

Hurchalla, George (2016) *Going Underground: American Punk 1979 - 1989*. PM Press: Oakland, California.

On 14 January 1978, The Sex Pistols played the final show of their first North American tour at the Winterlands in San Francisco. For George Hurchalla, this show is important not only because it symbolizes the passing of the torch, Virgin Records to SST, England to the United States, commercial success to thriving underground scene. No, he instead brings together punk's many definitions – a shared identity, genre of popular music, and sense of fashion – in order to work through punk's multiple meanings. The Winterlands show thus marks the exact historical moment where and when he begins his social history of the American do-it-yourself (DIY) punk scene. In lieu of highlighting punk's "aboveground" major label successes (e.g., Sex Pistols, The Ramones, and The Clash), Hurchalla fixates on the American "underground" (11), or what he and others call the DIY scene.

However the second edition of *Going Underground: American Punk 1979 - 1989* extends DIY punk and its histories past Dischord Records, Black Flag, and the early 1980s Washington, DC and Los Angeles scenes. Many of the book's 29 chapters revolve around creating a more readily-available archive that anthologizes some of lesser-known scenes, venues and bands, such as Miami, Florida, Club Doobee in East Lansing, or Sluggo from Cincinnati. The thorough analysis complements the author's own punk coming-of-age with zines, interviews, and flyers from different scenes – big city and small towns – all across the country, not to mention a number of never-before-seen photographs that give face to the voices of punk's DIY past. But *Going Underground* does not stop here; it berates punk's ultimate antagonist, Ronald Reagan, without losing sight of the fact that the DIY ethos is "rugged individualism" *par excellence*. While Reagan's real supporters were a "herd of mindless sheep," DIY punks for Hurchalla were the "actual rugged individualists" because they "took the necessary steps to have [their] voices heard" (104). Besides, Ian MacKaye, one of the founders of Dischord Records, reminds us elsewhere just how much work and time are used up by the DIY mode of production. As Reagan set in motion a world where instead of relying on the state for handouts, people learned to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps; MacKaye and countless other punks refused to be held hostage by the demands of the music industry, so in response they created their own scene wherein they make the rules – by punks, for punks.

Hurchalla wisely extends the American DIY punk scene past 1981 and beyond the coasts in space, though his point would be more effective if he did not severely overlook the many contributions of women. Sure, the names of many female punks are mentioned sporadically throughout (e.g. Philadelphia's Nancy Petriello Barile, Black Flag's Kira Roessler, and Sue Harshe of the Meat Puppets), but their purpose serves only as a means to connect various male-dominated scenes and bands. Indeed, towards the end, Hurchalla, in what can only be described as a tokenistic addendum, includes the chapter "Pardon Me, I'm Only Bleeding" (337-50) which opens with discussion of women in the scene. And yet, it still only devotes about a third (approximately 4 pages) to the experiences of women in western punk scenes, from Los Angeles to San Francisco, Portland and Seattle. Although its clever title

references a popular Butthole Surfers song, its contents again leave a lot to be desired. Rather than placing the contributions of women within the chapters relevant to those scenes, Hurchalla isolates their experiences; which, as a result, implies that women are not fully integrated into the scenes he examines. He cannot in good faith claim to write an inclusive social history of the American DIY punk scene that isn't more indebted to the contributions of women.

Ultimately, Hurchalla fills in the blank spots on the punk map by documenting some of the lesser known scenes, yet his way of bringing these histories to new life raise a number of concerns. Since the book is shaped by personal experience, Hurchalla over-emphasizes his own story at the expense of others. As such, *Going Underground: American Punk 1979 - 1989* successfully undoes punk's diversity when readers shouldn't have to put their ear to the ground in order to learn about some of the names, faces, and bands that existed parallel to the author's own frame of reference. Even so, the book joins a growing list of punk titles published by PM Press. *Going Underground* represents a commendable attempt to lessen the gap between 1980s cultural historian and punk newcomer, but I'm not entirely convinced that it lives up to its very un-DIY, \$21.95 price tag.

Corey Ponder  
*Trent University*