Papers, 1933-1963 (Predominantly, 1935-1955)

49.5 linear feet

Accession Number 304 L.C. Number MS

The papers of the Civil Rights Congress of Michigan were deposited in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in July of 1968 by Ernest Goodman and the Civil Rights Congress of Michigan and opened for research in 1979. Additional papers were placed in the Archives by Mr. Saul Wellman, former member of the Civil Rights Congress, in December of 1974 and opened for research in May of 1984.

The Civil Rights Congress of Michigan was organized in 1935 as the Conference for the Protection of Civil Rights. Reverend J. H. Bollins was Chairman and Patrick O'Brien was counsel. They supported labor in the early Ford and G.M. Strikes and also academic freedom. They opposed police brutality under Commissioner Pickert, the Dunckel-Baldwin Bill, censorship, the Black Legion and the Ku Klux Klan, fascism, and discrimination and attempted to take cases to court to get legal decisions on their issues. In this they were supported by other local groups such as the ACLU, AFL locals, the Young Democrats, the Professional League for Civil Rights, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, and Methodist and Baptist churches.

In about 19 38 the name of the group was changed to the Civil Rights Federation. J. H. Bollins continued as Chairman and Reverend Owen Knox of the Bethlehem Methodist Church became Treasurer. In 1940 Reverend Knox became Chairman of the CRF and also of the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties. At this time the purpose of the CRF was stated to be "the defense of civil rights on the part of widely divergent groups throughout Michigan...labor, farm, church, fraternal, language, racial, political, civic, professional, women and youth groups." They defined civil rights as the rights to free speech, press, assembly and worship, the rights of labor to organize and bargain and equal rights for all minorities.

In 1941 Reverend Knox resigned from both organizations over the issue of war policy. From 1941 on the emphasis of the group was on cases of discrimination and those holding unpopular political positions. They attacked the Dies Committee, the Mundt-Nixon Bills and the Smith Act and actively supported those who were indicted in these cases.

About 1945 the name of the organization changed to the Civil Rights Congress with Jack Raskin as executive secretary. In 1950 he was suceeded by Arthur McPhaul and Anne Shore became the director of organization. They dissolved in 1955 and the work was carried on by some of the veterans of the CRC staff, the ACLU, religious groups and various committees.

Part 2 contains additional material on topics found in Part 1 and covers new civil rights issues from 1954 on including the campaign to abolish the Un-American Activities Committee, the campaign to repeal the McCarran Act, and the case of Arthur McPhaul versus the United States in 1959.

Important subjects covered in Part 1 of the collection are:

Academic freedom
Anti-lynching
Black Legion

Legislation
Police brutality
Poll Tax

Dies Committee

Discrimination

Fascism

Father Coughlin

Foil Tax

Rosenberg case

Scottsboro boys

Smith Act

G.L.K. Smith

FEPC Strikes

Ku Klux Klan

Among the important correspondents in Part 1 are:

Roger Baldwin Owen Knox Patrick McNamara Franz Boas Charles Beard Vito Marcantonio Ruth Benedict Homer Martin Ed Carey A. G. Mazerick Frank Couzens Frank Murphy John Dingell Stanley Nowack Harper Paulson Tracy Doll Ernest Goodman William Patterson Dashiell Hammett Louis Rabaut David Henry Jack Raskin Granville Hicks A. Ruthven **Edward Jeffries** Anne Shore Robert LaFollette Neil Staebler Estes Kefauver Norman Thomas

Robert Weaver

Important subjects covered in Part 2 of the collection are:

Discrimination Smith Act Fair Employment Practices Un-American Activities

Police brutality

Milton Kemnitz

Among the important correspondents in Part 2 are:

