



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

Ton Steine Scherben: a unique hybrid of psychedelic rock and battle song

Robb, D. (2023). Ton Steine Scherben: a unique hybrid of psychedelic rock and battle song. *Popular Music and Society*, 46(3), 265-281. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03007766.2023.2206783>

Published in:
Popular Music and Society

Document Version:
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Queen's University Belfast - Research Portal:
[Link to publication record in Queen's University Belfast Research Portal](#)

Publisher rights

Copyright 2023 the authors.

This is an open access article published under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits distribution and reproduction for non-commercial purposes, provided the author and source are cited.

General rights

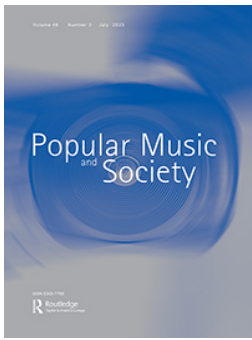
Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Queen's University Belfast Research Portal is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The Research Portal is Queen's institutional repository that provides access to Queen's research output. Every effort has been made to ensure that content in the Research Portal does not infringe any person's rights, or applicable UK laws. If you discover content in the Research Portal that you believe breaches copyright or violates any law, please contact openaccess@qub.ac.uk.

Open Access

This research has been made openly available by Queen's academics and its Open Research team. We would love to hear how access to this research benefits you. – Share your feedback with us: <http://go.qub.ac.uk/oa-feedback>



Ton Steine Scherben: A Unique Hybrid of Psychedelic Rock and Battle Song

David Robb

To cite this article: David Robb (2023) Ton Steine Scherben: A Unique Hybrid of Psychedelic Rock and Battle Song, *Popular Music and Society*, 46:3, 265-281, DOI: [10.1080/03007766.2023.2206783](https://doi.org/10.1080/03007766.2023.2206783)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03007766.2023.2206783>



© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 27 May 2023.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 75



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Ton Steine Scherben: A Unique Hybrid of Psychedelic Rock and Battle Song

David Robb

Reader in Music, School of Arts, English and Languages, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast, Northern Ireland

ABSTRACT

This article will examine the relationship of the anarchist rock group Ton Steine Scherben to the tradition of the German battle song. After setting the group in the context of the countercultural scene of West Berlin of the 1970s, the article will identify a key battle song trait in the group's militant lyrics that, combined with the music, are geared towards inspiring direct political action rather than mere critical contemplation. In this respect parallels will be drawn with approaches to radical political song from the 1848 Revolution and the Weimar Republic.



KEYWORDS

Agitprop; battle song; protest song; psychedelic rock; Rio Reiser; Ton Steine Scherben

Introduction

Over the years Ton Steine Scherben, the political rock phenomenon that emerged as a militant musical force in West Berlin in the early 1970s, has come to academic attention. Much of this has focussed on their anarchist lifestyle and actions and their political motivations, including the extent of their relationship to the Red Army Faction (RAF). Some critics have noted the amalgam of musical styles the group drew from such as psychedelic rock and German agitprop. None, however, so far have examined Ton Steine Scherben's lyrical relationship to the battle song. This article will argue that their first two albums represent a unique appropriation of this tradition. While both feature typical characteristics of this mode. for example, emotionally heightened proclamations of a collective "we" focussed on breaking their chains of captivity, the third album marks a shift towards ambiguity and personal introspection. backed up by a greater musical diversity.

The story of Ton Steine Scherben¹ is set within the post 1968 countercultural scene of the Kreuzberg district in West Berlin. Since 1961, sandwiched between the Berlin Wall and middle-class areas, this frontier district with its high Turkish immigrant population and cheap, run-down tenements had become a haven for those seeking an alternative existence: junkies, artists, militant students, and young men escaping military service. It correspondingly became a focal point for underground culture.

CONTACT David Robb  d.robb@qub.ac.uk  Reader in Music, School of Arts, English and Languages, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast, Northern Ireland

© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

In the aftermath of the student movement and the dissolving of the APO-linked Kommune 1, the scene of communes and squats which characterized Kreuzberg had become more autonomous and militant. Emerging political groups such as the Blues, radical bohemian anarchists who had links to the terrorist groups Red Army Faction (RAF) and Bewegung 2. Juni, existed alongside a number of the new anarchist K-Gruppen. As elsewhere in West Germany at that time, the latter saw their task as mobilizing the political consciousness of the working-class youth in their local environments (Brown). This was mirrored in the approach of Ton Steine Scherben, who evolved in late 1969 and early 1970 out of the radical street theater of Hoffmanns Comic Teater and the apprentices' agitprop group Rote Steine (Red Stones).

The group name literally means "Clay Stones Shards." According to Seidel, the group's singer Rio Reiser had come across this exact word combination while reading Heinrich Schliemann's account of excavating the ruins of Troy. In this respect the words had connotations with destruction as well as with piecing together and rebuilding (Seidel). As Sichtermann, Johler, and Stahl remember, the name was also aptly reminiscent of the trade union Bau Steine Erden or the *volkseigene Betriebe* (People's Own Industries) of the GDR (Sichtermann et al, 14). At the same time there was an ambiguity in the words whereby musical associations to sound ("Ton") and the Rolling Stones ("Steine") could be exploited.

The original group members were Ralph Möbius a.k.a. Rio Reiser (vocals, guitar), R.P. S. Lanrue (guitar), Kai Sichtermann (bass guitar), and Wolfgang Seidel (drums). Their early years were marked by a series of well-publicized scandals such as inciting a riot at a major rock festival and their manager and saxophonist Nickel Pallat taking an ax to a table on a late-night TV political discussion in December 1971. Forerunners of the punk ethos seven years later, they pioneered an independent system of record production and distribution under their own David Volksmund label (Sichtermann et al).² By the end of the 1970s, the group had shipped 300,000 albums despite no advertising and being shunned by the radio stations (Brown; Koch). In particular, their first three albums, *Warum geht es mir so dreckig?* (Why Do I Feel So Awful?) from 1971, *Keine Macht für Niemand* (No Power for No-One) from 1972, and *Wenn die Nacht am tiefsten . . .* (When the Night Is at Its Darkest. . .) from 1975, function as an historical document of the Kreuzberg anarchist underground scene in this volatile period.

