ROBERT S. BROWNE

PAPERS

The New York Public Library

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
515 Malcolm X Boulevard
New York, New York 10037

PREFACE

This inventory was prepared as part of an archival preservation project to arrange, describe and catalog resources essential for the study of the post-Civil Rights period of African-American history. The necessary staff and supplies for the "Archival Resources for the Study of the Post-Civil Rights Movement" project were made available through a combination of funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the City and State of New York.

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BROWNE, ROBERT S. (1924-) PAPERS, 1957-1995. 25 boxes (9.6 linear ft.)

Biography

Robert Span Browne, economist, was born in Chicago and attended public schools in that city. He was awarded the Bachelor of Arts degree with honors in economics from the University of Illinois in 1944, followed by a Masters in business administration from the University of Chicago (1947). Browne continued his graduate studies at the University of Chicago and the London School of Economics, 1951 and 1952, respectively. By 1981 he had completed the course and examination requirements for the Ph.D in economics at the City University of New York.

Browne began his career teaching at New Orleans' Dillard University in 1947 and served as the Industrial Field Secretary for the Chicago Urban League, 1950-1952. Because of a desire to see the world, he used his savings to travel to twenty-four countries in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, his journey lasting approximately one year between 1952 and 1953. This period of foreign travel whetted his appetite for additional trips abroad, and he therefore began to look for ways of parlaying his interests and talents into a position that would allow him to travel. Through contacts at the United Nations he obtained a position with the International Cooperation Administration presently known as the Agency for International Development (AID). He served as an International Trade Advisor to the government of Cambodia and to the U.S. economic aid mission for that country from 1955 to 1958. Among his duties, Browne assisted the Cambodians in formulating a suitable program for justifying their aid allotment. In 1958 AID transferred him to Vietnam, where from 1958 to 1961, holding the title of Assistant Program Officer, he performed similar tasks to those in Cambodia, including the preparation of the annual aid program request submitted to the U.S. Congress. In 1956 he married a Vietnamese resident in Cambodia, Huoi Nguyen.

As a foreign aid officer, Browne observed firsthand the overpowering manner in which the United States was shaping its policy in Vietnam and Cambodia. After his return to the States in 1961 before the American public became aware that a major war was developing in Vietnam, Browne protested American involvement

by meeting informally with various groups attempting to alert them to the fact that the U.S. was pursuing a dangerous course in Indochina. Using letters to newspaper editors as a vehicle of protest he wrote to The New York Times and had articles published in other newspapers. In 1962 Browne also began writing a book, which he did not complete, on the political history of Vietnam including the United States military build-up, and offering alternative solutions to Vietnam's internal problems. In 1965 he helped to launch the college teach-in movement, and during the 1960's increased the intensity of his protest, visiting Vietnam in 1965 as a member of the Inter-University Committee for Debate on Foreign Policy, and again in 1967 at the request of Vietnamese Buddhists. In 1966, at the invitation of Congressman Benjamin Rosenthal, he served as a consultant to the Ad Hoc Congressional Committee on Vietnam. Browne was a also member of the Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) which favored the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam and a reduction of the arms race. particularly outspoken concerning African-Americans fighting another people of color. In 1978 he was one of the first Americans to visit Ho Chi Minh City after the American withdrawal of troops in 1975.

As a deeply involved activist against American involvement in Vietnam, Browne ran for the United States Senate from New Jersey as an independent candidate in 1966 on an anti-Vietnam platform. He withdrew his candidacy six weeks prior to the election, officially giving as his reason that he had "hoped to convert New Jersey into a giant classroom and lead a mammoth teach-in." He believed that the "United States' role in Vietnam [was] based on a number of popular misconceptions and myths....For this reason a major unlearning must take place," and Browne felt there was not enough time before the election for this to happen. In 1968 he was named a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, pledged to the election of peace candidate Eugene McCarthy for president.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's Browne became actively involved in working for black economic change. He assisted in organizing the National Conference on Black Power in New Jersey, July 1967 and served as the coordinator of the Economic Development Task Force. The conference had been called by Dr. Nathan Wright, Jr. and four hundred black participants attended in the climate of the riot/rebellion which took place in Newark just a few days prior to the scheduled opening of the conference. A highlight of that conference was a resolution calling for a dialogue on the desirability of solving the country's racial problem by partitioning the United States into two sovereign entities, one white, one black. This issue would rage well into the 1970's. Because of the public confusion surrounding the resolution, Browne explained it in greater detail in national magazines in a series of articles particularly "The Case for Negro Separatism." He thus became associated with the

controversial and radical separatist ideology.

