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**Scene Report: Frankfurt
am Main, Germany**
(Yes, the city with the
airport where your tour
starts...)

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Fanzine

First Words

This intro is for *MRR*'s own Martin "Los Crudos" Sorrondeguy. Two years ago Andrea from German *Trust* zine and I went to the *MRR* house in San Francisco and carried out an interview for *Trust* with the then-active coordinators. We met Martin, who asked us where we were from and when we replied "Frankfurt," he flipped through the *MRR* record collection, searching for that special band from Frankfurt that he loved... It appeared to be the old-school German punk band DER DURSTIGE MANN (a.k.a. DDM—roughly translated into "The Thirsty Man"): Well, the band is long gone, although they played one gig last year in Frankfurt because Bernd Hasenfus, one of their old drummers, had died.

Why this scene report? A lot of American bands start/end their European tours in Frankfurt because of the good international flight connections to many US airports. I moved to Frankfurt—which is in South Germany—four years ago and thought it might be interesting for y'all to receive information about what's going on with DIY HC/punk in this city. Frankfurt am Main (which means "Frankfurt near [the river] Main") is the center of all major banks, which results in very expensive rents for the approximately 670,000 inhabitants. On the other hand, there are very good flight and train connections; for example, it's one hour to Cologne or three and a half to Berlin. The subcultural history of the city is quite ambivalent: On one hand, in Germany the radical student protests of 1968 started in

Frankfurt, the Green Party was founded there, and there was a famous youth center, JUZ Bockenheim, where most of the touring DIY bands played in the '80s and early '90s. On the other hand, one of Germany's best-known right-wing skinhead bands, BOEHSE ONKELZ, formed there at the beginning of the '80s (and broke up in 2003). Well, talking of good shit now:

Bands

I guess most of you are familiar with the German thrash metal band TANKARD (www.tankard.org). They started in the early '80s and are still active, along with even older punk rockers and one of the early "deutschpunk" bands STRASSENJUNGS (www.diestrassenjungs.de), who formed in 1977. There were other old bands like MIDDLE CLASS FANTASIES, PULLERMANN or MAGIC SPLATTERS, but they don't exist anymore. Oskar, one of the former drummers of DDM, is now playing drums in a psychobilly punk 'n' roll band called RUMBLE DELUXE, who just performed their first few gigs (www.myspace.com/rumbledeluxe). The guitar player of DDM, ERIC HYSTERIC, is still active as a solo acoustic player.

STAGE BOTTLES (www.stagebottles.de) have been around since the early '90s; two of them, singer and guitar player, are also involved in BLAGGERS ITA, so maybe you can guess which kind of music we got here with Stage Bottles—yes, antifascist skinhead Oi punk. Their slogan is "sometimes antisocial, always antifascist." A new crust band arose out of Frankfurt, SPIT FORTH; they just played their first hometown show as support for BLOODY PHOENIX from Los Angeles on that band's European tour. Spitforth.blogspot.com. Their music is a good old-school



Hellbasterd meets early Extreme Noise Terror crusty sound, and I guess we will be hearing a lot more about these guys and their female singer in the future. I know that their bass player Matze has an *MRR* subscription, so greetings to you, dumb-ass, ha ha. Actually, from the Bavarian city of Aschaffenburg are SCHEISSE MINNELLI, though now they are partly a Frankfurt band considered (even if they don't agree with that, ha ha) 'cause their singer Sam moved there (and their new guitar player lives there as well). They play an old-school RKL sound mixed with a little INFEST and sing about beer, skateboarding and drugs. They will tour the West Coast of the US in 2011, so check them out if you like what you read (www.myspace.com/scheisseminneli).

BUNGALOW 7 (www.myspace.com/bungalow7music) is a nice garage rock band, featuring on guitar the mighty Frank Rahm (now Frankfurt resident), who played guitar for Spermbirds from their beginnings in the '80s until 2007. ANTITAINMENT originally come from the suburbs, now the singer lives in (you already guessed) Frankfurt and they became a resident band, ha ha. For their very uncommon synthesis of music, around 400 people showed up on occasion of the record release party of their recently published third album, just great. The music is hard to describe; they mix hardcore, punk, metal with organ sound (www.myspace.com/antitainment)... Singer Tobi also plays in the electronic punk outfit LES TRUCS (www.myspace.com/lestrucs). CAPGRAS SYNDROM (www.myspace.com/capgrassyndrom) is a brutal HC punk band; their bass player was part of a very decent noise band called CONFUSED that broke up a while ago.

Speaking of noise, for all of you rockers who like the mid-period Touch and Go Records sound, you also have that kind of music, which in Frankfurt is also connected to the punk scene, because they gig in the same venues and have similar attitudes. GENTLE VEINCUT (www.myspace.com/gentleveincut) describes themselves as "looking out of the inside while being sucked up after crashing down" and play harsh noise rock the old-school way. Last but not least, in Frankfurt you will find the instrumental noise fusion kind of band called DATURAH (www.myspace.com/daturah), a wonderful and intense live band. Check out their studio records. Oh, and recently I saw that COPY CATS, a female-fronted punk rock band, are playing again (www.copycats.de/main.html).

Venues

"Serving warm beer since 1986" is the insider joke slogan of one of the oldest independent DIY venues in Frankfurt, the Exzess (www.myspace.com/exzessfm). You have a political information center (www.infoladen.net/fm), political meetings, a regular bar on Mondays, film screenings, lectures, an independent theatre group, even techno parties and in spite of that, of course, DIY concerts. There is one smaller room for up to 150 people as well as a big hall for 800 people. Admission and drinks are available at favorable prices and don't even think of appearing there wearing an Anal Cunt t-shirt.