What is distinct about Ton Steine Scherben's work is the clear unifying narrative of the songs: on their second album *Keine Macht für Niemand* lead singer Rio Reiser is the squatter anarchist. Each song tells a different story of life in their community: street battles with police, occupying houses, dodging fares on the Berlin public transport system, the communal squat as a haven from the boredom of apprenticeships, the quest for freedom from the constraints of the postwar Economic Miracle, and the longing for utopian alternatives to capitalist reality. The narrative is enhanced by the real-life dialect and mannerisms of Reiser in his vocal delivery, reflecting an attitude which verges on delinquency. Here we see an element of ambiguity in the role-play of Reiser stemming from the masked figures of Hoffmanns Comic Teater. On the one hand, he is a performer enacting various roles ranging from violent anarchist and teenage delinquent to political philosopher or sensitive lover. At the same time, he is playing his authentic self. The stories, such as the occupation of a former hospital in 1971, are based on radical actions in which the group directly

participated. The listener is caught up in this musical enactment of the hopes, aspirations, and conflicts of the young Kreuzberg anarchists, apprentices, and workers. The bleak harshness of political struggle is juxtaposed by the utopianism of songs such as “Schritt für Schritt ins Paradies” (Step by Step to Paradise) or the joyful exuberance and Berlin humor of the life-affirming “Mensch Meier” (Joe Bloggs) or “Rauch Haus Lied” (Rauch House Song).³

The musical soundtrack aids this portrayal. The Woodstock-style blues rock reminiscent of Joe Cocker or Jimi Hendrix, a style which at that time was laden with the symbolism of rebellion, is augmented by an air of experimentalism: distorted guitars – a hallmark of early 1970s progressive rock – contribute to the soundscape of chaos. Sound effects such as sirens and gunshots as in “Menschenjäger” (Headhunters) denote street battles between urban guerrillas and police. A dystopian darkness emanates from the sound, not atypical of West Berlin rock groups of the 1970s and 1980s. As Putnam has observed, there are parallels with the deconstructionism of Krautrock, for example, in the ideological commitment to uncovering “the cracks in society” via music (601). But in terms of musical style there is not much else in common between Krautrock and Ton Steine Scherben. Indeed, particularly on their first two albums, a more important consideration of the music was clearly its practical use value in furthering the political struggle. There are scant references to Krautrock in the memoirs of band members. Reiser recalls a meeting with Tangerine Dream in 1968 in which he disagreed with Edgar Froese that good musicians had to be ahead of their time. All Reiser wanted was to make music “to be enjoyed by millions” (135).

At the same time the music had to have an activating function. It is here that one sees the significance of the battle song tradition. While Scherben’s use of rock music was a world apart from the military marching style of the workers’ *Kampflied* (battle song), there is a marked aspect of commonality in its aggression and in its intention for use in direct political action. Proclamatory lyrics constantly appealed to the emotions of the listener in their evoking of a promised land that can be achieved by means of struggle with a clearly defined adversary. As will be demonstrated below, the group showed an affinity to the *Kampflied* aesthetic of Hanns Eisler, which in its proletarian radicalism distanced itself from bourgeois left-wing musical expression in the 1920s and 1930s, just as Ton Steine Scherben distanced themselves in the 1970s from what they perceived as the more conventional form of the *Liedermacher* (political singer/songwriters).

Indeed, the revolutionary agitprop culture of the Weimar Republic is one of Ton Steine Scherben’s main points of artistic reference. This can be heard in the chanting and political sloganeering, which lends an air of proto punk to the proceedings,⁴ and in the stage backdrops with political slogans such as Georg Büchner’s infamous demand, “Peace to the shacks, war on the palaces” (Sichtermann et al 64). This proletarian theatrical influence, which would be highly unusual in a British or American rock context, stems very much from a post-Russian Revolution European tradition. In the radical milieu of late 1960s West Berlin, this was a feature of the alternative scene, where art was perceived as a tool or “weapon” (see Scherben, qtd. in Brown 16) in the class struggle and the active participation of the audience (in a Brechtian breaking down of “the fourth wall”) was a precondition. The group referenced this political artistic heritage in their rock version of Brecht and Eisler’s “Einheitsfrontlied” (Song of the United Front), made famous by Ernst Busch, at the end of their first single “Macht kaputt, was euch kaputt macht” (Destroy Everything That

Destroys You) in 1971. A further element reminiscent of Brecht's Epic Theatre was the inclusion in their performances of spoken political texts and parables between songs.

Reiser acknowledges first learning about the tradition of agitprop at the time of the formation of Rote Steine in 1969, the successor group to Hoffmanns Comic Teater. He noted its "consciousness-expanding" potential (Reiser and Eyber 172). This links to another Brechtian aspect of Ton Steine Scherben, the element of political instruction in the songs, which often share acquired knowledge about class exploitation with their target audience. The group was later to be involved in many teach-ins, commonplace in the Berlin radical milieu of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In this context, one of the original tenets of the proletarian song theory of Hanns Eisler of the 1930s was that lyrics and message had to be clear (*Unsere Kampfmusik*). It is significant that Scherben sang in German precisely to be understood by others (Seidel), where all other groups were singing in English. Indeed, the group was one of the first ever German rock bands to sing in their own language. As Blixa Bargeld from *Einstürzende Neubauten* stated, "It probably would have never occurred to me to sing in German if it wasn't for Rio" (qtd. in Putnam 600).

Despite this clear connection to agitprop tradition, there is little acknowledgment of this proletarian musical heritage in memoirs of group members. This can be contrasted with the constant references to influential pop groups of the 1960s, and even to *commedia dell'arte*, which is cited several times in Reiser's autobiography in terms of its influence on Hoffmanns Comic Teater. Ernst Busch, for example, Brecht and Eisler's favored singer of battle songs, only receives one passing mention, and a derogatory one at that. This is in connection with the stealing of Reiser's music tapes from his flat in Kreuzberg in the late 1960s by a group of Marxist-Leninists. Reiser laments his "irretrievably" lost music, which he jokingly suspects the activists recorded over with songs of Ernst Busch (166). Scherben, as young anarchists, wished to distance themselves from anything perceived as political organization. Since Ernst Busch was associated with the ranks of the KPD in the Weimar Republic and the SED in the GDR, this arguably made him a suspect figure. Of further interest is bassist Kai Sichtermann's justification, reported by Sidney König, for the inclusion of "Einheitsfrontlied" at the end of "Macht kaputt, was euch kaputt macht." This song – about the necessity of workers to join in a united front against capitalism – would seem to fit well with the Scherben ideology. However, as Sichtermann remembered, it was to "soften" the radicalism of the sentiment of "destroy" in "Macht kaputt" (König). This is yet another indication of group members distancing themselves from this tradition. The battle song, however, which Busch, Brecht and Eisler represented, was a mode from which the group was to borrow lyrical traits – consciously or unconsciously – throughout their early career, as this article will demonstrate. And their awareness of this connection is, on occasions, backed up by their use of terminology. For example, Reiser describes "Der Kampf geht weiter" (The Fight Goes On), a song he wrote for political prisoners at the height of the actions of the RAF and Bewegung 2. Juni, as a "Kampfsong" (214–15). He also remembers the group playing their repertoire of "Kampflieder" on the back of a lorry for a May Day demonstration in 1971 (224).

