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**GEORGE MARSHALL
PAPERS**

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GEORGE MARSHALL (1904-2000) PAPERS, 1933-1955.
13.6 lin. ft. (36 boxes)

Biographical Sketch

Born in 1904, George Marshall was a leading advocate for the abolition of the Un-American Activities Committee of the United States House of Representatives, a noted conservationist, and a pioneer in the U.S. civil rights movement. His father, Louis Marshall, an influential lawyer and philanthropist, was instrumental in the founding of the Jewish Agency for Palestine under a League of Nations' mandate to Britain, and served on the board of the American Jewish Committee and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. His brother, Robert Marshall, with whom he shared a passion for preservation of the wilderness, died in 1939, leaving him as the manager and a trustee of his fund for protection of the environment, consumer education and civil liberties. He married Elizabeth Dublin, a fellow civil liberties advocate, in 1930 and fathered their two children, Roger Marshall and Nancy Marshall Schultz.

Marshall was a graduate of Columbia University (B.A., 1926; M.A., 1927) and the Brookings Institute of Economics (Ph D., 1930). He worked as an editor and writer for the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, and for several years as an economist in the New Deal National Recovery Administration. Some of his early associations with civil rights issues documented in the collection include: the National Association for the Defense of Political Prisoners; the Contributors' Information Service, a select group of affluent donors to liberal and radical causes organized by Corliss Lamont; the American League for Peace and Democracy, launched in 1933 as the American League against War and Fascism, which dissolved itself in 1940, citing the "advent of war" and the need for "a different program and type of organization;" and a citizen campaign to abolish the F.B.I., chaired by the anthropologist Franz Boas. Marshall wrote in 1950 of the Secretary of the National Association for the Defense of Political Prisoners, Joseph Gelders, that "his example and determination had a great influence on me ... at a time when I was beginning to become increasingly active as an adult in the progressive movement." A native Alabaman active in the Scottsboro case and in the defense of a communist organizer sentenced to 380 days on an Alabama chain gang for possession of communist literature, Gelders was abducted on the outskirts of Birmingham in September 1936, flogged and left unconscious in a ditch. His attackers included a lieutenant in the Alabama National Guard and a member of the American Legion.

The National Federation for Constitutional Liberties (NFCL) was founded at a national conference on civil liberties held in Washington, D.C. in June 1940. Delegates at the conference represented trade-unions, churches, African-American, civil rights and professional organizations. The purpose of the new organization was to coordinate the activities of those various groups toward the realization of greater democratic freedoms. Marshall was elected to the Federation's Executive Committee and chaired its finance committee. A national office was established in the nation's capital, and Rev. Owen Knox of the Michigan Civil Rights Federation served as NFCL's first chairman. He resigned in October 1941, charging Communist domination of the group and contending that, with the Soviet Union's entry in the war against Nazi Germany, the Federation had abruptly reversed its position against the war.

Marshall who replaced him as chairman believed on the other hand that “the over-shadowing threat of Nazism” had become the greatest danger against the extension of the Bill of Rights.

Under Marshall’s stewardship, the Federation supported vigorous prosecution of the war effort and made the fight against “native seditionists” and their supporters in Congress one of its chief concerns. Similar campaigns were waged for the abolition of the Dies Committee and its successor the Rankin Committee, two early manifestations of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). In August 1942, the Federation published a 47 page pamphlet, “Investigate Martin Dies! The case for a grand jury investigation of Martin Dies”, accusing the Texas congressman and author of the House resolution that established the Special Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities in 1938, of sheltering native fascists and seditionists opposed to the war effort and to the New Deal. Dies in return took to the floor of the House and denounced the Federation as “part of what Lenin called the solar system of organizations, ostensibly having no connection with the Communist Party, by which Communists attempt to create sympathizers and supporters of their program among those who would never affiliate themselves openly with the party.”

In December 1945, the House Committee on Un-American Activities, known as the Rankin Committee, called on the Federation to open its books for an investigation of subversive activities. Rejected as “insulting and wholly unwarranted,” that request was followed by a summons to Marshall to appear before the Committee with a list of NFCL contributors. Marshall first appeared before a HUAC subcommittee led by Congressman Parnell Thomas on April 8, 1946, and three days later before a closed hearing of the full Committee in Washington, D.C. At his appearance before the full Committee, Marshall brought ample evidence of the Federation’s activities and pronouncements, but declined to produce any list of contributors, and was cited for contempt of Congress. Rankin called him “the most contemptuous person” to appear before the Committee and went on to label the Federation “one of the most viciously subversive organizations of the Communist Party.”

