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Guide to the

Richard Parrish papers (Additions 1)

1959-1976 [bulk 1966-1973]

Sc Micro R-6688

Processed by Andre Elizee, 1983.

Summary

Creator: Parrish, Richard F. (Richard Franklin), 1914-1983

Title: Richard Parrish papers (Additions 1)

Date: 1959-1976 [bulk 1966-1973]

Size: 2.8 linear feet; 7 microfilm reels

Source: Gift of Richard Parrish, April 1978. SCM79-6

Abstract: Teacher, labor leader. Richard F. Parrish was one of the founding members of the National Afro-American Labor Council, formerly the Negro American Labor Council. The Richard Parrish Papers (Additions 1) consist primarily of the records of the National Afro-American Labor Council (NALC), of which Parrish served as treasurer (1960-1974) and president until it ceased its operation in 1976 (1974-1976).

Alternative Form Available: Microfilmed; Scholarly Resources, Inc.; call number: Sc Micro R-6688

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Language of the Material: English

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Separated Materials:

Date transferred: May 1983

Schomburg Photographs and Print Division:

One folder of photographs

Creator History

The National Afro-American Labor Council

By the late 1950's, the Civil Rights movement in the United States was in full bloom. The Supreme Court decision in the case of Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954 and the success of the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1956 had led to the emergence of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as a new charismatic leader and to a new awareness of the effectiveness of protest politics in the black community. A militant grass-roots campaign led by established black organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Congress of Racial Equality and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) spread throughout the country in order to eradicate discrimination and segregation in American society.

Industry and "Jim Crow" unions, however, continued to deny fair employment opportunities to black workers, in spite of an alliance between black leaders and the national labor unions in the Civil Rights movement. In 1959 A. Philip Randolph, vice-president of the AFL-CIO and president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, felt that labor was not moving fast and effectively enough to address the grievances of black workers. Pointing to what he called a "moral revolution" among black workers--a spontaneous surge forward to gain full social and economic status in labor and industry--Randolph called for a conference of seventy-five black trade-unions leaders in July 1959 to "consider the problems confronting the 1,500,000 negroes who are members of organized labor." The founding convention of the Negro American Labor Council (the name of the organization was changed in 1968) was held May 27-29, 1960 in Detroit.

According to the NALC constitution, the purpose of the organization was to seek equality of opportunity in industry and to remove discrimination in trade-unions, as well as to serve as a clearing house for black grievances and interests within the AFL-CIO. The NALC initiated and participated with the SCLC, the NAACP and the Student Non-Violent Coordination Committee in the 1963 March on Washington. It can also be credited with the adoption of better racial trade-union practices within the AFL-CIO. In February 1961, the organization held a Workshop and Institute on Racial Bias in Trade-Unions, Industry and Government in Washington D.C., which was co-sponsored and attended by prominent personalities such as Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the NAACP and Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. In addition, the NALC organized various economic conferences throughout its history.

During its existence the NALC claimed a membership of over 10,000 nationally, and a network of over thirty chapters across the country. A. Philip Randolph, a founding member of the NALC, served as its president from 1960 until 1966. He was succeeded by Cleveland Robinson, president of the Distributive Workers of America, and in 1974 by Richard Parrish, founding member and treasurer from its inception. Other leading members of the NALC included L. Joseph Overton, 1960-1970, Joseph R. Brown, treasurer since 1974, Lola Belle Holmes, Oliver Montgomery, Willoughby Abner and Joseph A. Beavers. The NALC ceased its operations in 1976.

Scope and Content Note

The Richard Parrish Papers (Additions) and Richard Parrish Papers are two separate but complementary collections. While the Richard Parrish Papers are generally centered around the activities of Parrish and include his personal papers as well as files from the different organizations he worked with, the Additions papers primarily consist of the records of the NALC, of which Parrish was successively, treasurer, 1960-1974, and president, 1974-1976. The bulk of the Richard Parrish Papers

were created between 1966 and 1973. The Additions papers contain the records of the office of the treasurer between 1960 and 1975, particularly under the presidency of A. Philip Randolph, 1960-1966.

The Richard Parrish Papers (Additions) offer a general and indepth understanding of the development and operation of an organization whose leaders and membership played a significant role in the struggle for equal rights in this country. They are divided into two series: Records of the **NATIONAL ORGANIZATION** and the **CHAPTER FILES**.