Browne's radical political and economic solutions to African-American issues were further developed at the National Black Economic Development Conference (NBEDC) held in Detroit, Michigan in April 1969, where he delivered the keynote address. conference addressed the liberation of African Americans through economic development as a means of gaining control of their own destiny. The NBEDC sought to bring together a wide representation of people in order to develop a new form of economics along cooperative lines, with broad community involvement. This conference is remembered primarily for James Forman's Black Manifesto, which put forward the demand of reparations to be paid by white churches and Jewish synagogues, as capitalist institutions, to African Americans. The basis for the Manifesto was the exploitation of African-American labor dating from slavery. Five hundred million dollars, or fifteen dollars for every African American, was to have been collected and used for a variety of black economic related objectives, including the funding of a southern land bank, training centers, a university, and the establishment of cooperative business between the United States and Africa.

Although the demand for reparation was not taken seriously by the religious establishment, Browne, over a period of three years, founded and directed three organizations that he felt would assist in realizing some of the objectives outlined in the Manifesto: Black Economic Research Center (1969), Twenty-First Century Foundation (1971) and Emergency Land Fund (1971). In response to the need for black expertise and a black perspective that would produce worthwhile results, Browne founded BERC in 1969 and its quarterly journal "The Review of Black Political Economy", to conduct research on the American political economy from a black perspective. As a center of applied research, BERC garnered the services of black economists, utilizing their research for many black economic development undertakings. Its staff members were in constant demand as resource persons at conferences, witnesses for Congressional hearings, "expert sources" for quotation in news stories, and for participation on radio and television commentaries. Considering the time period this was a revolutionary change, for the normal pattern had been to rely almost exclusively on whites for such purposes. BERC ceased functioning in 1982 when Browne left the New York area for Africa; however, the journal continues to be published regularly by the National Economic Association. Twenty-First Century Foundation and Emergency Land Fund (ELF) were developed through BERC. The Twenty-First Century Foundation, a small black-controlled foundation was established to fund black organizations in the fields of education and economic development. The Emergency Land Fund was designed to assist African Americans retain their land holdings in the South and to utilize them effectively. The latter two organizations

continue their operations, and although technically autonomous, all three actually functioned as complementary thrusts in a comprehensive effort toward black economic development.

In March 1972 Browne attended the National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana which was co-chaired by Amiri Baraka among others. Browne delivered an address entitled "Economic Development" and also served as an advisor for the Platform Committee for the Economic Empowerment Committee. The convention put forward the National Black Political Agenda, a national program which sought an independent black politics striving toward changes in the realms of economics, human development, international policy, communications, rural development, politics, and other major issues.

In addition to Browne's involvement with the anti-war movement in Vietnam and African-American politics, Browne has held a variety of positions. In 1963 he worked as a project director for the Phelps-Stokes Fund. He introduced international affairs programs to black colleges. From 1964-1972 he was an instructor and assistant professor of economics at Fairleigh Dickinson University while serving as adjunct professor of economics at Rutgers University where he developed a new course on the economics of the ghetto, 1969-1970.

Other employment include his appointments as visiting fellow at the Overseas Department Council (1977), visiting professor at the University of California at Berkeley (1979), and Executive Director (Representing the United States, the United Kingdom and Yugoslavia) at the African Development Fund, while being stationed in Abidjan, Ivory Coast (1980-1982). Browne also served as Senior Research Fellow of African Studies at Howard University (1982-1985), Staff Director of the Subcommittee on International Development, Finance, Trade and Monetary Policy of the House Banking Committee, where he worked on issues related to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, Third World debt, and exchange rates, among others (1986-1991). He was also a Ford Foundation Research Fellow, investigating regional economic integration in Africa through the African Studies Department, Howard University (1992-1993).

