Summary

Creator: Haywood, Harry, 1898-1985

Title: Harry Haywood papers

Date: 1930-1989

Size: 9.38 linear feet (23 boxes)

Source: Gift of Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, 1990.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: Harry Haywood was an African American member of the Communist Party who became a leading proponent of the theory that Blacks in the South, who were oppressed by Jim Crow laws and a system of serfdom (sharecropping), constituted a separate nation and had the right of self-determination. The Harry Haywood papers, 1948-1981, consist of typescripts of articles, speeches and book manuscripts; correspondence; photocopies of journal articles; and materials related to the Communist Party USA and several of its offshoots.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements: Many documents are damaged by water, rust, and mold. Although the mold is inactive, researchers, especially those sensitive to irritants, may want to use gloves when handling materials.

Preferred citation: [Item], Harry Haywood papers, Sc MG 398, 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: The majority of the collection was processed by Ellie Tweedy, August 2004; the processing was completed by Lauren Stark, May 2022.

Related Materials:

Harry Haywood papers, 1928-1985, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan
Creator History

Born Haywood Hall in South Omaha, Nebraska, on February 4, 1898, to the formerly enslaved Haywood and Harriet Hall, Harry Haywood changed his name by taking both his parent's first names (Harriet became Harry) when applying for a passport in 1925 to travel to the Soviet Union. In 1917, Haywood was deployed to France during World War I. His return to home soil coincided with the 1919 race riots and thoroughly disillusioned him with the state of race relations in the United States. After brief memberships in the African Black Brotherhood and the Young Workers Communist League, Haywood became a member of the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) in 1925.

Haywood was the first person of African descent to be selected by the CPUSA to study at the Lenin School in Moscow, where he learned Russian and studied Marxist theory. While there, Haywood also helped develop a Marxist analysis of the so-called Negro Problem. He became a leading architect and proponent of the National Question theory, which held that Jim Crow and sharecropping oppressed Blacks in the five Southern states of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, where they formed a majority of the population, and that Blacks had the right of self-determination, including the right to secede and form an independent nation. The Third Communist International (Comintern) adopted this position at its Sixth World Congress in 1928. In 1931, Haywood was appointed to the Central Committee and made head of the Party's National Negro Department. He was active in the labor movement and helped organize the Sharecroppers Union in Alabama and the League of Struggle for Negro Rights. Haywood also was involved in organizing demonstrations to defend the Scottsboro Boys as well as in campaigns to protest the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. In 1937, Haywood joined the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and went to Spain to support the Republicans in their fight against fascism. He served in the merchant marine during World War II, and he was a member of the National Maritime Union, the largest and most militant of all seamen's unions. In 1948, with financial assistance from Paul Robeson, Haywood published his first book, *Negro Liberation*, a detailed analysis of the national character of African American oppression, focusing on the South.

By the 1950s, the CPUSA rejected Haywood's position on the right to self-determination and expelled him from the Party in 1959, due to his continuing battles against the Party's abandonment of that position. After his expulsion, he continued to work with young radicals in the October League (reorganized as the Communist Party [Marxist-Leninist] in 1977) and the Black Power movement. Haywood spent several years writing his autobiography, *Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist*, which was published in 1978.


Scope and Content Note

The Harry Haywood papers, 1948-1981, consists of typescripts of articles, speeches and book manuscripts; correspondence, photocopies of journal articles; and materials related to the Communist Party USA and several of its offshoots, most frequently concerning their theoretical positions on Blacks in the United States.

Arrangement: Arranged into five series: I. Communist Party-USA; II. October League; III. Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist); IV. Writing; and V. Subject files.

Key Terms
Subjects
African American communists
African Americans -- Civil rights
Authors, Black
Black nationalism -- United States
Civil rights -- United States
Communist parties -- United States
Radicalism

Names
Briggs, Cyril V. (Cyril Valentine), 1888-1966
Haywood, Harry, 1898-1985
Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist : U.S.)
Communist Party of the United States of America
October League (M-L)
Container List

Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) 1930-1983

The Correspondence subseries consists of a response from William Z. Foster to Haywood's article refuting Doxey Wilkerson's article entitled, "On the Negro Question", and letters to and from Cyril Briggs, founder of the African Blood Brotherhood and fellow Communist. There are also two letters to Haywood's wife, Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, written during Haywood's illness. Numerous letters are long theoretical discussions of current issues, such as Communist Party ideology, the struggle against revisionist leanings in the Party, the passive resistance movement, the NAACP, Black Muslims, and the Black Nationalist movement. Much of the correspondence was water damaged and has been photocopied. The National Question subseries, which refers to the CPUSA's position on the right of self-determination for African Americans, is a wide-ranging subgroup that contains copies of journal articles from the 1930s-1960s; two pieces by James E. Jackson, "Stalin's Thought Illuminates Problems of the Negro Question" (1953) and "Features of the Negro Question in the U.S." (1958); a typescript of an article by Cyril Briggs refuting Jackson's theories, as well as resolutions in response to Jackson's theories; and several articles written by other people on white chauvinism, including one by Herbert Aptheker (1950).