The Federation also led numerous anti-lynching, anti-poll tax and anti-discrimination campaigns. Its legal work through hired attorneys and public opinion campaigns encompassed the defense of Communist leaders like Harry Bridges and Earl Browder who were targeted for deportation and imprisonment, and victims of Jim Crow justice like Samuel Buckhannon, Recy Taylor, and Willie McGee whose case was first brought to national attention by Marshall. Its labor advocacy included protection of the Wagner Act against encroachments from various anti-New Deal legislative proposals, and the defense of government employees labeled as subversive by the Kerr Committee. A proposed “Anti-Fascist Civil Rights Declaration for 1944” called for a permanent Fair Employment Practice Committee (FEPC), equality of training and treatment in the Armed Forces, legislation against anti-Semitism and the spread of race hatred, a ban on discrimination based on race, color, creed or national origin in employment and in housing, the abolition of Jim Crow practices in the District of Columbia, and passage of a federal anti-lynching bill. The Federation publicized its campaigns and other activities through numerous pamphlets and through “Action Letters” mailed to thousands of local leaders, unions, churches, civic and professional groups. It organized conferences, public meetings and banquets with outstanding speakers and civil liberties advocates. Its Academic

Council led the defense of educators like Josephine Adams and Max Yergan, blacklisted for their political beliefs.

In April 1946 in Detroit, at a national conference attended by over 300 delegates from church, labor, civil rights and community organizations, the Federation merged with the International Labor Defense to form the Civil Rights Congress; Marshall was elected chairman. The Congress continued the Federation's dual agenda of fighting discrimination, and organized the legal defense of victims of Jim Crow justice and advocates of radical causes. It also inherited the enmity of the Wood-Rankin Committee in Congress which labeled it a "Communist front." Marshall was especially active in the McGee case and in the campaign to save the Trenton Six. William Patterson, CRC National Secretary, called him "one of the outstanding leaders in the fight against Jim Crow." Marshall was also Secretary of the CRC Bail Fund, established in 1946 as a separate body with five trustees responsible for its operation. The Bail Fund posted \$5,000 each for the Communist leaders indicted under the Smith Act, and \$20,000 for the German Communist Gerhart Eisler that was forfeited when Eisler fled the U.S. in May 1949 as a stowaway on board a Polish ship.

The case against Marshall for contempt of Congress, dating to his appearance before HUAC in 1946, was tried in the U.S. District Court in the District of Columbia in April 1948. His lawyers, Abraham Isserman and Osmond Fraenkel, argued that HUAC's request for NFCL lists of contributors violated their client's First and Fourth Amendments rights. The only evidence presented by the prosecution was Congressman Dies's 1942 speech. The Court sentenced him to three months in jail and a \$500 fine. In his appeal to the D.C. Circuit Court, Marshall pleaded that Congress had acted unconstitutionally when it created HUAC, and argued that his conviction and sentence were motivated by his militant fight for civil rights, for prosecution of the Ku Klux Klan and for the abolition of HUAC. The Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the sentence against him, ruling that although there was no evidence in NFCL literature of subversive activities, the organization may have been involved in the "silent and secret diffusion of subversive propaganda." The U.S. Supreme Court refused twice to review his case. He served his sentence at the federal penitentiary in Ashland, Kentucky from June to September 1950. He resigned as CRC chairman on the eve of his imprisonment; he had previously resigned from the Bail Fund in September 1949.

Following his incarceration, Marshall appeared to have severed all contacts with his former leftwing associates and organizations. In 1955, he appeared under subpoena in front of a New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Charitable and Philanthropic Organizations investigating allegations that CRC had diverted monies raised on behalf of the Trenton Six for the legal defense of indicted Communist leaders. Marshall testified under oath that he had never been a member of the Communist Party, but declined knowledge of any wrongdoing in funds allocation. The Civil Rights Congress dissolved itself in 1956 at the height of the McCarthy anti-Communist witch hunts. Marshall remained active in wilderness preservation issues. He died in 2000.