Browne retired in 1993 and since that time has been an economic consultant for Washington, D.C. based organizations. Among those with which he has had sustained contact from 1982 through 1995 are: Africare, Congressional Black Caucus, Institute for Policy Studies, Lincoln University, Overseas Development Council, Project on Military Democracy, and the Washington Office on Africa. In recent years he has focused on issues which relate to African economics. Browne's involvement in United States presidential politics include his serving as Jesse Jackson's advisor on economic policy during his 1984 campaign for the presidency, and making a presentation on U.S.-Africa policy at

the Clinton/Gore Economic Summit held in Little Rock, Arkansas shortly after the 1992 election.

Browne has been a prolific writer within his areas of expertise, i.e. American involvement in the Vietnam conflict, especially its impact on African Americans, economics as it pertains to African Americans and to a lesser extent, to Africans, in addition to race relations on an international scale. Most of his writings have been in the form of articles, speeches, letters to the editor and book reviews as well as writing or co-authoring several books.

Browne's first book, <u>Race Relations in International Affairs</u> (1961) analyzes the history of racism toward blacks and other non-white people and its impact on world unity at the time. In his writings concerning Vietnam, Browne discussed French involvement in the country and his early protests relating to African Americans fighting in Vietnam. The majority of Browne's writings, however, consists of articles pertaining to traditional American economic and political practices as they affect blacks and his progressively more radical approach to black control of these areas of black life. His most controversial article entitled "The Case for Negro Separatism" which appeared in Ramparts in 1968 grew out of the National Conference on Black Power in that same year, with a subsequent booklet, "Separatism or Integration Which Way for America? A Dialogue: Robert A. Browne, Bayard Rustin."

Scope and Content

The Robert S. Browne Papers date from 1957 to 1982 and document Browne's role as an important African-American economist whose ideas helped shape the discourse on Black America during the 1960's well as the anti-Vietnam war protests. The Browne Papers consist primarily of professional correspondence relating to all aspects of his career as an economist and black activist, with the National Conference on Black Power, National Black Economics Convention, his involvement in the anti-Vietnam war protests, his campaign for the United States Senate in 1966 and other political activities. The collection is divided into five series and two subseries. The titles, dates and box numbers are as follows:

Title	Dates	Box Numbers
Personal Papers General Correspondence	1961-1995	1
Fairleigh Dickinson University	1966-1974	2-4
Black Economic Research Center	1969-1981	5-9
General	1982-1988	10-17
Political Activities	1966-1972	18-19
Vietnam	1960-1979	20
Writings	1962-1984	21-25

The PERSONAL PAPERS series, 1961-1995 (.2 lin. ft.) consists of biographical information including resumes and autobiographical sketches, Browne's letters to family and friends, job applications (1961-1964), and tributes.

Two of the subseries within GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE: Fairleigh Dickinson University, 1966-1974 (1.2 lin. ft.) and Black Economic Research Center, 1969-1981 (.2 lin. ft.) consists principally of correspondence Browne kept at FDU and BERC pertaining to his speaking engagements, conference participation, writings, and other professional and personal matters. These files were maintained separately by Browne and do not relate to his teaching responsibilities at FDU or to his administrative role at BERC.

Much of the correspondence pertains to and conferences nationwide. The bulk of his speeches deal with the war in

Vietnam and economic issues, especially Browne's numerous speaking engagements and participation in seminars as they relate to African Americans. Some of the conferences Browne participated in which are represented here are: panelist for discussion, "An Erosion of Justice: Black Land Loss in the South" for a symposium on Race and Law; "Black Reparations and the Idea of Compensatory Justice" at the University of Pennsylvania Law School (1979); moderator for "The World of Black Business" sponsored by the National Urban League (1979); an address to the National Association for the Advancement of

Colored People (1980); and several talks to the American Friends Service Committee and the Black United Fund. Programs for some of his speeches are included in these subseries, while the text of his speeches can be found in the writings series.

Correspondence from the 1980's reflects Browne's positions as a senior research fellow at Howard University and as the staff director of the banking subcommittee of the U.S. House of In addition to the correspondence pertaining to Representatives. economic issues as they affect African Americans, other themes in these files include monetary and fiscal policies of the United States and its relationship to other countries. Options for American policy on economic development regarding Africa, especially southern Africa, and the Caribbean are discussed. Other subjects include the African famine of the mid 1980's, South African apartheid, and international finance. Some of the organizations with whom Browne corresponded are the African-American Institute, Operation Crossroads Africa, Overseas Development Council, and Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs. Browne was also in contact with the International Monetary Fund, U.S. government agencies such as Agency for International Development, non-governmental organizations, and corporations

Correspondence pertaining to Browne's writings include requests for reviews of articles and books, editors seeking permission to publish his articles, invitations for submission of articles to journals, Browne's editorship of a college economics textbook and comments and questions on several of his articles such as separatism and the ideas put forth in the Black Manifesto. Some drafts of his writings can be found in this series.