Arrangement: Papers organized into two series: I. National Organization; and II. Chapter Files

Key Terms

Subjects

African American labor leaders
African Americans -- Civil rights
Labor unions, Black -- organizing -- United States
Labor unions, Black -- United States
Working class -- United States

Names

Overton, L. Joseph
Parrish, Richard F. (Richard Franklin), 1914-1983
Randolph, A. Philip (Asa Philip), 1889-1979
National Afro-American Labor Council
National Afro-American Labor Council. National Executive Board

Container List

National Afro-American Labor Council - National Organization

The records of the **NATIONAL ORGANIZATION** include the original copy and a 1970 revised edition of the constitution of the NALC, correspondence, minutes, reports, resolutions, financial records, press releases, programs, photographs and newspaper clippings dating from 1959 to 1976. They are divided into three subseries: the *Administrative Files* which include the records of the National Executive Board, those of Richard Parrish and L. Joseph Overton, respectively treasurer and secretary of the NALC, and the records of the Workshop and Institute on Racial Bias in Trade-Unions, Industry and Government; a General File; and records of the NALC Conventions.

The correspondence in the *General File* includes correspondence between John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Martin Luther King, Jr. and the West Indian writer, Paule Marshall and the officers of the NALC. Other letters from Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Nelson Rockefeller, Roy Wilkins and various trade-unions leaders can be found in the Correspondence folder of the workshop and Institute on Racial Bias in Trade-Unions, Industry and Government. The minutes of various meetings of the National Executive Board offer valuable information on the internal workings and structure of the NALC. In addition, different resolutions adopted by the 1960, 1961 and consecutive conventions, as well as various addresses by A. Philip Randolph--including his statement to the Steering Committee of the Proposed NALC in November 1959 (kept with other printed material of the founding convention)--document the general orientation and political choices of the NALC.

Administrative Records

National Executive Board

- b. 1 f. 1 Constitution 1960-1970
- b. 1 f. 2 Agenda And Minutes 1960-1970
- b. 1 f. 3 Correspondence 1960-1970
- b. 1 f. 4 Correspondence 1964-1972
- b. 1 f. 5 Reports 1960-1967
- b. 1 f. 6 Membership Records 1960-1970
- b. 1 f. 7 Memoranda 1962-1970
- b. 1 f. 8 Election Ballots 1965

Treasurer's File (Richard Parrish)

- b. 1 f. 9 Correspondence 1960-1976
- b. 1 f. 10 Financial Records 1960-1970
- b. 1 f. 11 Writings 1965-1971
- b. 1 f. 12 Subject File

Memorandum On Civil Rights In AFL-CIO June 1961

- b. 1 f. 13 Reply: Report To Memorandum On Civil Rights In AFL-CIO June 1961
- b. 1 f. 14 American Federation Of Teachers 1960-1973
- b. 1 f. 15 Labor Grievances 1960-1976
- b. 2 f. 1 Miscellaneous - Union Material 1960-1976
- Secretary's Files (L. Joseph Overton)
- b. 2 f. 2 Correspondence 1962-1969
- b. 2 f. 3 Workshop And Institute On Racial Bias In Trade - Unions, Industry And Government
- b. 2 f. 4 Correspondence 1960-1961
- b. 2 f. 5 Planning 1961

National Afro-American Labor Council - National Organization (cont.)
Administrative Records (cont.)

General File

- b. 2 f. 6 Correspondence 1960
- b. 2 f. 7 1961
- b. 2 f. 8 1962-1967
- b. 2 f. 9 Form Letters 1960-1961
- b. 2 f. 10 Membership Records 1960-1967
- b. 3 f. 1 Speeches And Statements 1959-1966
- b. 3 f. 2 March On Washington March 1963-April 1964
- b. 3 f. 3 Press Releases 1960-1976
- b. 3 f. 4 Printed Material
- b. 3 f. 5 Newspaper Clippings-Militant Oct. 1959-Feb. 1960
- b. 3 f. 6 General Clipping File Aug. 1959-Dec. 1960

Conventions

1960 Convention

- b. 3 f. 7 Correspondence Dec. 1959-June 1960
- b. 3 f. 8 Program - Planning 1959-1960
- b. 3 f. 9 Printed Material 1959-1960

1961 Convention

- b. 3 f. 10 Correspondence July 1961-March 1962
- b. 3 f. 11 Program-Planning Oct.-Nov. 1961
- b. 3 f. 12 Printed Material Oct.-Nov. 1961

1962 Convention

- b. 3 f. 13 Correspondence Sep.-Nov. 1962
- b. 3 f. 14 Program-Planning Nov. 1962
- b. 3 f. 15 1964 Convention Jan. 1964-April 1965

1965 Convention

- b. 4 f. 1 Correspondence Dec. 1964-Feb. 1966
- b. 4 f. 2 Program-Planning May 1965
- b. 4 f. 3 Printed Material May 1965

1966 Convention

- b. 4 f. 4 Correspondence Sep. 1965-May 1967
- b. 4 f. 5 Program-Planning May 1966
- b. 4 f. 6 1968 Convention May 1968-Jan. 1966
- b. 4 f. 7 1970, 1972 Conventions 1970-1972

National Afro-American Labor Council - Chapter Files

The NALC **CHAPTER FILES** consist primarily of correspondence and membership records. In a few cases the files contain information regarding the activities of the chapters.