Scope and Content

The George Marshall collection is divided into six series, and documents Marshall's involvement in the 1940s with civil rights issues, his legal defense against a contempt citation from the House Un-American Activities Committee, and his management of the Robert Marshall Foundation's grant-making program. The decade of the 1940s, as documented in this collection, was not a period of high radicalism or revolutionary politics, but of the united front to win the war against fascism. With the advent of the Cold War in 1946, progressives like Marshall would fight a rearguard defensive battle to preserve the gains made during the New Deal and were confronted with new repressive legislation and a growing anti-communist hysteria that would send many of them to jail. The internal evidence in the collection suggests that Marshall may have purged his papers of valuable correspondence with representative personalities in the civil rights and cultural realms for fear they would be incriminated or blacklisted through their association with him.

Series and Subseries	Dates	Boxes
Personal Papers	1933-1955	1
George Marshall Contempt of Congress Case	1945-1950	2-5
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Activities	1940-1946	8-9
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Poll Tax	1942-1946	10
Labor	1939-1946	11
Legal Cases	1940-1946	12-13
Discrimination	1941-1946	13-15
Anti-Semitism	1943-1946	15
House Un-American Activities Committee	1940-1946	16-17
Printed Matter	1940-1946	18-21
Civil Rights Congress		
Administrative	1946-1956	22
Conferences	1947-1949	22
Case Files	1946-1951	23-24
Subject Files	1946-1950	25-26
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Other Organizations		
International Labor Defense Fund	1936-1946	29
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Robert Marshall Foundation	1940-1950	32-35

The **PERSONAL** series, **1933-1955 (0.4 lin. ft.)** consists for the most part of correspondence about Marshall's contempt case and incarceration, and various drafts of articles, statements and speeches written by him. Included are a nine page letter written by Marshall in Bavaria, Germany, in 1933, chronicling the Nazis' rise to power, and a selection of letters and memoranda authored by Marshall between 1939 and 1950. Also included are notes and transcripts of Marshall's testimony in front of the New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Charitable and Philanthropic Organizations in 1955.

The **GEORGE MARSHALL CONTEMPT OF CONGRESS** series, **1945-1950 (1.6 lin. ft.)** is a densely documented archive on the use of subpoena power and contempt citations by the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and on organized and legal opposition to the Committee prior to the rise of Senator Joseph McCarthy as the leading opponent of communism in the United States. Organized in loose chronological order, it includes Marshall's testimony and statements, and compilations of NFCL publications presented at his first and second appearances before the Committee; and legal correspondence, clipping files and campaign materials compiled by Marshall and his defense team toward his April 1948 trial in the District Court in Washington, D.C., his unsuccessful appeal of the lower court verdict, and his subsequent incarceration. Marshall's defense followed a two-pronged approach: to argue, with the help of expert witnesses, the unconstitutionality of the Un-American Activities Committee, and to establish the non-subversive character of the Federation through an accumulation of its publications and documents. The defense also contrasted the Committee's zeal in prosecuting perceived Communist front organizations with its reluctance to document activities of the Ku Klux Klan and other right wing groups.

Original NFCL materials submitted to HUAC in 1946 pertained to the extension of democratic rights, the elimination of discrimination, full employment legislation, voting rights, the rights of labor, support for the war effort, the fight against lynching, the danger of native fascism, and the elimination of the Committee itself. Other documents include a 146-page legal memorandum on the constitutional invalidity of the Wood-Rankin Committee; a 72-page digest of newspaper articles on the Committee's procedures and investigations, and of Congressman Rankin's more pronounced anti-Semitic and racist comments of that period; briefs, opinions, letters of support, speeches, evidence and exhibits, motions to dismiss, legal correspondence, campaign material and other court documents regarding Marshall's case and other HUAC contempt cases, including the Hollywood 10. There was a level of duplication inherent in the creation and the compilation of those files; their original order and titles have been preserved for the most part.

The **NATIONAL FEDERATION FOR CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTIES** series, **1939-1946 (8.2 lin. ft.)** is divided into 13 subseries. The first subseries, **Administrative**, groups some founding documents, a file on NFCL's first chairman, Rev. Owen Knox, correspondence and minutes of the Executive Board, materials relating to the American Civil Liberties Union and its 1940 anti-Communist purge, and some contact lists.