The memoir of Reiser's brother Gert Möbius is more revealing in terms of social background and political influences. It contains very elucidating descriptions of the history of the family, which originally came from Berlin, but moved to Bavaria shortly after the war due to the father's job as an engineer in the

Siemens company. A middle-class family whose three sons went to *Gymnasium* (grammar school) – and as such was distinctly non-proletarian – all brothers were highly creative. The older two, Peter and Gert, took an interest in left-wing politics from an early age, this forming the background to the formation of Hoffmanns Comic Teater. Moving back to Berlin, Möbius’s account reflects the volatile political period of student unrest in West Berlin in 1968. It teases out the schism between the “bourgeois left” and “proletarian culture” in the group (129) that, after an influx of “proper proletarians” (125), resulted in one section splintering off to form the agitprop group Rote Steine, the forerunner of Ton Steine Scherben. Although in Möbius’s book, too, there is scant reference to the workers’ song tradition, there is mention of the concept of “Auftragslieder” (commissioned songs, 165), which hails back to the left-wing practice of “Gebrauchslieder” (utility songs) written for specific political events and purposes, famous practitioners of which in the Weimar Republic were the songwriters Kurt Tucholsky and Walter Mehring (Robb, “Mühsam”). The point is that Ton Steine Scherben were, consciously or not, immersed in the revolutionary tradition of “Prolet-Kultur” that made them distinct from psychedelic rock bands in the English-speaking world. At the same time, their rallying for collective action to instigate change prefigured the political activity of UK Punk groups later in the decade at events such as Rock against Racism (1976-82).

Such points of connection to the workers’ movement did not mean, however, that Ton Steine Scherben were musically or ideologically akin to the contemporary *Liedermacher*. Highly popular at the time of the 1968 students’ rebellion and in the New Social Movements of the 1970s (see Holler, “Burg Waldeck” and “Folk and Liedermacher”), political singers such as Franz Josef Degenhardt, Dieter Süverkrüp, and Walter Moßmann demanded an overhaul of the system but did not share the same degree of anarchic militance as Scherben. The *Liedermacher*’s acoustic guitars and folk or chanson-orientated style of singing also had different cultural associations. Their softer sounds, which Scherben’s first drummer Wolfgang Seidel dismissed as “too normal” (42), were linked rather to the cabaret tradition. The *Liedermacher*’s more ambiguous and politically nuanced lyrics tended to inspire contemplation, rather than the direct action urged by Scherben’s aggressive and more simplistic slogans, this mirroring a debate on political songs which had already taken place in the Weimar Republic and which I will examine later. As well as this, the *Liedermacher* also exhibited the post-WWII pacifism of a young generation of musicians and fans who would have been alienated by the militant aggression of Ton Steine Scherben, who were arguably closer ideologically to the Red Army Faction (see Putnam’s discussion on this) than to the New Social Movements.

At the same time, one should be wary of such over-generalizations regarding the *Liedermacher* that ignore points of overlap with Scherben. For example, in 1968, at the highpoint of student militancy, Franz Josef Degenhardt introduced the concept “Zwischentöne sind bloß Krampf im Klassenkampf” (nuances are just cramps in the class struggle) in advocating a more direct and combative approach to political song writing that had commonalities with the battle song (Robb, “Narrative”). Similarly, Walter Moßmann was famous in the New Social Movements for the “Flugblattlieder” (broadside songs) that he sang at direct action events in the anti-nuclear movement of the 1970s (see John and Robb).

Another assumption worthy of investigation is Seidel's summing-up of Scherben's difference to the *Liedermacher* in terms of the latter's links to the "romantic song tradition" (42). Hartwig Vens, too, cites Scherben's revolutionary pamphlet "Musik ist eine Waffe" (Music is a Weapon) as evidence of their incompatibility with the bourgeois *Liedermacher*, who "dressed their protest in romantic longing" (206–07). This is problematic because, as we will see, much of Rio Reiser's lyrics, particularly from the second album onwards, displays a distinctly romantic edge. While it is true that the poetic style of the lyricists of the 1848 Revolution, whom Vens is referring to here, differ greatly from the rock lyrics of Scherben, the combination of romanticism, politics, and sloganeering is something that both have in common. Indeed, such idealism and the expression of longing – side-by-side with aggressive battle cries – are marked features of songs of revolutionary song movements of the past and present. The clue lies in Rio Reiser's statement: "We want to make folk songs and folk songs can be a revolutionary moment" (qtd. in Vens). The point is that Reiser recognized the communication potential of popular song traits and was prepared to incorporate such techniques into his own battle songs.

The Battle Song in German Revolutionary History

It is in this opposition between different purposes of protest music – for direct action or critical contemplation – that one can identify the significance of the battle song aesthetic of Ton Steine Scherben. The following section will establish basic historical traits of the German battle song by looking at examples from two periods in which it played a key role: the 1848 Revolution and the workers' movement of the early twentieth century. In the latter, composer Hanns Eisler was to give a definition of the battle song that differentiated it from the worker's song. Battle songs of both these periods can be seen to exhibit key lyrical motifs and characteristics that one comes across in the lyrics of Ton Steine Scherben.

The songs of the 1848 Revolution had raged against the social injustices of the *Vormärz*, the reactionary post-Napoleonic period (1815–49) in which a repressive monarchical system with strict censorship had been restored. The protest songs that emerged in those years constituted a mixture of popular musical and literary categories ranging from fraternity songs to satirical *Moritaten* (street ballads) and battle songs (see John and Robb). Herwegh wrote emotional-laden militant political poetry which, when set to marching music, lent itself to the battle song mode. Helena Szépe talks about Herwegh's "combination of high style and aggressiveness," which combined pathos with methods of political speech and propaganda resulting in "a passionate style designed not to persuade through reasoning, but to convert by its appeal to the emotions" (1). One example, Herwegh's "O wag' es doch nur einen Tag" (Go on, dare it just for one day), circulated widely in the revolutionary year of 1848 (see John and Robb). It is characteristically proclamatory, directly appealing to their audience to free itself from tyranny with lines such as "Rise up my people, beat your drums," and, "Oh to wipe only one moment off your time of slavery." Herwegh's battle cry is full of pathos, calling on people to harness their desire for freedom and step up to revolutionary action: "Go on, dare just for *one day*,/To be free, just for *one*" (Lammel, *Lieder* 16). While not all 1848 battle songs had the same high poetic aspirations of

Herwegh, all convey a unanimous rejection of the monarchical regime and vehemently attack the lack of democratic rights and freedom of speech (see Lammell, *Lieder*).

