, Byron Calvert, co-founder of Panzerfaust Records, offered a fairly rosy picture of the process as he envisioned it.

Eminem and Kid Rock are not the only working class kids who ha-- who, whose experience is a story that, that needs to be told, you know, there's a lot of other kids. Our customers here in Minnesota, if you saw 'em, you probably wouldn't know it. I mean it's, it's high school kids. It's girls in the suburb. I probably do over a hundred emails a day and it's just nuts how many emails I get that are your average 14 or 15 year old kid that came across us by doing a internet search or because he saw a sticker or some friends of his told him about the label. And they go, and they actually read the literature, they read the articles, they listen to the MP3s, they watch the videos, they see what it is we're saying. And it's like they soak it up.<sup>43</sup>

Calvert frames those who create and consume white power music after the model of working class white sensations, Eminem and Kid Rock, embodied by myriad normal, average, and otherwise unremarkable and unrecognizable young people. A vision of the

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<sup>43</sup> [http://www.onthedia.org/transcripts/transcripts\\_120304\\_hate.htm](http://www.onthedia.org/transcripts/transcripts_120304_hate.htm). Accessed 30 June 2005. Now dead.

media and multiculturalism colluding to keep kids from the truth, to keep minds closed, and expression regulated lurks just behind his assessment. For when chance or curiosity pierce the veil of acceptable mores and established knowledge, they actively embrace the message. The key, the challenge, for Calvert and other ambitious producers and organizers, is how to get the message to the masses.

In the fall of 2004, building on this understanding of communication, political organizing, and conversion, Calvert and his then partner Anthony Pierpont launched an ambitious venture through their label Panzerfaust Records. Dubbed Project Schoolyard USA, they sought to get a CD featuring white nationalist music into the hands of thousands of young people, convinced this would grow the movement in an unprecedented fashion, while also expanding the audience and market for the bands on their label. Calvert and Pierpont claimed to have been inspired by an earlier undertaking in Germany in which so called “German patriots” sought to circumvent government regulation of hate speech by distributing free copies of CDs compiling “nationalist rock and roll.”<sup>44</sup> With this inspiration, Panzerfaust outlined the scope and objectives of Project Schoolyard USA:

As an expression of the increasing level of international solidarity and cooperation between White nationalists, Project Schoolyard has crossed the Atlantic and is being continued here in the U.S. *Panzerfaust Records is pressing 100,000 copies of a pro-White sampler CD to be handed out to White youth from coast to coast in every state, including Hawaii.* Volunteers from every pro-White group and organization in the U.S. have signed up to assist us in this project, as

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<sup>44</sup> <http://www.panzerfaust.com/sampler/about.shtml>

well as numerous unaffiliated individuals, consisting mostly of our customers/supporters who are high school students themselves. These CDs will be handed out in middle schools, high schools, university campuses, shopping malls, sporting events, mainstream concerts, parties, etc...<sup>45</sup>

In this effort to get the message out, Panzerfaust created what it thought to be a pithy tagline, which encapsulates both this venture and the role many accord music in the movement: “We don’t just entertain racist kids: We create them.”

The sampler contained 20 tracks by established hate rock groups. For the most part the CD works to disguise the ideological content. This approach is very much in keeping with the development of cloaked websites that Jessie Daniels describes in *Cyber-Racism*; in both instances creators veil or hide racist messages behind seemingly neutral content, relying on code and subtlety to hail their audience. The featured bands have names like Bound for Glory, Max Resist, Fortress, Rebel Hell, and Final War. Perhaps not original, but not too far from the aggressive and oppositional monikers of many rock bands, especially those which play some variation of punk, metal, or hardcore. Only the group H8Machine might send up a red flag for some. And even the inclusion of a track by Skrewdriver would mean little to most American teens. Only one with knowledge would know these bands are part of the white power music scene. Similarly, the song titles do not reveal much of the content of the CD. Where tracks like “Thirst for Conquest,” “Ghost,” “Waiting for a Ride,” “Might is Right,” and even “Parasite” sounds like fairly typical rock fare, others, such as “Commie Scum,” “Teutonic Uprising,” or “The Nationalist,” might give a thinking fan some clue of the ideological content of the

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<sup>45</sup> *ibid*, emphasis original

CD. For all that, only one song, “White Supremacy,” explicitly outs the CD. The producers of Project Schoolyard USA clearly sought to use seduction, if not outright deceit, as means to hook young people, drawing them into the music and the movement surreptitiously.

