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Guide to the

Vicki Garvin papers

1923-1998 [bulk 1950-1990]

Sc MG 647

Summary

Creator: Garvin, Vicki, 1915-2007

Title: Vicki Garvin papers

Date: 1923-1998 [bulk 1950-1990]

Size: 2.37 linear feet (5 boxes)

Source: Gift of Vicki Garvin, September 1998.

Abstract: Victoria (Vicki) Garvin was an African-American trade union and political activist as well as a pan-Africanist and internationalist. The Vicki Garvin papers document aspects of Garvin's work as a trade union organizer, especially among African-Americans in the 1950s; her teaching experience in Shanghai (1964-1970); and her support of communism both in the United States and China.

Preferred citation: [Item], Vicki Garvin papers, Sc MG 647, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Accessioned by Janice Quinter, May 2010. Garvin had organized her own files prior to donating them to the Schomburg Center; the file folder titles that she provided have generally been retained.

Creator History

Victoria (Vicki) Garvin was an African-American trade union and political activist as well as a pan-Africanist and internationalist. From 1946-1950, Garvin served as a research director of the United Office and Professional Workers of America. In 1951, she took part in the formation of the National Negro Labor Council and became a national vice president and executive secretary of the New York City chapter. She taught English in Ghana between 1963-1964, and from 1964-1970, she taught English to advanced Chinese students at the Shanghai Foreign Languages Institute.

Scope and Content Note

The Vicki Garvin papers document aspects of Garvin's work as a trade union organizer, especially among African-Americans in the 1950s; her teaching experience in Shanghai (1964-1970); return trips to China in the 1970s; and her support of communism both in the United States and China. Included are Garvin's personal reminiscences about her activities and individuals with whom she associated.

In addition to personal papers and letters to various activists and personalities, her files include the published proceedings of the 11th Constitutional Convention of the CIO. Garvin's interest and work with the National Negro Labor Council (NNLC) is documented in the proceedings of the founding convention in 1951, news clippings, flyers, and her reminiscences.

Also included are teaching materials from China, such as speeches, lessons plans, and lectures in which she stated her support for Mao Tse-Tung and compared the liberation struggles of African Americans with those of the Chinese people and the South Vietnamese. In her diaries of the 1970s, she summarized her personal experiences teaching in Shanghai and discussed the Gang of Four. The collection contains texts for Garvin's speeches and presentations regarding her personal achievements and background, her ideas for change, and tributes to Black leaders. Her writings discuss the history of Black workers' struggles in the United States in the 1950s and the Chinese Communist Party in the 1960s, among other topics. Of interest in the Organizational and individual files are Garvin's speeches and writings about Malcolm X; her experiences with him as his translator when he visited Ghana in 1964; and her remembrances of the statements he made while in Ghana.

Arrangement: Papers organized into six series: I. Personal papers; II. Correspondence; III. Employment; IV. Presentations and speeches; V. Writings; and VI. Organizational and individual files.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American communists
African American intellectuals
African American political activists
African American women
African Americans -- China
African Americans -- Civil rights
African Americans -- Relations with Chinese
Communism
Communists -- China
Labor unions
Political activists

Geographic Names

China -- Social conditions -- 1949-1976

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Diaries
Reminiscences
Speeches

Names

Garvin, Vicki, 1915-2007

X, Malcolm, 1925-1965
Congress of Industrial Organizations (U.S.)
National Negro Labor Council (U.S.)
Zhongguo gong chan dang

Container List

Personal papers 1923-1998

- b. 1 f. 1 Biographical information
Includes resumes.
- b. 1 f. 2 Early education and accomplishments 1923-1997
- b. 1 f. 3 Master's thesis, "The American Federation of Labor and Social Security Legislation: Changing Policy towards Old Age Pensions and Unemployment Insurance, 1900-1932" 1942 June
- b. 1 f. 4 Awards 1945-1996
- b. 1 f. 5 Community event participation 1992-1998
- b. 1 f. 6-7 Cards from family and friends 1973-1998
- b. 1 f. 8 Autograph album 1929-1932

