



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

Claudia Jones Memorial collection

1935-1998

Sc MG 692

Summary

Creator: Manchanda, Claudia

Title: Claudia Jones Memorial collection

Date: 1935-1998

Size: 1.2 linear feet

Abstract: Claudia Jones Memorial Collection 1935-1998 (bulk 1955-1964) consists primarily of printed matter apparently owned by Jones. There is a relatively small volume of material relating to Jones' personal and political activities. Bon-voyage postcards, letters and telegrams sent to her on her departure from the United States following deportation are the only documents that deal with her life in the United States. The collection also contains poems Jones wrote while in prison and during her voyage to England.

Access: Advance notice required.

Preferred citation: Claudia Jones Memorial collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

Creator History

Claudia Jones (1915-1964), political activist, communist, journalist, and community leader was born in Trinidad, and immigrated to the U.S. in 1924 with her parents and siblings. During the 1930s and '40s she became a strong advocate for human, civil and women's rights and rose in the Communist Party-USA to a position of leadership. She was appointed editor of Negro Affairs for the Daily Worker in 1948 and that same year she was arrested for violation of the Smith Act. Between 1948 and 1955 Jones was arrested and imprisoned twice and finally deported to England in December 1955 after serving a sentence of a year and a day at the Aldersen Federal Women's Prison.

From 1955 to 1964 Jones worked with London's African-Caribbean community doing political and cultural organizing. She founded and edited The West Indian Gazette and the Afro-Asian Caribbean News, and in 1959 helped organize a series of cultural events that grew to become the Notting Hill Carnival. Jones died on December 24, 1964 after a long illness.

Scope and Content Note

Claudia Jones Memorial Collection 1935-1998 (bulk 1955-1964) consists primarily of printed matter apparently owned by Jones. There is a relatively small volume of material relating to Jones' personal and political activities. Bon-voyage postcards, letters and telegrams sent to her on her departure from the United States following deportation are the only documents that deal with her life in the United States. The collection also contains poems Jones wrote while in prison and during her voyage to England. There are several notebooks chronicling her experiences during trips she took to China and Japan. A folder on Paul Robeson includes a booklet "Paul Robeson goes to Washington," and a transcript of his appearance before the Smith Act Congressional Hearing Committee. Also contained in the Robeson folder are promotional material for his appearances in London from 1956 through 1962, correspondence between the Robesons' and Jones, and a transcript of a speech by Jones delivered at a reception for the Robesons held in London, and Robeson speech notes. A folder labeled "Bailey, Frank /Manchanda, Abhimanyu /Jones, Claudia controversy" contains letters, notes and other information concerning charges that were filed against Jones and Manchanda by Frank Bailey, a member of Communist Party, who was also involved in working with the Afro-Caribbean community in London. The printed matter consists of booklets and monographs on a variety of subjects including race and gender. Authors include James Allen, Herbert Aptheker, Ben Davis, George W. Crockett, Elizabeth Flynn Gurley, James Ford, Harry Haywood, and Claudia Jones.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American communists
African Americans -- Civil rights
Black author
Communist parties -- United States
Political prisoners -- United States
Women -- Political activity
Women political activists -- Great Britain
Women political activists -- United States
Women, Black

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Poems

Geographic Names

United States -- Politics and government -- 1945-1953
United States -- Politics and government -- 1953-1961

Names

Manchanda, Claudia
Davis, Benjamin J. (Benjamin Jefferson), 1903-1964
Garvey, Amy Jacques
Jones, Claudia, 1915-1964
Robeson, Paul, 1898-1976
Communist Party of the United States of America