Another interesting trait of battle lyrics of the 1848 period is the use of images of nature as metaphors for the political struggle. This is indicative of a nationalist romantic aspect of the songs of the 1848 Revolution. While such imagery would later be associated with the conservatism of Bismarck's Empire and, in the 1930s, with the ideology of the Nazis, in 1848 nationalism, reflecting its "many shades" (Bohlman xxvi), was still associated with liberal reform and progress. Such references to nature are intended to convey the eternal essence of the values being fought for. The seasons, colors of the sky, and the violence of the weather become metaphors for revolutionary fervor. In Herwegh's song, for example, the people are urged to rise up "[w]ith the fury of raging weather!"⁵ Another typical feature of "O wag' es doch nur einen Tag" is the urging of the need to "awaken" in conjunction with the dawning of a new day, one of the most prevalent metaphors of the battle song mode: "Wake up! Wake up! The morning light/Wafts warningly in your ear." This corresponds to the general sense of the urgency of the moment in the 1848 songs, exemplified in "O wag es doch" by the line "Into battle! Victory or death!" A particular sense of time is conveyed here, whereby history is perceived as being on the side of the oppressed and action will lead to inevitable victory. This is reflected in expressions such as "The clock hand points to the hour" from Herwegh's "Der letzte Krieg" (The Final War) (*Gedichte* 18–19).

Similar imagery can be found, for example, in Ferdinand Freiligrath's "Reveille" (Wake Up). This was written in 1849 to celebrate the anniversary of the March revolution of 1848, whose fervor should effectively be "reawakened." By setting it to the tune of the "Marseillaise" the author also invoked the spirit of the French Revolution. The text typically uses fiery, emotionally language in demanding an end to servitude: the new uprising "with sword and lance/Will soon break the last chain" (Lammell, *Lieder* 10). "Reveille" also features the characteristic reference to the foe: the rebellion will not shrink from "the dagger of the enemy" (11). Typically, it also uses imagery of the seasons and the weather in its urging of unconditional commitment:

The seeds of spring ripen in summer,
 Just as June comes after March.
 Oh June, come and bring us action!
 How our hearts thirst for new deeds!
 How our hearts thirst for new deeds!
 Bring on the black, gathering clouds,
 And stormy weather in all its force!
 Let the disgrace be atoned for
 By the thunderbolt of revenge!
 The new rebellion!
 The new rebellion!
 March, march!
 March, march!
 March – even unto death!

And our flag is red! (11)

After the stifling of this revolutionary song culture in the decades following the defeat of the 1848 Revolution, such songs were revived in the newly emerging workers' movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The anarchist poet Erich Mühsam, in particular, was inspired by the songs of the 1848 Revolution. His poem "Generalstreikmarsch" (General Strike March) from 1906, sung to the tune of "Debout, freres de misere" (Stand up Brothers of Misery) agitated for a general strike in response to the Russian Revolution of 1905. Battle song traits are evident in the emotional call to action, the references to servitude and tyranny, the image of a sleeping people that needs to be awakened, and in the incendiary language denouncing the enemy:

We've been slaves for long enough
 We don't want our masters any more
 We're defending ourselves now
 For our rights and for our freedom:
 So are the people sleeping? –
 We want to wake them!
 Hey workman, rebel, wake up,
 Now we have to stretch tired limbs,
 The turmoil roars, now on and on.
 . . .
 They suck the blood from our bodies
 They grab impudently at our happiness;
 Driving people to the slaughterhouse
 That is their aim – Whatever it costs
 Will evermore the people's soul
 Be sacrificed for the man in tails?
 No, seize the sharks by the throat
 And strike them dead, the pack of murderers.
 (Mühsam, "Generalstreikmarsch," 1)

The 1848 songs provided a template for the battle song mode Mühsam adapted. As he contemplated the failure of the April 1919 communist uprising in Bavaria, he felt that the present-day workers' repertoire of songs was missing the particular "folk" style of the 1848 examples (Kauffeldt). For that reason, he tried to introduce their "hymnic rhetoric" as well as their "folk song elements" into his own battle songs (Kauffeldt 147, 250). Mühsam wrote,

"The revolutionary period [of 1918–19] lacked the traditional battle songs to an almost disastrous extent . . . Songs of mockery, like the ones which arose on mass in the 1848 Revolution and characteristically expressed the rage of the people against their oppressor, were completely lacking" (Revolution 7," qtd. by Köhnen 171).

Mühsam's debating on the most effective type of revolutionary song was mirrored by the ideological split in the German workers' movement in the early decades of the twentieth century regarding the function of the political song. This could be seen in

the growing factionalization between social democrats and communists where a debate took place between proponents of the *Kampflied* and those of the *Arbeiterlied* (worker's song). Despite these terms often being used interchangeably, the *Kampflied* was intended to denote a particularly militant form of protest song, one that had an active use in the daily struggle for political emancipation. Victor Noack of the Deutscher Arbeiter Sängerbund (German Workers' Singing Association), which was affiliated to the Social Democratic Party, explained in 1931 how the debate centered on the question of "battle song or art song" (4). For the communist composer Hanns Eisler, it epitomized the opposing stances of the two factions: the workers' choirs produced songs to be listened to, while the battle songs of the agitprop groups were intended to be sung:

The worker's choral movement has not produced a single fighting song for the mass movement during the last ten years. Because of this their audiences are forced into the same position as concert listeners; in the agit-prop groups it is different. But we are well aware that it is wrong to merely listen to a fighting song; the activating purpose of a fighting song can only be achieved if the people sing it themselves (*Rebel* 33).

Lammel, in referring to Eisler, summarized the differences in function of both these workers' song types:

The battle song demanded . . . an easy comprehensibility, paired with a politically precise stance, so that it could support the daily political struggle effectively. On the other hand, music for listening to, which was supposed to serve political education, needed more demanding forms and artistic structuring ("Politisches Lied" 28).

