

My dissertation seeks to examine interactions between the radical Left and punk subculture in Detroit during the mid- to late-twentieth century. Detroit has been an important site of radical activism since the late nineteenth century, but this narrative is obscured by the story of postindustrial urban decay. I seek to explore how punks in Detroit have pursued antiracist and antifacist activism from the 1960s to the present. The punk subgenre of rock music is often cited as beginning in Detroit in the late 1960s with bands such as the MC5, a group that was the mouthpiece of antiracist activist John Sinclair's White Panther Party. The American corollary of the antifacist movement, Anti-Racist Action, was born in the hardcore punk subculture in Minneapolis during the 1980s, but I argue that John Sinclair's idea to use the MC5 to build white solidarity with the Black Panthers was a predecessor to antifa's American birth in the hardcore punk movement. Through examining the underground press, DIY zines, punk show flyers, and the personal papers of some pivotal figures, I will demonstrate how punks and anarchists in Detroit have for decades been imagining and creating alternatives to hegemony, and also situate the city as a hotbed of radicalism we should turn to for inspiration rather than ignore as an urban failure. I will also contribute to burgeoning literature on the antifa movement by writing a place-based, cultural history of Anti-Racist Action.

The AHSS Award will enable me to visit important archives at the University of Michigan, including the Labadie Collection of radical ephemera. The archive's wide-ranging collection of self-published punk zines from Detroit and around the country will form the bulk of my archival research. This research project began in my M.A. paper with an examination of the underground newspaper *The Fifth Estate*, which published writings by John Sinclair and other Detroit counterculture figures during the 1960s and later shifted to become an explicitly anarchist publication in the following decade. *The Fifth Estate* is still published out of Detroit today and is considered to be the longest-running anarchist publication in North America. The Labadie Collection has holdings of *The Fifth Estate*, as well as the personal papers of the publication's founder Harvey Ovshinsky. Another important publication for me to explore is the rock magazine *Maximum RocknRoll*, which has been published from California's Bay Area since the early 1980s and played a significant role in championing antiracist activism in the hardcore punk scene nationwide. The Labadie Collection has one of the most complete collections of *Maximum RocknRoll*. I will also look at more obscure, smaller publications, such as the Detroit anarchist zine *Babyfish Lost Its Mama*. These zines will help me see how punk and anarchist activists in postindustrial Detroit fought white supremacy through theory and praxis. These publications, created quickly and cheaply with the do-it-yourself ethos of punk, have not been widely digitized or

published, and I believe that uncovering the stories within their pages can have profound consequences. Historians such as Penny Von Eschen have shown that the erasure of the radical Left during the Cold War weakened the New Left of the 1960s, which had to essentially start from scratch. Telling this story and making these zines more accessible through the digital project I hope to create to accompany my dissertation can help activists see the theory, praxis, mistakes, and successes of last generation's antiracist activists.

The Labadie Collection and the Bentley Historical Library also hold the personal papers of numerous figures important to my research. Most significant are the papers of John Sinclair, which include drafts of his prolific writings on the connections between art (especially rock and roll) and antiracist activism. Seeing how Sinclair conceptualized his management of the MC5 will help me better understand how his approach influenced the punks that founded and participated in Anti-Racist Action. Others include the anarchist publisher and translator Fredy Perlman, who during the 1960s founded the Detroit-based Black and Red Press, and Jerry Vile, the founder of the Detroit punk zine *White Noise*. These personal papers will add a deeper context to my research, allowing me to get a more intimate glimpse into a few of the pivotal figures in Detroit's anarchist and punk scenes.

Depending on the state of the pandemic, I hope to visit anarchist punk sites that continue to foster activism and dissent in Detroit today. For example, the anarchist house the Trumbullplex has operated as a commune, zine library, and punk venue since the early 1990s. The city's proximity to Ann Arbor means that I will be easily able to pursue research in both places. I believe that a combination of archival and oral history fieldwork is necessary for me to complete this project, and this award will give me a significant head start on crafting a well-researched prospectus. Making this research trip to Ann Arbor this summer will be an important step for me to develop my research and write my dissertation prospectus this fall. By allowing me to do a deep dive into a wide variety of punk and anarchist zines, the AHSS award will help me elevate the voices of working-class radical activists whose antiracist thought and praxis will be valuable to researchers exploring antifa and punk subcultures, as well as artists and activists participating in those movements today. Antiracist activists who have spent decades imagining and creating alternative worlds built on radical equity have much to offer as we continue to navigate our current interlocking crises.