Correspondence with politicians such as Benjamin Rosenthal and Harrison Walker concern the war in Vietnam, white control in Rhodesia and other controversial black related issues. Additional correspondents include writer Amiri Baraka concerning

the National Black Political Conference, economist W.H. Ferry pertaining to Browne's ideas on separatism and Vietnam, the

president of San Francisco State College, S.I. Hayakawa, and Senator Bill Bradley. As a much sought after black intellectual and activist, there are many letters from universities asking Browne to apply for faculty positions at those universities; others sought his nomination for membership in organizations and on boards of national organizations.

The series POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, 1966-1972 (.8 lin. ft.) documents Browne's roles in major national events which encompass his 1966 political campaign for the United States Senate seat from New Jersey, the National Conference on Black Power (1967), Eugene McCarthy campaign material (1968), and the National Black Economic Convention held in 1972. Browne's political campaign is documented with material consisting of a list of groups and individuals who expressed support for Browne's candidacy; his letters indicating reasons, as they relate to the war in Vietnam, for his bid for the nomination; comments listing factors favorable and unfavorable for his candidacy; press releases indicating the official reason for his withdrawal; as well as news clippings pertaining to several other candidates and to the Vietnam Conflict.

Additionally this series also includes documents from the National Conference on Black Power held in Newark, New Jersey in July 1967. Material encompasses lists of Advisory Committee members and memoranda sent to them, reports on sessions including that of Browne's workshop on black power through economic development, and printed matter. Correspondence between Browne and Amiri Baraka deals with their participation in meetings regarding the conference.

The Eugene McCarthy campaign material (1968) in this series consists of correspondence, petitions, flyers, news releases, and printed matter for McCarthy's campaign and Browne's participation as a Democratic National Convention delegate. Opposing candidates are also represented in the collection.

Documentation for the National Black Political Convention include pre-convention material such as the Congressional Black Caucus' call for the convention, minutes of committee meetings, and lists of Platform Committee staff advisors. Also included are drafts of the National Black Political Agenda which challenged African Americans to determine which essential changes would enable them to move in the direction of self-determination. There are other drafts of papers prepared by the Platform Committee concerning a variety of topics as they relate to African Americans including human development, communications, foreign policy, rural development, and political empowerment. Browne's position paper on economic empowerment (which consists of manuscript drafts) can also be found here.

The VIETNAM series, 1960-1979 (.4 lin. ft.) reflects Browne's long-term commitment to influence the United States government to withdraw its troops from Vietnam. Correspondence with officials and others, including The New York Times, detail Browne's position, including his conviction that U.S. policy supporting Vietnam's President Diem was erroneous. Notes and an annotated incomplete manuscript, written in approximately 1962, for an unfinished book on Vietnam provides historical background on French involvement in the country and United States aid dating to the 1950's. Diaries document two trips he took to Vietnam in 1967 and 1978 to observe the changes that had occurred in the country. Other writings include unpublished and published articles by Browne, and published material on his involvement in Vietnam. There is also printed matter about the war in Vietnam, the anti-war protests, and African-American involvement as both soldier and protester. A poster with the caption "Uncle Sam Needs You Nigger" completes the series.

The WRITINGS series, 1962-1984, (1.6 lin. ft.), includes speeches Browne delivered at conferences nationwide concerning the economic policies of the United States, especially as they relate to African Americans, manuscripts for published articles, book reviews, programs, and letters to the editor about the same topic. Copies of his numerous publications are also included in this series.

Of note is the difficulty Browne experienced in publishing a book entitled <u>Race Relations in International Affairs</u> (Public Affairs Press). This 1961 work deals with the increasing significance of non-white peoples in the world power scheme and their impact on the white world. The book suggested various courses of action Americans might have followed to meet the swiftly changing power situation. Correspondence documents Browne's problems in getting the manuscript accepted, and following publication, the poor reception it received.