In his compositions for Brecht's battle lyrics, Eisler intended to combine both these functions. His music entailed a modernist montage-based approach juxtaposing musical styles (often the serious alongside the popular) in order to communicate his message to a mass audience as effectively as possible (see Eisler, *Rebel*; Betz). For example, the song "Solidaritätslied" (Solidarity Song), sung by Ernst Busch in Dudo Slatan's film *Kuhle Wampe* from 1932, constitutes a montage of agitative text, march rhythms, modal ecclesiastic music, and popular jazz (Betz). This and other Brecht and Eisler songs such as "Einheitsfrontlied" from 1934 came to form an indispensable part of the canon of German political song. Lyrically "Solidaritätslied" is a typical battle song in its promotion of unity as the means of overturning the historical master-servant relationship: "Our masters, whoever they are/Love to see our division/For as long as they divide us/They will remain our masters/ . . . Proletarians of all countries/Unite and be free./Your great regiments/Will break all tyranny!" (Brecht 112).

While Ton Steine Scherben were not engaged in such complex music theoretical considerations, the aspect of the practical use and value of the battle song as a means of communication and forging unity in the worker's struggle, as highlighted here by Eisler, certainly previewed Scherben's own aims regarding the role of their political music in the early 1970s. Like Eisler, they saw music as a means to support the political struggle; they incorporated it into their direct action at teach-ins and street demonstrations, in contrast to the art songs of *Liedermacher* that were geared toward intellectual contemplation.

Post-WWII Political Song Revival and Ton Steine Scherben

With the reestablishing of the tradition of the worker's song in the GDR after the Third Reich, a cultural context was created where it could once more be heard. In the post-WWII years of the Economic Miracle in West Germany, however, there was little appetite for historical workers' songs.⁶ The new folk singers who emerged at the Burg Waldeck festivals in the 1960s, equipped with Wolfgang Steinitz's two pivotal song collections of workers' songs (*Deutsche Volkslieder*), did admittedly rediscover the tradition of 1848 songs, but favored the satirical, anti-authoritarian variety sung in the street ballad, folk song, or chanson style over the pathos-laden battle songs with their militaristic marching rhythms (John and Robb). The battle song was furthermore a tradition that had been shared with the Nazis and – in the aftermath of the Third Reich – anything with a whiff of a military connotation was frowned upon, particularly by the counter-cultural youth generation of the 1960s. As well as that, it was simply old-fashioned, the styles of pop and rock from the UK and the US now taking precedence.

However, the militancy of the battle song was something Ton Steine Scherben could use for their own ends. And, like pop and rock, it was a mode of song that communicated via a straightforward verse-chorus structure, insistent rhythms, and memorable melodic hook lines that function by way of repetition. In this respect, the slogan orientation of the battle song with its pathos laden call for action was transferable to the rock genre. One also sees historical traits of the battle song in the simple binary oppositions such as exploiter and exploited, freedom and captivity, truth and deception, isolation and collectivity, and the use of natural imagery as a metaphor for political change. The following section will demonstrate this by taking several key songs from their first two albums, *Warum geht es mir so dreckig?* and *Keine Macht für Niemand*.⁷

A striking characteristic of the lyrics is the illustration of unequal power relationships in society, encouraging the need for “self-liberation through action” (see Brown 1). In this way the lyrics demonstrate similar conflicts to the ones Hoffmanns Comic Teater and Rote Steine acted out in their agitprop scenes (see Ka). The demand for freedom is frequently juxtaposed with the social restrictions which prevent this. Liberty is embodied by the political struggle on the streets, the communal life of the squats, and the willful violation of rules and regulations. The latter are represented by the workplace, the family home, institutions, and figures of authority such as politicians and factory bosses.

“Wir müssen hier raus” (We Have to Get Out of Here), for example, describes the prison-like existence of daily work and the stifling life at home with parents. The father, who drinks in the pub to forget, represents the cynical viewpoint that the world will not change, while the youth maintains that his generation can break out of these shackles. Like the dialogue of *Liedermacher* Franz Josef Degenhardt's “Vatis Argumente” (Father's Arguments), the song expresses the generational conflict between father and son. But this is no intellectual satire, rather an anguished cry of desperation mixed with utopian anticipation. The electric guitar's counter rhythm in the bridge creates a tension as Reiser exclaims, “We have to get out of here!/This is pure hell!/We live in a prison!” before the rhythmic and melodic resolution in the chorus: “We are born to be free,/We are sixty million people./We aren't alone./And we'll do it,/we'll do it” (*Keine Macht*).

Warum geht es mir so dreckig reflects the programmatic organization of political ideas into a form of manifesto within the structure of a song. The verses of “Macht kaputt was euch

kaputt macht” consist of short, bullet-point phrases, each describing a component part of the system – its commerce, media, industry, justice, and military – that the group want to smash: “Bombers flying/Tanks rolling/Police hitting/Soldiers falling/Protecting bosses/Protecting shares/Protecting the law/Protecting the state/From us.” These lines are framed by the chorus: “Destroy what destroys you” – a highly appropriate slogan for a chant at a political demonstration. This is half-sung, half shouted out by Rio Reiser with a raw rage, underpinned by abrasive electric guitars played in a style bridging psychedelic rock with punk. The coda is provided by Brecht and Eisler’s “Einheitsfrontlied,” played as a rock march, its precis of the working person’s basic needs – food, freedom from exploitation, and collective unity – functioning as cultural contextualization (*Warum geht es mir*).

“Keine Macht für niemand” is constructed almost entirely out of slogans, for which the agitative music serves as a good vehicle. The enemy is omnipresent: “In the south, the east, the west, the north,/it’s the same ones everywhere who murder us.” This threat, however, is countered by the strength of the collective. Reiser sings, “Come over brother, get in line,/come over sister, you aren’t alone.” The singer stresses the necessity of overcoming socially constructed barriers to enable people to form such collectives, proclaiming, “Let’s tear down the walls that separate us./Come together people. Get to know each other/You’re not better than the one beside you/No one has the right to rule people.” Another battle song trait of this song is the subject’s consciousness of the age-old historical power relationship: “I have bled a thousand times and they’ve forgotten me./I’ve starved a thousand times and they were stuffed full.” The solution is presented in the refrain: “In every town and every land/write the slogan on the wall/no power for no one.” Similarly, in “Schritt für Schritt ins Paradies” (Step for Step to Paradise) the singer recognizes the historical dimension of “the long road.” At the same time, the subject is convinced that “the new world” is now within grasp. In conjunction with the theme of historical time, we encounter the metaphors of “waking up,” a frequent motif in revolutionary song:

I’ve woken and I’ve seen
 Where we come from and where we’re going
 And the long road that lies before us
 Leads step for step to paradise
 I’ve waited and reflected a long time
 Had many dreams and now I’m awake
 If we look, we’ll find the new country
 Nothing but our fear keeps us from paradise. (from *Keine Macht*)

This song is slower in tempo with a softer tone provided by the piano, reminiscent of a Rolling Stones’ blues ballad. However, it builds in intensity through alternately contrasting lighter and heavier sections, culminating in an extended distorted electric guitar solo, giving the impression of an epic journey.