The folder on the Buffalo Chapter illustrates the general anticommunist attitudes prevailing in the NALC during the 1960's. Stating that he would rather not have a chapter of the NALC than one under communist control, Randolph ordered the immediate dissolution of the Buffalo chapter when its president, John H. Coston, resigned, due to "communist infiltration and domination." The "Chicago Dispute" is another example of strong anti-communist feelings in the NALC. Lola Belle Holmes, national vice-president of the NALC in charge of the Chicago district, was an FBI informer who infiltrated the Communist Party-USA and the NALC. During a 1963 public trial of an alleged member of the Communist Party, she testified that local leadership of the NALC was controlled by Communists. Members of the Chicago chapter, demanded her removal from the NALC. The New York chapter documents the struggle of black artists to gain equal opportunities in the New York show business industry, and the relationship between the Afro-American Music Society and the Greater New York Chapter of the NALC. The Westchester chapter folder includes transcripts of a lawsuit initiated by Local 664 of the United Auto Workers against the NALC.

Chapter files are arranged alphabetically. Within the folders, the material is arranged chronologically by type.

- b. 4 f. 8 Atlanta 1960
- b. 4 f. 9 Baltimore 1961-1970
- b. 4 f. 10 Boston 1966
- b. 4 f. 11 Bridgeport, Ct 1961-1962
- Chicago
- b. 4 f. 12 Correspondence 1960-1961
- b. 4 f. 13 Correspondence 1962-1969
- b. 4 f. 14 "Chicago Dispute" 1962-1964
- b. 5 f. 1 Membership Records 1960-1968
- b. 5 f. 2 Cincinnati 1962-1964
- Cleveland
- b. 5 f. 3 Correspondence 1960-1965
- b. 5 f. 4 Membership Records 1960-1965
- b. 5 f. 5 Detroit 1961-1968
- b. 5 f. 6 Farrel, Pa 1968
- b. 5 f. 7 Gary, In 1960-1968
- b. 5 f. 8 Indianapolis, In 1960-1963
- b. 5 f. 9 Jacksonville, Fl 1960-1964
- b. 5 f. 10 Jersey City, NJ 1960-1962
- b. 5 f. 11 Little Rock, Ark 1965-1967
- Los Angeles
- b. 5 f. 12 Correspondence 1960-1965
- b. 5 f. 13 Membership Records 1960-1965
- b. 5 f. 14 Mahwah, NJ 1960
- b. 5 f. 15 Milwaukee, Wis 1961-1966
- b. 5 f. 16 Newark, NJ 1961-1964
- b. 5 f. 17 New Haven, Ct 1961-1962

National Afro-American Labor Council - Chapter Files (cont.)

New York, Ny

- b. 5 f. 18 Correspondence 1960-1973
- b. 5 f. 19 Form Letters 1961-1969
- b. 6 f. 1 Reports, Minutes, Agenda, Financial Records 1960-1969
- b. 6 f. 2 Membership Records 1962-1965
- b. 6 f. 3 Membership Records 1966-1975
- b. 6 f. 4 Printed Matter 1962-1967
- b. 6 f. 5 Oakland, Ca 1960-1962
- b. 6 f. 6 Omaha, Ne 1961-1965
- b. 6 f. 7 Philadelphia, Pa 1962-1972
- b. 6 f. 8 Pittsburgh, Pa 1960-1972
- b. 6 f. 9 Providence, RI 1962-1963
- b. 6 f. 10 Racine, Wis 1965
- b. 6 f. 11 San Francisco, Ca 1960-1963
- b. 6 f. 12 Seattle, Wa 1961-1962
- b. 6 f. 13 St. Louis, Mo 1960-1964
- b. 6 f. 14 Tampa, Fl 1960-1969
- b. 7 f. 1 Tucson, Az 1963-1964
- b. 7 f. 2 Tri-Cities And Muscle Shoals, Al 1962
- b. 7 f. 3 Washington, DC 1960-1962
- b. 7 f. 4 Waterbury, Ct 1961
- b. 7 f. 5 Westchester, NY 1962-1972
- b. 7 f. 6 West Haven, Ct 1962-1965
- b. 7 f. 7 Youngstown, Oh 1960-1975