

Ian Glasper, *The Day The Country Died: A History of Anarcho Punk, 1980–1984* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2014). 496 pp. \$24.95 Paperback.

Ian Glasper's *The Day the Country Died* is a welcome contribution to a growing body of writing on the history of punk. While scholars from many disciplines have been active in shaping this emerging literature, so too have punk's participants. Glasper's work is reflective of the latter tradition. Growing up as a participant in the UK punk scene, the author has channeled his enthusiasm and commitment for the topic into an informative, engaging, and broadly based account of anarcho punk in the UK during the first half of the 1980s. With its specific focus on anarcho bands, the book provides a fascinating window into the musical, political, cultural, and social dynamics of some of punk's most radical communities.

For those readers who are attracted to the sounds of punk — this reviewer included — Glasper's work provides a detailed history of anarcho punk's diverse musicality, particularly in his short introduction to the book. Here, Glasper argues that while much of UK's punk scene had developed a "fairly generic sound (and what a great sound it was!)," the "anarcho bands were bound together more by their ethics than any unwritten musical doctrine." (9) Embodying an eclecticism that reflected everything from "folk" to "hardcore" to "arty noise," the conventions that bound anarcho punk together combined a general commitment to progressive causes, a rigorous democratic ethos rooted in DIY culture, and a pronounced disdain for cultural conventions. (8–9)

Although inspired by the author's personal involvement with the subject, *The Day the Country Died* is neither an autobiography nor a conventional historical narrative. Instead, the book is built around a series of band biographies, numbering 80 in total. While each entry contains commentary by the author, most of the text is drawn from the oral testimony of individual participants. This consistent approach reflects a staggeringly impressive amount of oral historical research on the part of the author. The band biographies are organized into nine chapters, grouped by regional origin. In structuring the book in this way, Glasper not only discusses the importance of well-known centres such as London, but also highlights the important contributions of bands from Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, demonstrating the significance of a wide geographical setting for anarcho punk's development.

Because the author approaches the history of anarcho punk through a focus on specific bands, *The Day the Country Died* offers a detailed and consistent exploration of the formation of groups and their musical interests, as well as providing detailed information on the production and organization of performances, recordings, distribution, and consumption. Reflecting this emphasis, each band profile ends with a selected discography of the group's work as well as suggested ad-

ditional resources for readers who are interested in more information on particular performers.

But for readers of *Left History* in particular, Glasper's work offers additional value in its nuanced discussion of anarchist politics and culture in the early 1980s. Not every band biography contains such overt political discussions. Indeed, for many performers, the anarchism in anarcho punk seems to be little more than a vague claim to personal liberation, and a rejection of institutionalized musical structure and organization. Yet, other band profiles provide fascinating political discussions that directly engage with the ambiguities of anarcho punk, and that speak to its overt contributions to the social movements and activist projects of the early 1980s. In an evocative discussion of anarcho punk's political culture, for example, Subhumans' vocalist Dick Lucas notes the ways in which the band felt uncomfortable with the anarcho label because "we were doing things that we thought would exclude us from being anarchists. We thought it involved a very strict sense of values, a morality that we couldn't maintain, 'cos we got the impression — wrongly — that there was no fun in anarchy, it was all very, very, very serious." (182) In Lucas' case, he interpreted owning a car and eating meat as placing him outside the anarchist tradition. At the same time, it is also clear from Crass vocalist Steve Ignorant how difficult and exhausting it was to maintain certain codes of conduct. (17–18) Such pressures were particularly ironic, given the overarching emphasis upon a culture of "no rules." (9) At the same time, while these examples reflect individual expressions of "personal revolution," as Glasper argues, he is also right to conclude that those personal commitments played a role in promoting collective forms of progressive politics. (6–8) In particular, the book's focus on bands such as Crass and Conflict provides insightful personal reflections on the ways in which anarcho punk played a role in broader social movements against racism and militarism, and for animal rights and direct action. While both bands used music as a means of engaging with these issues, they also demonstrate the tactical differences within the scene. Here, Crass's pacifism is contrasted by Conflict's willingness to use physical violence and confrontation in support of animal rights activists who were often physically attacked during their attempts to sabotage fox hunting. (117–118)

Such discussions, which are repeated in different iterations by others in the book, offer a fascinating portrait of anarchism's political and cultural makeup within the context of 1980s UK punk, and the ways in which punk intervened into a broader anarchist and activist tradition in these years. Rather than only hinging on anarchist approaches to mass organization and social revolution—practices that had been at the centre of anarchism's global development over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth century—Glasper's research demonstrates how some anarcho punk communities made sense of anarchism through a diverse set of personal cultural practices and collective political work.

In its exploration of anarcho punk's eclectic sounds, its personal political culture, and its contributions to social movement politics, *The Day the Country Died*

offers readers a wealth of individual perspectives on a rich and relevant history. Glasper's detailed biographical and oral historical work plunges the reader into anarcho punk's everyday existence, and in doing so, suggests with great clarity the ways in which popular culture operated as a critical site for the merging of politics and play. This is a book that should interest a wide range of readers, whether they are interested in punk's past, or in the dynamic history of anarchist politics and culture in the late twentieth century.

Eryk Martin
Simon Fraser University

Charlie Angus, *Unlikely Radicals: The Story of the Adams Mine Dump War* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2013). 240 pp. \$24.95 Paperback.

In 2009, a group called the Post-Mining Alliance funded a book called *101 Things to do With a Hole in the Ground*. The publication is beautifully illustrated and full of hopeful stories about former mines that have been converted to movie sets, football stadiums, cheese cellars, and research centres. One could debate whether such a publication (funded in part by industry) is selectively optimistic, and avoided the thousands of abandoned mines where problems with chemical pollution will persist for decades, or even eternity in some cases. But at least the book encourages creative design and land use options for those mines where remediation is possible. Nowhere does this publication suggest that using abandoned mines as garbage dumps is a smart thing to do with a hole in the ground.

But that is exactly what entrepreneur Gordon McGuinty and his company, Notre Development proposed to do with the abandoned Adams Mine near Kirkland Lake. A former iron mining operation owned by Dofasco Steel, the Adams Mine pits were slowly filling with water after abandonment, and exhibited no lasting pollution legacies after closure in 1989. McGuinty visited the south pit that year and thought it was an ideal location to park Toronto's massive garbage output after the planned closure of the Keele Valley landfill. Bob Rae's NDP government initially rejected the idea, but when McGuinty's North Bay associate Mike Harris became Premier in 1995, Notre Development (eventually aligned with a consortium of private interests called Rail Cycle North) and the provincial government effectively became co-proponents of the dump. Many residents of the Temiskaming district objected to the idea of taking Toronto's garbage, provoking a pitched fourteen year battle over the fate of the mine.

Charlie Angus' *Unlikely Radicals* is an eloquent first-hand account of the struggle against the Adams Mine dump proposal. Angus, currently a federal Member of Parliament with the NDP, is well-positioned to tell the tale, as he was a key leader in the protest movement. Indeed, the book is a stunning insiders' perspective on one of the most important environmental protests in the history of northern On-