The historical certainty that the class conflict will be resolved is also evident in the “Die letzte Schlacht gewinnen wir” (We’ll Win the Final Battle), a title reminiscent of Herwegh’s “Der letzte Krieg.” Reiser sings, “We need no squatters/Because the houses belong to us/We need no factory owners/Because the factories belong to us/Get out of the way capitalists/We’ll win the final battle.” The song depicts a united front of communists

and anarchists lined up against a united enemy: “Get out of the way capitalists/We’ll win the final battle/Throw your gun away policeman/The Red Front and the Black Front are here.” This song reflects Scherben’s anticipation of the Punk explosion four years later in its similarity to the sound of the Clash or the Damned. Its catchy staccato guitar riff and constant drumbeat accompanies Rio Reiser’s political demands, shouted out like the bullet points of a manifesto (from *Keine Macht*).

Like the songs of the 1848 period, Ton Steine Scherben use metaphors from nature to express political desires and antagonisms. These are presented in terms of a natural order of things which will reassert itself – if the necessary steps are taken – for example, by working collectively. Scherben highlight the intrinsic justice of their mission through comparison with eternal phenomena such as light, sun, stars, and seasons, the freshness of wind or the dawning of the day. In “Alles verändert sich” (Everything Changes), love and sun function as symbols of warmth, truth and enlightenment leading to social change, as symbolized by the river:

A tree cannot blossom if the sun doesn’t shine
 And there is no river if the rain doesn’t fall
 And there is no truth if we don’t look for it
 And there is no freedom, if we don’t take it

Corresponding to the less antagonistic subject matter, the music for this song is less harsh and abrasive. A fuzz guitar provides a bright melody line over a rhythm that is mostly provided by shakers and rim shots as opposed to drums. In the chorus Reiser sings, “Everything changes, if you change it/but you can’t change anything as long as you’re alone” (from *Warum geht es mir*).

Another song with natural imagery, “Mein Name ist Mensch” (My Name Is Human), portrays basic human necessities such as love, food, light, and air, and functions such as hearing, sight, and understanding: “I live from light and I live from air/I live from love and I live from bread/I have two eyes and can see everything/I have two ears and can understand everything.” The simplicity of the logic is supported by a hypnotic blues rock groove, the shakers and maracas making it sound like a cross between the Stone’s “Sympathy for the Devil” and Santana’s *Abraxas*, a cyclical guitar riff conveying an atmosphere of druggie hedonism (from *Warum geht es mir*).

The sun and the seasons are used to express hope and longing for a better world in “Der Traum ist aus” (The Dream is Over). This sentiment is supported by the blues ballad style and melody not dissimilar to the opening of Free’s “Be My Friend:”

I dreamt the winter was over
 You were here, and we were free
 And the morning sun shone.
 There was no fear and nothing to lose
 There was peace among people and animals
 It was paradise

The idyllic atmosphere is broken by Lanrue's jagged electric guitar riffs on the chorus when Reiser shouts: "The dream is over/But I will give everything to make it come real." The song alternates between moods and includes an experimental, dream-like flute section, redolent of early prog such as Genesis or Jethro Tull and accentuating the sentiment of longing.

Lyrical Developments on *Wenn Die Nacht Am Tiefsten ...*

While the first two albums are characterized to a large extent by a rock battle song aesthetic, there was already a hint of a more personal lyrical approach on certain songs on *Keine Macht für Niemand*. For example, in "Wir müssen hier raus" the lines, "We're born to be free/We're two among millions/We're not alone," are ambiguous: interpretable as the isolation of a worker who has not yet found a collective, or of Reiser himself as a homosexual in society (see Sichtermann et al.). The third album, *Wenn die Nacht am tiefsten* [The Darkest Hour. . .] (1975), however, contains many more instances of lyrical ambiguity and personal introspection. Combined with a less aggressive and more varied musical style, this marks the beginning of a shift away from the battle song. Some tracks are reminiscent of Pink Floyd's psychedelic era, others use soul and funk rhythms typical of the mid-1970s era with wahwah guitar sound effects and saxophone. The softer acoustic blues ballad style evoking the Rolling Stones of the early 1970s is another defining feature.

The theme of overcoming isolation and breaking down social barriers remains central. While this was previously revolutionary in gesture, geared toward the attainment of a new political society, it now takes on the connotations of romantic, idyllic escape. *Wenn die Nacht am tiefsten ...* was written and recorded between 1974 and 1975, shortly before the band's departure from Kreuzberg to their retreat in Fresenhagen near the North Sea. It documents a period in which they had increasingly felt the need for a change in location. They were exploited by anarchist leaders who had expected them to play for free or who even intervened in their art, for example, disapproving when performance aspects of their show detracted, in their eyes, from the desired political message (see Sichtermann et al.). In light of this, the group's longing for freedom, as expressed on this third album, relates arguably less to a specific political manifesto than the desire to overcome the inextricability of their situation. This is reflected in the new playful aspect of songs that contrasts with the previous seriousness, sounding like a weight of responsibility has shifted from their shoulders. For example, "Guten Morgen" (Good morning), a pastiche of early 1960s American pop, is an ironic celebration of the group's lay-about existence, while the song "Ich geh weg" (I'm leaving), in its endless repetition of the title line, celebrates the break they have already made innerly with the Kreuzberg scene.

The song "Steig ein" (Come on in) is an example of their new ambiguity. On one hand it sounds like a call to join a political movement, but the shift to the "I" perspective indicates a plea for friendship: "Get on/jump up/come in/come up/join in/Keep doing it/make the road to you/a bit wider//Come knocking/I'll open the door/when you see I'm fine/bring me down/when you see I'm tired/cheer me up."

Some of the battle song lyrical imagery remains, however. The references to nature, weather, the morning light and awakening, traits stemming from the songs of the 1848 Revolution, are still evident, symbols of a struggle for liberation from social and political

constraints. In “Komm an Bord” (Come on Board) the metaphor of the on-coming storm signifies that the time has come to act. It presents the collective “we” perspective of the downtrodden who have not lost faith: “Our ship/The anchors have been weighed/The wind has been sown/When the storm breaks out at last/ . . . It’s perhaps too late/Come on board/The time is on our side/Our ship/Is called hope.”