The **Academic Council** subseries begins with an exchange of letters between Marshall and his brother James, president of the Board of Education in New York City, on the prohibition of Communists as teachers in the city's public schools. Their disagreement is echoed in two files

regarding violations of academic freedom in colleges and universities (1940-1941) and the Rapp-Coudert Committee. Frederick Coudert chaired a committee in the New York State Legislature that hunted down suspected communists among teachers and university professors, including the well-known educator and rights activist Max Yergan. Coudert was, in turn, criticized for his anti-Semitic sympathies and his failure to target any Nazi sympathizers in his investigations. The Academic Council, which replaced the earlier American Committee for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom, was concerned with the spread of misleading textbooks about racial and religious minorities, with anti-Semitic bias in the Department of Romance Language at the City College of New York, and with discrimination in the academic field in general. Lyman Bradley was its Secretary.

Action Letters, mailed to some 6,000 grassroots, professional and political leaders and organizations across the country, were used for prompt and effective response around various issues and cases, including the rights of political minorities, passage of a federal anti-lynching bill, the fight for a permanent FEPC, Morris Schappes's perjury case from the Rapp-Coudert investigations in New York State, the campaign against the Dies Committee, and the fight against Sam Buckhannon's extradition to a Georgia chain gang. **Conferences and Testimonial Dinners** brought together leading figures in the field of civil and constitutional liberties with select audiences. Arranged by year from 1940 to 1945, conference files include NFCL's founding convention, a 1942 "Conference for Victory over Fascism in Our Schools," and a Conference on Racial Unity (1943). The anthropologist Franz Boas was honored as a "Friend of Liberty" at a testimonial dinner in his honor attended by scientists, clergymen, educators and artists. Paul Robeson, honored at a 1944 Dinner for Racial and National Unity attended by 1,000 guests, called Marshall "a very quiet person ... but a real anti-fascist fighter." This latter file includes a complete transcript of the dinner speeches, correspondence, lists of contributors and invited guests, newspaper clippings and publicity materials.

The **Activities** subseries groups several brief and early NFCL endeavors; later and long-term activities have their own subseries. "The Menace of the F.B.I." (1940) was an emergency group chaired by Franz Boas, concerned with the "unlawful actions and operations of the Federal Bureau of Investigations" and its "apparently ominous development into a secret political police force." The two files in question include letters by Boas and extensive memoranda on illegal wiretapping, unreasonable searches and seizures, excessive use of grand jury powers, arrests without warrant, and unlawful investigations of "peaceful and non-criminal activities based upon economic and political opinions" disliked by F.B.I. Director J. Edgar Hoover. "Races of Mankind" was a monograph authored by Ruth Benedict and Gene Weltfish that was suppressed by the U.S.O. organization in 1944. Said file includes correspondence with Weltfish and with New York University professor Henry Pratt Fairchild who questioned the "monogenetic" assumptions in the pamphlet.

Two Freedom of Speech files deal with the rights of trade-unions to buy radio time in the face of industry restrictions against "controversial subjects" like union organizing and the rights of labor; with restrictions against Japanese-Americans and other national minorities during the war years; and with the rights of Trotskyites indicted in Minneapolis under the Smith Act and labeled by the Federation in NY as "fifth column agents." Included are some materials of the American Civil Liberties Union which supported the Minneapolis Trotskyites. War related

activities include a brief but intensive campaign against compulsory military training in 1940; a 1943-1944 campaign in favor of federal legislation for a voting program for absentee soldiers, opposed by a coalition of conservative Republicans and Southern Democrats; and a petition drive in support of the War Department's special order against denying commissions and other appointments to Communists and Communist sympathizers. Chaired by Dashiell Hammett, NFCL's Committee on Election Rights mobilized on behalf of minority parties kept off the ballot in 30 states in 1940 and 1941. In several states people were indicted for signing nominating petitions, and Communist Party workers and candidates were sentenced to heavy jail terms. Election rights materials include statements by Hammett, Theodore Dreiser and Lloyd K. Garrison, drafts of a NFCL pamphlet, "Will You Vote as You Please in 1942?" and several Action Letters and campaign literature. There are also affidavits by Mississippi African-Americans denied the right to vote in 1946 and clipping files on the intimidation of black voters in several Southern states.

The **Fair Employment Practice Committee** subseries consists of correspondence, campaign and research material developed as part of a national effort to turn the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice empanelled by Executive Order in 1941 and 1943 into a permanent FEPC. Included are letters from the League of Women Shoppers urging an end to discrimination in the railroad industry and the Brooklyn Navy Yard; two letters from James Wolfe, Chief Justice in Utah and former correspondent to the President's Committee, warning of serious race riots in the aftermath of the war if greater equality in employment was not secured in time. There are also letters from congressmen and senators in response to letters and telegrams from Marshall urging them to vote for a permanent FEPC, including Wisconsin Representative Charles LaFollette who took Marshall and the National Negro Congress to task for using tactics more likely "to see the 'right' prevail then to accomplish progress." A solicitation telegram from Marshall brought dozens of endorsements from legal scholars, trade unions, religious leaders and other personalities, including Judge Jane Bolin, New York City Councilman Benjamin Davis, and Boston Symphony Orchestra conductor Serge Koussevitzky.