Particularly interesting is a major article Browne wrote, "The Case for Black Separatism" (December 1967) and the responses it elicited in the press and via correspondence; many letters and articles came out in support of Browne's ideas. The two opposing sides of this issue were discussed in the pamphlet <u>Separatism or Integration Which Way for America? A Dialogue: Robert S. Browne, Bayard Rustin</u> (1968), an expansion of Browne's first article. The contents for this pamphlet were taken from speeches delivered to the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

Note:

Material relating to Browne's activism against the war in Vietnam can be found in three series in this collection: Correspondence, Vietnam and Writings. The records for the Black Economic

Research Center and the Twenty-First Century Foundation are housed as separate collections in the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center. Browne donated the Emergency Land Fund records to the Armistad Research Center at Tulane University. The Swarthmore College Peace Collection maintains the Robert S. Browne Collection documenting Browne's peace and protest activities.

Provenance

Donated by Robert S. Browne, 1985 SCM 85-40 Donated by Robert S. Browne, 1995 SCM 95-39 Donated by Robert S. Browne, 1996 SCM 96-18 Processed by Janice Quinter October 1995, May 2004

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	10	"The Issue of Black Economic
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	13	Article for <u>Freedomways</u> , May 1970
	14	Paper for <u>Black Enterprise</u> , 1970
	15	"Barriers to Black Participation in the
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	16	"Economic Autonomy," September 1970
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	18	"Testimony Before the Senate Sub-
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	7	"The Overall Economic Situation of Blacks as well as their Attitude toward the Carter Administration," August 1979
	8	Paper Presented to the National Bankers Association, 1979
	9	Book Review - <u>Strategy for a Black</u> <u>Agenda</u> , by Henry Winston, n.d.
	10	Comments on Manuscript, "The Setting of Black Capitalism," n.d.
	11	"Proposal for a Minority Network Equities Fund," n.d.
	12	Untitled or Incomplete Manuscripts, 1968-1973 Race Relations in International Affairs -
	13	Correspondence 1960

Box	<u>Folder</u>	
24	14 15 16	January - July 1961 August 1961 - March 1962 "Development Strategies and Trade,"
	17	December 1987 "How Can President Bush Save Africa's Economy," December 1988
	18	"Shaping and African Policy," 1988
	19	"The World Bank vs. the Economic Commission for Africa," ca. 1988
	20	"U.S. Policy and Third World Economies," ca. 1990
	21	"Liberalization: Is It Still Africa's Agenda?," January 1991
	22	"Institutional Debates on Structural Adjustment Programs," 1991
	23	Book Reviews - <u>The Challenge of African</u> <u>Recovery and Development</u> , ca. 1991
	24	"African Americans and the U.S. Economy 1950-1990"
	25	"Economic Inequality: A Grave Cancer in American Society," April 1992
	26	"Will the Nineties Witness a Revival in Africa's Economic Fortune?," April 1992
	27	"Ignoring Racism: A Savvy Political Tactic?," June 1992
	28	"Race, Caste and Ethnic Diversity," July 1992
	29	"Social Inequality, Racial Friction and the Good Society," September 1992
	30	"New Role of IMF and World Bank in New World Order," October 1992
	31	"The African-American as Scholar, Economist, and Activist," ca. 1993
	32	"The Case For Black Separatism," 1967
	33-34	Responses 1967-1968
	35	1968
	36	African Descendants Nationalist Independence Partition Party, 1960's
	37	Related Material, 1964-1967
25	1	Related Articles, 1967-1968
	2	Related Material, 1968-1970
	3	Permission to Reprint, 1971-1976 Publications
	4	1961-1965

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>		
25	5 6 7 8 9	1966-1967 1968-1969 1969-1970 1971-1976 1977-1979,	1984

SEPARATION RECORD

The following items were removed from:

Name of Collection/Papers Robert S. Browne Papers

Accession Number SC MG 240 SCM 85-40,

Donor: Robert S.Browne

Date received: 1985

Date transferred: 1985

The item(s) listed below have been sent to the division indicated, either to be retained or disposed of there. Any items that should receive special disposition are clearly marked.

Schomburg Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division:

Five 8 track tapes dated May 27-28, 1968 of the Ethnic Appeal Radio Conference

Schomburg Photographs and Print Division:

Nine photographs

Other:

Broadside - Uncle Sam Needs You Nigger (re Vietnamese Conflict)

Accessioned by: Berlena Robinson Date: 1985