Correspondence 1949-1998

From Garvin

- b. 2 f. 1 1987-1995
- b. 2 f. 2 1995-1997

To Garvin

- b. 2 f. 3 1952-1992
- b. 2 f. 4 1994-1998
- b. 2 f. 5 Letters regarding trade unions 1949-1986
- b. 2 f. 6 Bailey, Ron (regarding Garvey anthology) 1992-1997

Employment 1944-1996

- b. 2 f. 7 National War Labor Board news clipping 1944
United Office and Professional Workers of America
- b. 2 f. 8 "The Facts of Life: An Economic Document" 1948
- b. 2 f. 9 CIO proceedings 1948
- b. 2 f. 10 CIO proceedings and expulsion of eleven "progressive" unions from CIO-
Anti-Communist move 1949
- National Negro Labor Council
- b. 2 f. 11-12 Founding convention and background material 1949-1972
- b. 2 f. 13-14 News clippings 1949-1955
 - b. 2a
- b. 2 f. 15 Third Annual Convention 1953-1956
- b. 2 f. 16 Campaigns 1950s
- b. 2 f. 17 Greater New York Labor Council 1952
Includes congratulatory messages and reception honoring Garvin's appointment as executive secretary.
- b. 2 f. 18 Reunions and Garvin remembrances 1971-1993
- b. 2 f. 19 Thompson, Mindy. "The National Negro Labor Council: A History" 1978
- b. 2 f. 20 Continuation Committee 1992
- b. 2 f. 21 Nigeria 1961-1990
- China
- b. 2 f. 22 Speeches 1964-1967

Employment (cont.)

China (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 23 Teaching lectures 1964-1968
- b. 2 f. 24 Lesson plans 1960s
- b. 2 f. 25 Garvin's summary of her teaching experiences in China 1966
- b. 2 f. 26 Chinese briefings from Chinese sources received by Garvin 1970s
- b. 2 f. 27-29 Writings and speeches on China (given in the United States) 1970s-1996
- b. 2 f. 31-33 Diaries 1974-1979
- b. 2 f. 34 U.S.-China Peoples Friendship Association 1973-1989
- b. 2 f. 35 Correspondence 1982-1992
- b. 2 f. 36-37 Papers on U.S. Black history written by Garvin's Shanghai students 1964-1965

Presentations and speeches 1930s-1998

- b. 3 f. 1 1930s-1975
- b. 3 f. 2 1977-1985
- b. 3 f. 3 1986-1991
- b. 3 f. 4 1992-1993
- b. 3 f. 5 1994-1998

Writings 1940s-1998

- b. 3 f. 6-8 Trade unions 1940s-1990s
- b. 3 f. 9 Published letters and articles 1973-1998
- b. 3 f. 10 Suggested reading list and political polemical papers 1996-1997
- b. 3 f. 11-14 Original drafts and notes 1970s-1990s
- b. 4 f. 1-5 Includes writing on Garvin's personal history and Ghana.

Organizational and individual files 1977-1997

Organizations

- b. 4 f. 6 Black Workers Organizing Committee 1980-1981
- b. 4 f. 7 National Black United Front's Second Annual Convention 1981
- b. 4 f. 8 National Conference of Black Workers 1981
- b. 4 f. 9 W.E.B. DuBois Memorial Centre for Pan-African Culture 1986-1991

Individuals

- b. 4 f. 10 Fidel Castro's welcome in New York 1995
- b. 4 f. 11 Garvin's eulogy for Queen Mother Moore 1977
- b. 4 f. 12 Williams, Robert F 1991-1997
Includes writings by Garvin and news clippings.
- b. 4 f. 13 X, Malcolm 1990-1997
Includes Garvin's speeches and writings.