The **Poll Tax** subseries groups Action Letters, correspondence, surveys, proposed legislation and other congressional documents, newspaper clippings, and materials of the New York State Committee to Abolish the Poll Tax and the National Committee to Abolish the Poll Tax.

Advocating for the rights of organized labor was one of the mainstays of NFCL activities, including retaining the gains made by minorities during the war years, defending government workers from anti-communist witch-hunts, and preserving the Wagner Act from the encroachments of anti-labor legislation like the Smith-Connally bill, the John Kerr Amendment and the Taft-Hartley law which eventually passed in 1947. Included in the **Labor** subseries is one file on the Dies and Kerr Committees' investigations of federal government employees Robert Morss Lovett, Goodwin Watson and William Dodd, who were purged by a Congressional rider to an appropriations bill signed by President Roosevelt in 1943; clipping files on anti-labor initiatives; pro-labor documentation from the C.I.O. Political Action Committee and about the Ives-Quinn bill in the New York State Senate; and NFCL publications in support of labor.

Legal Cases where the Federation provided legal representation, submitted briefs or engaged in support work through public outreach campaigns, ranged from deportations and issues of academic freedom, to unequal justice for Mexican-Americans and Southern blacks. The files consist of correspondence, briefs, publications of various defense committees and newspaper clippings. Among the academic freedom issues represented in these files are the cases of Josephine Truslow Adams, dismissed from the faculty at Swarthmore College; Homer Rainey removed as president of the University of Texas; Morris Schappes jailed for perjury; and Max Yergan dropped from the teaching staff at the College of the City of New York. Cases involving red-baiting and freedom of speech include Harry Bridges who faced deportation, and Tom Mooney and Earl Browder, jailed because of their association with the Communist Party. (Tom Mooney's November 1933 desperate appeal to Marshall for funds is one of the earliest documents in the collection.)

The King, Ramsey and Conner case in California, and the R.J. Thomas case in Texas were concerned with the rights of labor to organize. The Sleepy Lagoon case involved the mass arrest of 300 Mexican-American youth and the conviction of 17 among them in the alleged killing of one man in Los Angeles during the so-called "Zoot-Suit crime wave" of 1942. Cases of Jim Crow justice included Samuel Buckhannon, sentenced to a Georgia chain gang for the theft of cigarettes; William Mason Wellman, strapped to the electric chair and pardoned in extremis when someone else confessed to the rape of a 67 year-old white woman that took place at a time when Wellman was on a job 350 miles away; James Williams, Fred Lane and James Davis, three Florida youth sentenced to death and executed in an alleged case of rape. Meanwhile the six Alabama whites who gang-raped Recy Taylor, a 24 year-old African-American woman, were not even indicted. Additional Jim Crow cases are in a miscellaneous folder.

The **Discrimination** subseries documents various forms of discrimination against blacks, aliens and Jews in the workplace, in education, in politics and in housing. In support of the New Deal and the war effort, the Federation sought to expose and defeat "every person, organization or publication whose activities tend to create disunity." Those included the Ku-Klux-Klan, the "Poll Tax" Democrats in Congress, and those "guilty of lynching, mob violence and peonage," whose "seditious" and "fifth-column actions" undermined national unity and morale. The file Racial Discrimination in the Armed Forces catalogs abuses, both administrative and social: lynching, enforced segregation, instances of black soldiers wounded, beaten or killed, especially in the South. The Housing and Schools file deals in part with white riots against the Sojourner Truth Defense Homes in Detroit initially constructed for black defense workers but eventually converted to all-white occupancy, and with the Hillburn school in Rockland County (NY) where some white parents protested the enforced segregation of their children to a private school after the admission of black children to the county's public school.