J. H. Bollens Jack Raskin
George W. Crockett Anne Shore
Ernest Goodman Maurice Sugar

Arthur McPhaul

An index to subjects and correspondents in Part 2 will be found on p.30

-3-

Contents

99 manuscript boxes

Part 1

- Series I, Civil Rights Congress Office File, 1935-1955, Boxes 1-11: This series contains material from the Civil Rights Congress of Michigan, the National Civil Rights Congress, the ACLU, the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, and the Professional League for Civil Rights. The papers of each of these groups are not interfiled. Within each group the folders are filed alphabetically and then chronologically. Printed material is included at the end of the series.
- Series II, Black Legion KKK, 1936-1952, Boxes 12-16: Folders in this series are filed chronologically and then alphabetically. Much of the series consists of newspaper clippings. The last box contains an index file to newspaper clippings by name of persons.
- Series III, Fascism, 1933-1947, Boxes 17-25:
 The series includes material on native and foreign fascism.
 It includes material on G.L.K. Smith, Charles Lindberg, native fascist groups, Hitler and Nazi Germany. The folders are arranged alphabetically and then chronologically. Newspaper

fascist groups, Hitler and Nazi Germany. The folders are arranged alphabetically and then chronologically. Newspaper clippings make up a large part of the series. Printed material is included at the end of the series.

- Series IV, Un-American Activities, 1935-1955, Boxes, 26-43:
 This series contains records on the Dies Committee, Smith Act, Un-American Activities Committee and appropriate legislation. As with the other series files of individual cases are included. It is arranged alphabetically and then chronologically. Cases, the Dies Committee, Legislation, Smith Act, and Un-American Activities Committee are the major subjects, each of which has sub-headings. Printed material is included at the end of the series.
- Series V, La Follette Committee, 1936-1939, Boxes 44-46: Very little of the series relates to correspondence. The majority consists of printed pamphlets of the committee hearings.
- Series VI, Labor, 1935-1954, Boxes 47-60:

This series contains material on fair employment, labor employment, labor legislation and strikes. Each of these subjects has its own sub-heading. The folders are arranged alphabetically and then chronologically. Newspaper clippings are abundant. Printed material is included at the end of the series.

Series VII, Discrimination, 1932-1954, Boxes 61-75:

The major portion of this series relates to Black discrimination although there is material on anti-Seimitism and discrimination against other minority groups and aliens. Files of individuals are grouped under cases. The folders are arranged alphabetically and then chronologically. Miscellaneous printed material is included at the end of the series.

Part 1 cont'd

Series VIII, Academic Freedom, 1935-1954, Boxes 76-78:
Much of the material in this series relates to Academic Freedom in Michigan Universities during the 1940's. The folders are arranged chronologically and then alphabetically.

Series IX, Police Activities, 1935-1953, Boxes 79-81:

The material includes both statements and clippings of police activities in the 1930's and 1940's - for the most part folders are broken down into types of activity as strikebreaking, shoutings and the like. The folders are arranged chronologically and then alphabetically. Some printed material is included at the end of the series.

Series X, Criminals Index File, 1930"s, Box 82:

This series consists of a box of index cards arranged alphabetically by person. Some identification of the person is given. It covers the late 20's and early 30's.

Series XI, Miscellaneous Civil Rights, 1935-1954, Boxes 83-94: Newspaper clippings and printed material make up a large part of this series and are included at the end of the series. The folders are arranged alphabetically.

Part 2

Series XII, Civil Rights Congress Office Files, 1937-1960, Boxes 95-96: Correspondence, minutes, reports, and other materials relating to the Michigan Civil Rights Congress and the staff. Files from the Professional League for Civil Rights can be found in this series.

Series XIII, Civil Rights Issues, 1933-1963, Boxes 96-99:
Correspondence, trial transcripts, clippings and other materials covering various issues including the campaign to for a Fair Employment Practices Committee in Michigan, discrimination, un-American activities, the Smith Act, and anti-labor activities. There is some material on Civil Rights activities after the CRR was disolved.

Non-manuscript Material:

Approximately 62 photographs relating to activities and people connected with the Civil Rights Congress have been placed in the Audio-Visual Collection. Numerous labor newspapers, reports, pamphlets and other materials relating to civil rights received with this collection are available in the Archives Library.

Box Listings

Series I Civil Rights Congress Office File

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Civil Rights Congress

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State CRC Conference - 1949

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CRC Correspondence - 1939 (2 folders) CRC Correspondence - Jan.-May, 1939 CRC Correspondence - June-Oct., 1939

CRC Correspondence - 1942-1951 (7 folders)

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Series XII Civil Rights Congress Offices Files, 1937-1960 Boxes 95 - 96

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Series XIII Civil Rights Issues, 1933-1963 Boxes 96 - 99

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