In “Wir sind im Licht” (We’re in the Light), written by band manager Nickel Pallat, the tribal war drums accentuate the urgency of mood, as an isolated individual fights against the system. The subject only sees closed eyes, knocks on closed doors. With bound arms and chained feet, he cowers before the tower of dominion, built of stone. As the drums subside, softer acoustic guitar tones accompany more emollient contrasting lines with images of open eyes, warmth, togetherness, sparkling stars, and overcome division: “And all people around us/Are shining stars/We are on the road/And all walk together/Who wants to stop us/We’re breaking through the barriers.” As the drums return, the song builds to its concluding slogan: “The shadows have gone – we’re in the light.” The idea of the collective is still present, but the song simultaneously offers a more intimate personal perspective.

On *Wenn die Nacht am tiefsten*, the idea of “the long road” (theme of “Schritt für Schritt ins Paradis” on the previous album) here takes on the aspect of a personal mission. A tension arises from the contradiction of this image set against the urgency of change in the present. The motif of waiting⁸ emerges, for example, in “Durch die Wüste” when the subject expresses, “I come from the desert of fear and hatred/Where the people die of thirst in the search for love/Ill from desperation and tired of waiting.” Each verse presents a similarly desolate landscape: “a land of poisoned streets/Where one has to sell the day/in order to sleep free of care” and a “planet of desperate gods/ . . . where love is sold, and hatred given feely.” The military drums – set against a guitar riff that does not deviate from the tonic – contribute to the impression of an epic, endless wait.

But there is hope in the title track “Wenn die Nacht am tiefsten.” Reiser sings: “I was often running on empty/finished and alone/ . . . But I want to complete this journey/And I know we’ll see the sun.” The song has a strong psychedelic feel, reminiscent in riff and melody of Pink Floyd’s “Astronome Domine.” The rhythm of the electric guitars and drums form a counterpoint with Reiser’s vocal lines in the verses and bridge. This tension is resolved in the chorus line, chanted in harmony by the group: “The darkest hour is just before the dawn.”

In “Heute Nacht,” Reiser transfers the imagery of the “waking” of political will to the personal sphere. Accompanied by a freer, funkier rhythm, this song addresses the awakening of love and desire, and the courage to break down barriers to the expression of love: “Let us break through what divides us/Let us wake up what’s still asleep.” Similarly, the themes of dominance/servitude, waiting, and the need for truth and communication are transferred from the political to the personal sphere:

Show me your true face
 No, I don’t want to chain you
 Don’t want a quick fuck
 Not to be your boss and not your slave
 I’m looking for a different happiness

Do you speak my language
 Can you understand me
 Our wild dreams are waiting
 Let's go and catch them

In this article we have seen how lyrical traits of the historical battle song of the 1848 Revolution and the twentieth century workers' movement were adapted by the group Ton Steine Scherben in their music of the 1970s. This can be seen in the militant slogans, binary oppositions, metaphors of nature and weather, and references to historical time. While the anarchist, manifesto-led songs of their first and second albums are characterized by a unique hybrid of psychedelic blues rock and political lyrics, there is an additional aspect of romantic longing in Rio Reiser's words that represents a further aspect in common with poems and songs of the 1848 Revolution.

The battle song elements played a reduced role in the more personally orientated *Wenn die Nacht am tiefsten*, which can be seen as a pivotal album pointing ahead to the more experimental *IV* from 1981. Here the group, augmented by the lyricist Hannes Eyber, was to break with the past in adopting a stream-of-consciousness approach to lyric-writing. After the dissolution of the group in 1985, singer Rio Reiser embarked on a successful solo pop career in Germany.

David Robb Biography

I am a Reader in Music in the School of Arts, English and Languages at Queen's University Belfast. I have published widely in the field of German protest song. My books include *Songs for a Revolution. The 1848 Song Tradition in Germany* (coauthor, 2020), *Protest Song in East and West Germany since the 1960s* (editor and main author, 2007) and *Zwei Clowns im Lande des verloren Lachens. Das Liedertheater Wenzel und Mensching* (author, 1998). My research into the songs of the 1848 Revolution was funded bilaterally by the AHRC and the DFG, and prior to this by the British Academy. I am currently researching the songs of the East German singer Gerhard Gundermann as part of an AHRC-funded Fellowship. I am a singer/songwriter with years of experience performing live in the UK, Ireland and Germany.

Notes

1. This introductory section draws on material first published in David Robb, "The Protest Songs of the Late 1960s and early 1970s," here, pp. 51–54.
2. "David" was a reference to the underdog David who challenged the giant Goliath. "Volksmund" means "people's voice."
3. For more on the theme of narrative role-play see David Robb, "Ernst Busch, Rio Reiser and Gerhard Gundermann. Examples of Proletarian Narrative Role-Play in German Political Song," *Jahrbuch des Zentrums fuer populaere Kultur und Musik*, vol. 60/61, 2015/2016, 227–46.
4. The ground-breaking uniqueness of Ton Steine Scherben musically can be seen in this agitprop and rock combination. The shouting of political slogans over an electric rock accompaniment gave them a punk sound, a good five years before the Clash were doing the

same in the UK. By the same token it was almost a decade before the beginnings of *Neue Deutsche Welle* (New German Wave).

5. This can also be seen in Herwegh's poem "Frühlingsmorgenruf" (Spring Morning Call), where the people are urged to "see/the sky itself in flames/ . . . Onwards, onwards, onwards in the storm!" (Lammel, *Lieder* 18).
6. An exception to this can be seen in sporadic workers' choir books of the 1950s. See, for example, Deutscher Allgemeiner Sängerbund, which included Freiligrath's "Schwarz-Rot-Gold." See John and Robb, 136.
7. All lyrics of *Ton Steine Scherben* quoted with permission of Kobrow Musikverlag GmbH. All original German lyrics and quotations translated by David Robb.
8. See also the treatment of the theme of "waiting" by *Liedermacher* and rock groups of the GDR in Robb, "Censorship, Dissent and the Metaphorical Language of GDR Rock," in *Popular Music under State Socialism. Breaking the Cold War Paradigm*, edited by Ewa Mazierska (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 109-28.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Works cited