The Federation documented a "campaign of shocking lynching and mob violence in war production centers" in eight states across the country over a 90 day period in 1943, as "part of a conspiracy aimed at stopping war production and weakening the United Nations' war effort." Substantive files were compiled on the race riots in Detroit, Mobile (Alabama) and New York City, where most of the violence occurred, and a petition drive was launched calling on President Roosevelt and his Attorney-General "to arrest and prosecute the leaders of the Ku

Klux Klan, the America First Party, the National Workers League ... and to disband all pro-fascist groups in the United States.” These files consist of correspondence, Action Letters, press releases and other campaign material, a pamphlet “Smash Detroit’s Fifth Column!” and newspaper clippings. Similar files were compiled on lynching and police brutality. Additional materials deal with U.S. policy toward Japanese-Americans, the blacklisting of anti-Fascists, and with legislative efforts to ban racial discrimination.

The **Anti-Semitism** subseries groups clipping files on anti-Semitic outbreaks in Boston and New York in 1942 and 1943, and correspondence, speeches and publicity material from various campaigns to combat anti-Semitism, including efforts to have patrolman James L. Drew, accused Nazi sympathizer, dismissed from the New York Police Department. In January 1944, the Federation convened a citywide conference of community and union leaders, and representatives of racial and religious groups, to work out a program to stop anti-Semitic violence, vandalism and defamation. Marshall saw the increase in anti-Semitic outbreaks, after similar attacks against Mexican-Americans and blacks, as part of a nationwide pattern of violence against racial minorities to sow disunity and disrupt the war effort. Also included are a 170-page report by police investigation commissioner William Herlands to Mayor LaGuardia on “Anti-American and Anti-Semitic Vandalism” (1944), and a correspondence file between Marshall and members of the Mayor’s Committee on Unity (1945).

The fight to abolish the **House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)** was a major part of NFCL’s activities, and replaced earlier efforts by the American Committee for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom to abolish the Dies Committee. Marshall firmly believed that HUAC and the men who led it in its early days – Dies, Rankin, Karl Mundt and John Wood – were anti-democratic and should be investigated for giving aid and comfort to the “Nazi-Fascist cause.” The HUAC subseries is divided into Dies Committee and Rankin Committee files, correspondence and printed matter, and includes petitions, Congressional resolutions, correspondence, pamphlets, detailed memoranda on Congressman Dies’ confluence with pro-Nazi groups, and materials of other organizations, including the National Lawyers Guild, the International Labor Defense and the National Negro Congress. The Rankin Committee files consist of correspondence, NFCL Action Letters and broadsides, campaign materials opposing the establishment of the Committee, various statements challenging the legality of its contempt citations and its investigations in general, as well as a file of NFCL publications presented as exhibits during Marshall’s appearance under subpoena before the Committee. Marshall’s correspondents in this subseries include members of Congress, government officials and broadcasters; Edward Barsky of the Spanish Refugee Appeal of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee; and Ernie Adamson, HUAC Chief Counsel. A file of mounted clippings dating from January 1945 to January 1947 completes the HUAC subseries.

The **Printed Matter** subseries comprises a complete run of NFCL publications arranged chronologically, a subject file on civil rights and legislative issues, and a box of newspaper and magazine articles on WWII seditionists. Included with the NFCL publications are correspondence, outlines and drafts of various leaflets and pamphlets, including a 41-page manuscript for the repeal of the Smith-Connally Act, as well as correspondence with American Unitarian Youth minister Stephen Fritchman who drafted the Federation’s FEPC pamphlet. Additional Fritchman materials are in the Civil Rights Rights case files. The Seditionists files

are mostly newspaper clippings on known individuals and organizations like Charles Coughlin, Gerald L.K. Smith and the Ford Motor Co., their supporters in the press and in Congress, including actions against them taken or recommended by the Federation and allied organizations.

The **CIVIL RIGHTS CONGRESS** series, **1946-1951 (2.8 lin. ft.)** comprises the following subseries: **Administrative, Conferences, Case Files, Subject Files** and **Printed Matter**. These are Marshall's files as Civil Rights Congress Chairman, active participant and key financial contributor, and also as Secretary of the CRC Bail Fund.