While the goal--unfiltered access to young people fosters interest and involvement—speaks volumes, the organizational thrust deserves special mention here. Panzerfaust would press the CDs and volunteers, ideally affiliated with established white power organizations, would purchase and distribute them. Reading an online forum dedicated to Project Schoolyard USA, one can almost feel the excitement among participants, who eagerly request copies, look to collaborate with others in the area, identify ideal locations (skate parks and malls are deemed more opportune and better than schools), and strategize (use Halloween to give out this treat anonymously and without suspicion to kids).<sup>46</sup> And groups like the National Socialist Movement (NSM) endorsed the initiative, reiterating its political import in a webposting: “We encourage NSM members and supporters to get behind Project Schoolyard. Music is another tool in our arsenal for reaching out to our Racial Youth [sic], and it is a tool that should be utilized to it’s [sic] fullest extent.”<sup>47</sup>

For a time, Project Schoolyard USA generated much media buzz and active pushback from the Anti-Defamation League and the Southern Poverty Law Center, both of which condemned the message and tactics of Panzerfaust. Perhaps because of the public spectacle and associated attention, as much as the actual number of CDs distributed, Panzerfaust declared Project Schoolyard USA a success: “it reached

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<sup>46</sup> <http://www.freemindproductions.com/forum/2265>. Now defunct. Accessed 30 June 2005. See also the enthusiastic endorsements here: <http://www.panzerfaust.com/sampler/endorsements.shtml>.

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.nsm88.org/articles/project%20schoolyard.html>. Now defunct. Accessed 30 June 2005.



thousands of White Youths [sic] all across the world with the message of White survival.”<sup>48</sup> Despite its purported achievements, Project Schoolyard USA marked the end of Panzerfaust, as co-founder Pierpont was condemned for not being white (but rather of Mexican heritage) and for taking a sex tour of Thailand.<sup>49</sup> Factionalism and the politics of racial purity once more splintered the scene and undermined organizational advances of the movement. Notably, Tightrope Records revived Project Schoolyard USA, pressing a second volume, which originally was freely distributed and more recently has been made available for purchase via its website.<sup>50</sup> While Project Schoolyard USA reveals much about how white nationalists think about organizing, communication, and outreach, it also underscores the limitations of using music to expand the movement or even attract an audience to the scene: a bridge was built to the mainstream, but little evidence exists that many opted to cross it and become active participants in the scene.

### **Crossover**

On its face, the thought of creating a white nationalist musical group that would have broad appeal seems absurd. This, however, is precisely what April Gaede set out to do, when she formed Prussian Blue, a band comprised of her twin daughters, Lamb and Lynx. The twins made their first appearance at EuroFest in 2001. At the event, sponsored by the National Alliance, William Pierce, then leader of the white power group and director of Resistance Records, extended a contract to their mother, who would also manage the band.<sup>51</sup> Initially, Lamb and Lynx largely performed folk music, cultivating

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<sup>48</sup> <http://www.tightrope.cc/sampler/index.shtml>. Now defunct. Accessed 7 May 2007,

<sup>49</sup> [http://www.adl.org/extremism/panzerfaust\\_records.asp](http://www.adl.org/extremism/panzerfaust_records.asp).

<sup>50</sup> <http://tightrope.cc/catalog/cds-project-schoolyard-volume-ii-p-756.html>

<sup>51</sup> (Gell, 2006)

more of a pop sound over time. Prussian Blue put out three albums and one collection of videos, playing major white power music festivals across North America and touring Europe (2007). The juxtaposition of white nationalism, rock music, and childhood innocence garnered the band much media attention, including two BBC documentaries, a spot on *Primetime Live*, and an article in *Gentleman's Quarterly*.

A telling description of the band featured on its official website in 2008, which read in part:

Prussian Blue is the combination of 14-year-old twin sisters named Lynx and Lamb. Prussian Blue is also probably one of the most controversial up and coming bands on the music scene today. In a day and age when most bands are working hard to remain within self-imposed limits of Politically Correct Thought, Prussian Blue pushes the envelope. Within the fold of White Nationalist Rock, one of the only true alternatives to the corporate music and recording business, these two little girls have filled thousands of their fans with love and hope for the future. Also, within the pro White genre, they stretch the envelope even more to create and sing songs that are of the unexpected. Personal beliefs and experiaences [sic] are delicately woven with upbeat rhythms and poignant lyrics to create something that is guaranteed to catch the listener off guard and create a reaction. Open your heart and your mind to a time and place in the future where Pride in who you are and where you came from, Love for your people and Hope for the future are acceptable for EVERYONE. Open your heart and mind to Prussian Blue!

The brief introduction positions the young duo as oppositional figures. As Davis argues:

It suggests that the band is fighting political correctness and the corporate music industry, while articulating a pro- White message predicated upon —love or White people (rather than vilifying racial others). It is also important to note here that the notion about pride and hope for—everyoneonly includes White people.<sup>52</sup>

In common with Project Schoolyard USA, coded language and counter-hegemonic posturing conceal the ideological foundations of white nationalism and make it more palatable to a mainstream audience. A similar pattern emerges in interviews about the name of the band (which is not a reference to Zyklon B and the mass killing of Jews, but the girls' ethnic heritage and blue eyes) and to an infamous photo of the girls wearing tee-shirts emblazoned with a smiley face sporting a Hitler mustache (which was just a joke people took the wrong way).