- Betz, Albrecht. *Hanns Eisler Political Musician*. Translated by Bill Hopkins, Cambridge UP, 1982.
- Bohlman, Philip. *The Music of European Nationalism: Cultural Identity and Modern History*. ABC-CLIO, 2004.
- Brecht, Bertolt. *Gedichte*. Reclam, 1976.
- Brown, Timothy S. "Ton Steine Scherben" and the Politics of Rock in Cold War Berlin." *German Studies Review*, Vol. 32, no. 1, 2009, pp. 1-22.
- Deutscher Allgemeiner Sängerbund. *Deutsches Chorbuch für gemischte Chöre*. DAS-Bundesverlag, 1955.
- Dudo, Slatan. *Kuhle Wampe, oder: Wem gehört die Welt*. Prometheus, 1932.
- Eisler, Hanns. *A Rebel in Music: Selected Writings*, edited by Manfred Grabs, Kahn and Averill, 2006.
- _____. "Unsere Kampfmusik." In *Hanns Eisler. Musik und Politik. Schriften 1924-1948*, edited by Günter Mayer, VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1973, pp. 169-171.
- Herwegh, Georg. *Gedichte eines Lebendigen*. 10th edition, Göschen'sche Verlagshandlung, 1877.
- Holler, Eckard. "The Burg Waldeck Festivals, 1964-1969." In *Protest Song in East and West Germany since the 1960s*, edited by David Robb, Camden House, 2007, pp. 97-132.
- _____. "The Folk and Liedermacher Scene in the Federal Republic in the 1970s and 1980s." In *Protest Song in East and West Germany since the 1960s*, edited by David Robb, Camden House, 2007, pp. 133-167.
- John, Eckhard, and David Robb. *Songs for a Revolution. The 1848 Protest Song Tradition in Germany*. Camden House, 2020.
- Ka, Bernhard. *denn die Freiheit ist unser Ziel. Autobiografie. Rote Steine Berlin*. BoD-Books on Demand, 2016.
- Kauffeldt, Rolf. *Erich Mühsam. Literatur und Anarchie*. Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1983.
- Koch, Albrecht. *Angriff aufs Schlaraffenland - 20 Jahre deutschsprachige Popmusik*. Ullstein, 1987.
- König Sydney. "'Memory is a Weapon': Ton Steine Scherben's Use of WWII Memory in the Political Upheavals of the 1970s." *Music & Politics*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2021. doi: 10.3998/mp.9460447.0015.205.
- Köhnen, Diana. *Das literarische Werk Erich Mühsams*. Koenigshausen und Neumann, 1988.
- Lammel, Inge, editor. *Lieder der Revolution von 1848*. Das Lied im Kampf geboren, 1st pamphlet, Hofmeister, 1957.

- _____. "Politisches Lied und Volkslied in der Gesangspraxis der Arbeiterklasse." In *Arbeiterklasse und Musik. Theoretische Positionen in der deutschen Arbeiterklasse zur Musikkultur vor 1945*. Arbeitsheft 15, edited by Inge Lammel, Akademie der Künste der DDR, 1974, pp. 26–51.
- Möbius, Gert. *Halt dich an deiner Liebe fest. Rio Reiser*. Aufbau Taschenbuch, 2021.
- _____. "Der freie Geist." *Welt am Montag*, 27 July 1925.
- _____. *Revolution. Kampf- Marsch- und Spottlieder*. Der freie Arbeiter. 1925.
- _____. "Generalstreikmarsch." *Freiheit*, vol. 28, no. 34, 1906, pp. 1.
- Noack, Victor. *Deutscher Arbeiter Sängerbund. Entstehung, Kampf und Aufstieg*. Verlag des Deutschen Arbeiter-Sängerbundes, 1931.
- Putnam, Michael T. "Music as a Weapon: Reactions and Responses to RAF Terrorism in the Music of Ton Steine Scherben and Their Successors in Post-9/11 Music." *Popular Music and Society*, vol. 32, no. 5, 2009, pp. 595–606. doi:10.1080/03007760903251417.
- Reiser, Rio, and Hannes Eyber. *König von Deutschland. Erinnerungen an Ton Steine Scherben und mehr*. 3rd Edition, Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1994.
- Robb, David. "Narrative Role-Play as Communicative Strategy in German Protest Song." In *Protest Song in East and West Germany since the 1960s*, edited by David Robb, 2007, pp. 67–96.
- _____. "Mühsam, Brecht, Eisler, and the Twentieth-Century Revolutionary Heritage." In *Music and Protest*, edited by Ian Peddie, Ashgate Publishing, 2012, pp. 325–56.
- _____. "Ernst Busch, Rio Reiser and Gerhard Gundermann. Examples of Proletarian Narrative Role-Play in German Political Song." *Jahrbuch des Zentrums für populäre Kultur und Musik*, vol. 60/61, 2015/2016, pp. 227–46.
- _____. "Censorship, Dissent and the Metaphorical Language of GDR Rock." In *Popular Music Under State Socialism: Breaking the Cold War Paradigm*, edited by Ewa Mazierska, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, pp. 109–28.
- _____. "The Protest Song of the Late-1960s and Early 1970s: Franz Josef Degenhardt and Ton Steine Scherben." In *A Companion to German Pop*, edited by Uwe Schutte, De Gruyter, 2017, pp. 43–62.
- Seidel, Wolfgang. "Berlin und die Linke in den 1960ern. Die Entstehung der Ton Steine Scherben." In *Scherben. Musik, Politik und Wirkung der Ton Steine Scherben* 2nd Edition, edited by Wolfgang Seidel, Ventil, 2008, pp. 25–50
- Sichtermann, Kai, Jens Johler and Christian Stahl. *Keine Macht für niemand. Die Geschichte der Ton Steine Scherben*. 4th edition, Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2008.
- Steinitz, Wolfgang. *Deutsche Volkslieder demokratischen Charakters aus sechs Jahrhunderten* Vol. 1 and 2 Akademie Verlag 1954 and 1962.
- Szépe, Helena. *Das militante Pathos in der politischen Lyrik Georg Herweghs*. 1968. Washington University, PhD Dissertation.
- Ton Steine Scherben, Musik ist eine Waffe. Agit 883: 24 Dec.
- _____. *Warum geht es mir so dreckig*. David Volksmund, 1971.
- _____. *Keine Macht für niemand*. David Volksmund, 1972.
- _____. *Wenn die Nacht am tiefsten*. David Volksmund, 1975.
- _____. *IV (Die Schwarze)*. David Volksmund, 1981.
- Vens, Hartwig. "Unsere Lieder sind einfach damit viele sie mitsingen können. Zur Sprache der Scherben." *Scherben. Musik, Politik und Wirkung der Ton Steine Scherben*, edited by Wolfgang Seidel, Ventil Verlag KG, 2008, pp. 205–214.