The **Administrative** subseries includes some correspondence and minutes of the Executive Board, a file of correspondence and other documents of the New York branch of the Civil Rights Congress chaired by Dashiell Hammett, CRC's grant requests to the Robert Marshall Foundation (1946-1949), financial reports, and correspondence and other documents of the CRC Bail Fund. The **Conference** files in this series consist of correspondence, lists of sponsors, programs, publicity material, newspaper clippings and related documents. The Mass Delegate Conference in Defense of Civil Rights held in NY in April 1948 was part of an overall campaign to defeat the Mundt Bill (H.R. 5852), known as the Subversive Activities Control Act, which would outlaw any group or third-party movement deemed "Communist-inspired" or a Communist-front organization, and would require them to register their members with the Attorney General. The 1949 National Civil Rights Legislative Conference and Freedom Crusade called for thousands of delegates and participants to converge on Washington, D.C. to urge Congress to pass comprehensive legislation to abolish thought control, grant full equal rights to ethnic minorities and women, dissolve HUAC and dismiss the Smith Act indictments against leaders of the Communist Party.

The **Case Files** consist for the most part of correspondence, briefs, publications of various defense committees and newspaper clippings. The Columbia, Tennessee Riot of 1946 started with a dispute over a radio in a repair shop and the failed lynching of a young African-American veteran, followed by a nightly raid on the black side of town by a mob of white vigilantes and state and local police. One black resident fired back at the assailants who went on a rampage of terror and mass vandalism. Dozens of black residents were rounded up at the local jail and two of them shot to death. The NAACP handled the legal defense in the case but NFCL and later CRC conducted a vigorous campaign in favor of a Federal grand jury investigation of the riot and its aftermath. Marshall co-chaired a Conference to Stop Lynch Terror in Columbia, Tennessee, and NFCL/CRC joined the NAACP in launching a National Committee for Justice in Columbia.

German Communist Gerhart Eisler was a WWII refugee who was widely denounced as Moscow's No.1 man in the U.S. He was convicted of entering the country with a false passport and of contempt of Congress. While on bail awaiting appeal, he fled as a stowaway on a Polish ship. The CRC Bail Fund had posted bail for Eisler and intervened after his flight to reverse a Justice Department perjury charge that would make him extraditable from England where he was briefly detained after being forced to exit the ship in Southampton. The file includes various Eisler speeches and statements, several briefs and letters of support, newspaper clippings and campaign material on his behalf. A letter of apology from Eisler to Marshall is

with the personal correspondence in box 1. Other communist-related cases include the “Los Angeles 10” ordered jailed indefinitely and without bail for failure to answer questions about the Communist Party; Carl Marzani, indicted and found guilty of concealing his past membership in the Party; William Patterson, CRC’s national executive secretary, charged with contempt of Congress for refusing to turn over names of CRC contributors to HUAC; and the 12 Communist Party leaders indicted under the Smith Act.

Arrested on the charge of having raped a white woman in Laurel, Mississippi in 1945, Willie McGee was tried and convicted three times in Mississippi courts, and after the Supreme Court refused to review his case was put to death in the electric chair in May 1951. Marshall was among the first to bring his case to national attention, and CRC spearheaded an international campaign in his defense. In a letter to New York Post columnist Max Lerner the day of McGee’s execution, and after his own retreat from political life, Marshall wrote that he was sickened and deeply angry: “There is nothing more horrible than taking the life of an innocent man – of a State killing a man because he is a Negro.” The McGee file consists of correspondence, campaign material and clippings. Included is a letter from Mississippi’s Attorney General to the governor of the state laying out the case against McGee, a letter from NY attorney Bella Abzug commenting on the Mississippi Attorney General’s letter, and the copy of a letter from McGee’s wife, Rosalee, to William Patterson (1949).

The case of the “Martinsville 7” in Virginia, also involving allegations of interracial rape, resulted in the execution of eight African-American men in spite of mass protests organized by CRC and other organizations. Another case that appealed to Marshall was the “Trenton Six” in New Jersey – six black youth on death row who were exonerated after a vigorous CRC defense and public opinion campaign. Included in the latter file are legal briefs, correspondence, clippings and campaign material. A miscellaneous file for other Jim Crow and racial discrimination cases relates to, among others: Fletcher Mills, a 23 year old former sharecropper fighting extradition to Alabama in 1949; Lemas Woods whose 1946 death sentence was reversed after a determined public opinion campaign; and disabled veteran Major Benton sentenced to death on an alleged rape charge in North Carolina in 1946.

The **Subject Files** subseries consists for the most part of printed matter on civil rights, lynching, academic and intellectual freedom, President Truman’s 1947 Loyalty Order, the 1949 Peekskill riots, and on various legislations pertaining to CRC’s work – the Mundt-Nixon and the Mundt-Ferguson Bills, the Smith and McCarran Acts, and the Taft-Hartley Law. Also included are materials from the National Committee to Oust Bilbo. The Lynching folder includes legislative proposals and materials of the American Crusade to End Lynching chaired by Paul Robeson. The Peekskill file incorporates some unrelated Robeson materials. The **Printed Matter** subseries includes six files of CRC publications arranged chronologically, as well as petitions, resolutions and organizational leaflets, and a compilation of briefs from various cases involving CRC.