From the start, Gaede sought to use Prussian Blue to communicate a white nationalist message to a broader public. In the documentary *Louis and the Nazis* she remarks,

I think that Lynx and Lamb's music and their appeal, especially as they get a little bit older, they're going to be an example and they're going to show how being proud of your race is something that would be very appealing to young teenage

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<sup>52</sup> Davis (2009: 5-6)

girls. You know, I mean, what young man, red-blooded American boy, isn't going to find two blond twins, 16 years old, singing about White pride, and pride in your race . . . Very few are not going to find that very appealing.

Gaede consciously plays up the physical attractiveness and sexuality of her daughters, the very features of the band that most disturbed many members of the public and some in the white nationalist community.

Recoding white power as white nationalism and racism as white pride and wrapping both in a pretty package, Gaede hoped to move hate rock from the margins to the mainstream. As she noted in an online interview,

I think that White Nationalist music needs to make some new directions. We need to . . . not always be singing about war and Vikings. You know, we need to come up with some different topics to sing about, and we need to sing more about, you know, real life issues that we're dealing with everyday. And I'd love to see some . . . good White poetry like this Kipling [sic] poem and turn it into songs because there's a lot of potential there.<sup>53</sup>

She envisioned Prussian Blue as one of these new directions. She actively constructed the band to forge a new model and to reach a new, broader audience.

Importantly, Prussian Blue replaced the hypermasculinity, antipathy, and coarseness long associated with hate rock with more "poppy," approachable, and feminine elements. Gaede noted in the same interview,

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<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Davis (2009: 80-81)

There are a couple of songs on there that sound—I wouldn't be surprised if a similar sounding thing were on Nickelodeon or on a TV commercial, or used for some kind of promotion for a sitcom. Some of the songs are—like —Hey Hey and —What Do You Think of Me Now—I think that they've got a lot of potential for crossover into the mainstream.<sup>54</sup>

While Prussian Blue achieved a level of notoriety, it never realized the aspirations of its manager. In fact, like Project Schoolyard USA, the group might be described as a failure. It generated media attention and public outrage, but never had more than a small, if devoted, following. Worse, Lynx and Lamb essentially brought an end to the band when they asked to stop touring and more recently renounced the ideology undergirding the band: "I'm not a white nationalist anymore," Lamb declared in 2011. "My sister and I are pretty liberal now."<sup>55</sup> Similarly, Anthony Pierpont, who had founded and later left Panzerfaust Records in disgrace, has left the world of white power him, directing his energies more recently to financing ventures in the hospitality industry.<sup>56</sup>

### **Unpopular Culture**

If Asa Carter had had his way, parents and politicians would have prohibited rock music, putting a decisive end to what he saw as a corrupt musical fashion and arguably more importantly saving the white race from certain moral degradation and cultural decline. Despite his best efforts, rock and roll did not die, a fact many who make white

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p. 77

<sup>55</sup> Gell (2011)

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-files/profiles/anthony-pierpont>

power music today likely greet with great joy, because it constitutes a core of the social scene and political ideology anchoring the movement today. For all of this, while white power engages with and appropriates pop music for its own ends, it remains wildly unpopular, as evidenced by market share, public outrage and condemnation, and the reaction to it within other music subcultures, perhaps notably in punk songs like “Nazi Punks Fuck off” by the Dead Kennedys and “Fuck the K.K.K.” by the Unseen.<sup>57</sup>

This unpopularity has crystallized across the past century. Where white supremacist music (like white racism generally) once enjoyed a warm welcome in public life, especially in areas ruled by Jim Crow and that nurtured the reinvention of the Ku Klux Klan as a mainstream fraternal order, it now largely dwells on the margins, emergent in transgressive and oppositional subcultures. Our discussion of songs about Mary Phagan underscores the decline and marginalization of white power, especially in popular culture. Nevertheless, advocates of white power continue to invest music with great power. On the one hand, it has proven to be especially fecund, enabling adaption and elaboration of style and sound. On the other hand, it has fostered endeavors, directed at recruiting kids from the mainstream and crossing over to the mainstream, which move across the moral and political boundaries that keep white power on the margins. For all of its engagements with popular music, hate rock remains unpopular. It is perhaps best described as unpopular culture, that is, a set of cultural practices and cultural productions that draw upon and deploy popular stylings but have little claim beyond a bounded social field on audience, desire, or fashion.

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<sup>57</sup> Spracklen