Another old-school DIY venue is the AU, the

oldest squat in Germany because it has squatted since 1983 (www.au-frankfurt.org). Both venues focus on HC and punk bands. Once a year, the AU-FEST takes place, celebrating the anniversary of the squat. It is a big open-air benefit festival with more than a thousand people. A ten-minute walk from the AU, you hit the Raumstation (www.myspace.com/raumstationffm), another fine, non-commercial small DIY space for all kinds of HC/punk shows.

Another venue is called IVI (which stands for "Institut für Vergleichende Irrelevanz," or Institute for Comparative Irrelevance, www.ivi.copyright.com), a squatted university building. If you like electro punk or similar stuff, this is the place to be. Yellow Stage (www.yellowstage.wordpress.com) is actually a studio room with a small stage where the bands of the Hazelwood label would gig but also other bands, yet more related to the later SST Records phase (you know, jazz, songwriters, punk in spirit but not in music...).

Tracing back to the revival squatting of the above-mentioned legendary Juz Bockenheim in 2008, Klapperfeld originated (www.faitesvotrejeu.blogspot.de), which is based in an old prison building. They don't stage concerts too often, but are very active in political information evenings, regular DIY bar and so on. Still not to forget is Wagenplatz Borsigallee, a wagon site that also hosts subcultural DJ parties and live gigs.

Record Stores

If you are into old punk and garage music, make sure you pay visit to Lucky Star RECORDS, tiny but nice and the owner always has a cold beer for ya (www.myspace.com/luckystarrecords). Seniors in terms of record stores are Sick Wreckords (www.sickwreckords.de) for vinyl and Number 2 (www.no2-records.de) for CDs—check them out for your punk, HC and indie needs. Sick Wreckords also has some old *MRR* and German zines in the bins... Also good for rare and old vinyl is Mythos Records (www.mythos-records.net); used records you find in Musical Box (www.musical-box.de) and mainly new stuff in Musikladen (www.musikladen-frankfurt.de).

Media

Most important of all, a monthly flyer called *Untergrund Flyer* is published and contains every necessary piece of information regarding all subcultural concerts, parties and political stuff that is going on in Frankfurt and the surrounding areas (Darmstadt, Hanau, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Mannheim, etc.). There is also an online version—just think of Bay Area's "The List" (www.copyright.com/untergrund). Frankfurt has a non-commercial radio station called RADIO X; check their program online (www.radiox.de). Depending on the DJs, you will get hip-hop, punk, hardcore, metal... Unfortunately, no fanzines emerge from Frankfurt at the moment although some people who are active in zines like *Punkrock* or *Trust* fanzine live there. Actually, a monthly Fanziner Skat Playing Round has been established, which means that we meet in shabby bars, drink beer and sometimes play skat (a card game). You certainly are welcome

to join in (contact—only for skat playing—jan@trust-zine.de).

Personally, I can recommend two great DIY record labels (besides Hazelwood Records, mentioned before): First of all Streaks Records (www.streaksrecords.de) that is operated by Spit Forth bass player Matze and focuses on non-hipster black-doom-sludge-metal. Totally different music-wise but also DIY and recommendable is, secondly, Pure Pop For Now People (www.ppfnp.com), a label run by Joachim. On a steady basis, he releases international bands and ego-projects whose music could be described best as kind of weird psychedelic...

Final Words

I am not that familiar with vegan/vegetarian restaurants, but check out the underground flyer for vegan/vegetarian People's Kitchens (in German, "Volxkueche") almost every day. They take place in the usual venues and serve food for just a few Euros—for example, Mondays at the Exzess and Thursdays at the AU (starts at 8:00 PM, described in their words as: "Tasty dinner at cost price for those on a limited budget, bar open until 2:00 AM. In wintertime in the cellar, as soon as it is warm enough outside in the beer garden."). Frankfurt also has some more-or-less alternative bars to offer: Backstage (www.backstagefrankfurt.de), Feinstaub (www.dasfeinstaub.de) and Dreikoenigskeller (www.dreikoenigskeller.com), they also put on shows but more rock'n'roll stuff—a nice bar with an Elvis shrine, ha ha).

For all people who want to taste the regional things for which Frankfurt is well known (e.g. the famous Rindswurst—beef sausage), check out some traditional beer gardens. Ask the locals, everyone knows the best! And hey, I don't perpetuate the cliché of sausage-eating, beer-drinking Germans, but it's not that entirely wrong! Perhaps people reading this like to drink cider? Then try the famous Ebbelwoi, a sour sparkling wine made of apples, which is the regional drink. Or the local beers—always ask for the Binding blue, not the red one. Also, check out the farmer's market in the city center at Konstablerwache on Thursdays and Saturdays (smaller ones at Friedberger Platz on Fridays and Bornheim Mitte on Saturdays) for having a drink and eating or buying regional organic food. And make sure that your lungs are intact, because it is common that you are allowed to smoke at almost all DIY shows. People won't necessarily stop smoking 'cause a band is playing but if you announce "please don't smoke" before the show starts, that should not be a problem.

This whole scene report is far from being complete; for instance, I've neglected the huge soccer scene around Eintracht Frankfurt (amongst other soccer clubs) with their fans and music—they even have their own bands and bars. But I thought to keep this report short for all of you who start or end their trips in Frankfurt with maybe an extra day left to spend. Have a good tour in Europe and a good day in Frankfurt!