The **OTHER ORGANIZATIONS** series, **1936-1946 (1.2 lin. ft.)** includes one box of material from the International Labor Defense Fund which merged with NFCL in 1947 to create the Civil Rights Congress. Included in the ILD files is a 199-page “Memorandum on Violations of the Rights of Free Speech and Assembly and Undue Interference with the Right of Labor to

Bargain Collectively” submitted to the La Follette Committee of the U.S. Senate (1936), with sections on lynching, lawless police and vigilante activity against striking workers, farmers’ unions and the unemployed. The Files of the American League for Peace and Democracy consists of minutes, reports, publications, some correspondence with Harry F. Ward, chairman of the League, and a 48-page transcript of a January 1939 meeting of the National Labor Committee which was affiliated with the League. The file of the American Committee for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom, chaired by Franz Boas, reflected some of its activities against censorship, racial prejudice and communist witch-hunts (Rapp-Coudert investigation in NY State’s public schools).

The Citizens Emergency Conference for Interracial Unity initiated by Marian Anderson and Rabbi Stephen Wise in 1943, called for actions that would address the causes of the Harlem Riots of that year; its file includes minutes, conference reports, resolutions, some correspondence and newspaper articles. The file for the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners includes letters from Joe Gelders, data on violations of the rights of Alabama cotton pickers and Kentucky coal miners, documents related to Gelders’ kidnapping and flogging in Birmingham, and a memorial tribute for Gelders written by Marshall. Other organizations represented in this series are the Contributors’ Information Service founded by Corliss Lamont, the Council on African Affairs, the National Negro Congress, the National Council on American-Soviet Friendship and the Southern Negro Youth Congress.

ROBERT MARSHALL FOUNDATION series, **1940-1950 (1.6 lin. ft.)** In keeping with its mission statement (“The education of the people of the United States of America to the necessity and desirability of the development and organization of unions of persons engaged in work or of unemployed persons and the promotion and advancement of an economic system in the United States based upon the theory of production for use and not for profit”), the Robert Marshall Foundation awarded grants to trade-unions and labor advocacy groups, progressive research groups and schools, alternative newspapers and civil rights organizations. The files consist for the most part of correspondence between George Marshall, director of the fund, and the funded groups, grant proposals and tracking sheets, activity reports, and general information about the organizations involved.

Funded newspapers and publication projects include *The Allied Labor News*, Charlotta Bass’s *California Eagle*, the weekly *Chicago Star* edited by William Sennett, *Federated Press* and Adam Clayton Powell’s *People Voice*. The Foundation funded various projects of the National Farmers Union and Farm Research Inc., including educational and organizational work in the South and farm-labor cooperation. The file for the Southern Negro Youth Congress includes correspondence with Executive Secretary Louis Burnham and several grant proposals. The Southern School for Workers file holds correspondence with directors Louise Leonard McLaren and Brownie Lee Jones, reports, grant proposals and a 98-page transcription of a public hearing on the minimum wage organized by the School. Other correspondents include Marion Bachrach of the Council for Pan-American Democracy; Willard Uphaus of the National Religion and Labor Foundation; Terry Pettus, editor of the Seattle *New World* and the *Washington New Dealer*, Doxey Wilkerson of the *People’s Voice*; and James Dombrowski of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare.

Complementary Collections

The records of the International Labor Defense Fund and of the Civil Rights Congress are housed at the Schomburg Center. There is also a small collection of Trenton Six materials located at this site. George Marshall's papers related to his work with the Wilderness Society and the Sierra Club are at the University of California at Berkeley. The papers of Robert Marshall and his Civil Liberties Trust Fund are housed at the American Jewish Archives and at Columbia University Libraries, with additional materials in Roger Baldwin's papers at Princeton University. The Robert Marshall Wilderness Fund records are at the Denver Public Library. For additional material on the Robert Marshall Foundation, consult the Gardner Jackson Papers at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, NY.

Provenance:

Gift of George Marshall and Nancy Marshall Schultz, 1994, 2000.
SCM 94-1; SCM 06-18

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