The Provisional Organizing Committee for a Communist Party (POC), formed in New York City in August 1958, was a largely Black and Puerto Rican group of dissatisfied Party members, who hoped to build a new Marxist-oriented party; Haywood was one of its founders. This subseries consists of correspondence; Haywood's report to the New York Steering Committee and the National Executive Committee (September 1958); New York Steering Committee meeting materials (1958); discussion circle files; and Haywood's resignation in November 1958. A large portion of the subseries is concerned with Haywood's internal party battles with the general secretary of the POC, Armando Roman. The General files subseries includes a draft resolution and clippings on the 16th National Convention (1958), and articles from Political Affairs, 1952-1962.


**Correspondence 1952-1983**

| b. 1 f. 1 | Foster, William Z 1952 April 21 |
| b. 1 f. 2 | Briggs, Cyril 1958-1962 |
| b. 1 f. 3 | General 1958-1983 |

**National Question 1930-1969**

| b. 1 f. 4 | "Stalin's Thought Illuminates Problems of Negro Question" 1953 |
| b. 1 f. 5 | "Theoretical Aspects of Negro Question in the United States" 1958 |
| b. 1 f. 6 | Refuting James Jackson's theories |
| b. 1 f. 7 | Discussion article on the Negro Question 1959 November |
| b. 1 f. 8 | "Letter to the Editor," Peoples' World 1959 |
| b. 1 f. 9 | Haywood on the Negro Question undated |
| b. 1 f. 10 | Articles on white chauvinism 1950 |
| b. 1 f. 11 | Recruiting "Negro workers" 1930s |

**Journal articles**

Includes copies of various articles from Political Affairs, New Masses, Daily Worker, and The Crisis, among others.

| b. 1 f. 12 | 1940-1949 |
| b. 1 f. 13 | 1950-1969 |
| b. 1 f. 14 | Negro History Week 1950-1953 |
Provisional Organizing Committee (POC) 1958
b. 2 f. 1 Correspondence 1958
b. 2 f. 2 New York Steering Committee Meeting remarks 1958
b. 2 f. 3 Haywood's Report to New York Steering Committee 1958 September
b. 2 f. 4 Haywood's resignation 1958
b. 2 f. 5 Discussion circle transcript undated

General 1952-1962
b. 2 f. 6 Political Affairs, copies and originals 1952-1962
b. 2 f. 7 Draft Resolution 16th Convention 1958
b. 2 f. 8 Miscellaneous

October League 1973-1975
The October League series, arranged alphabetically, contains Central Committee and Executive Committee meeting reports and minutes; status reports on student work; Marxist Education campaign materials; and preparatory materials for a Third Congress in 1975.

Arranged alphabetically.

b. 2 f. 9 Central Committee 1974-1975
b. 2 f. 10 Chicano Commission 1974-1975
b. 2 f. 11 Executive Committee 1974-1975
b. 2 f. 12 Inner Party Debate in Student Work 1974
b. 2 f. 13 Marxist Education Campaign 1974
b. 2 f. 14 Third Congress Preparations 1975
b. 2 f. 15 Miscellaneous 1973-1975

Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) 1970-1982
The Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist), or CP (ML), was a "revolutionary party of the working class and the oppressed" that believed that the "theory of Marxism-Leninism must be applied to the complex conditions we face today in the fight for liberation here in the U.S." (from draft constitution)

This series includes several files dealing with the internal struggles over organization and party leadership, and issues leading up to the Second Congress in May 1981. There are also materials related to internal party debates on the viability of the party organ, "The Call"; international issues; and possible mergers with other Marxist Leninist groups. Also included are agendas, minutes, and resolutions from the Afro-American Commission. Materials related to the Southern Region contain remarks by Haywood on the National Question (March 1981) and reports on the party's work in the South. The Marxism and the Black Liberation Movement folder contains various writings, some identified and some not, on labor and the League of Black Revolutionary Workers, the Greensboro Collective, and the Harlem Unemployment Center.

Arranged alphabetically.

b. 3 f. 1 Afro-American Commission 1979-1981
Afro-American work
b. 3 f. 3 Chicano Movement 1980
b. 3 f. 4 Draft constitution undated
b. 3 f. 5 Fight Back organization 1978-1979
b. 3 f. 6 Internal party debate on The Call (party newspaper) 1980
Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) (cont.)

b. 3 f. 7-8  Internal party debate on organization and party leadership 1978-1980
b. 3 f. 9  Internal party debate, Pre-Congress, regional districts 1980-1981
b. 4 f. 1  International issues 1978-1980
b. 4 f. 2  Labor issues 1981-1982
b. 4 f. 3  Marxism and Black Liberation Movement 1970-1980
b. 4 f. 5  Mergers 1979-1981
b. 4 f. 6  Nuclear power 1979
b. 4 f. 7  Puerto Rican independence 1980
b. 4 f. 8  Second Congress 1981 May
b. 4 f. 9  Southern Region 1979-1981
b. 4 f. 10  U.S. election 1980
b. 4 f. 11  White chauvinism ca. 1977-1980
b. 4 f. 11  Women's work ("The woman question") 1977-1980
b. 4 f. 12  Miscellaneous 1980-1981

Writing 1933-1989

Writing by Haywood includes articles and essays, speeches, and Haywood's autobiography, Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist. Articles and essays contain manuscripts and typescripts of articles, both published and unpublished, and two interview drafts. It contains a partial manuscript from Haywood's first book, Negro Liberation (1948); his introduction for A House Divided: Labor and White Supremacy by Roxanne Mitchell and Frank Weiss (United Labor Press, New York, 1981); and a draft of his For a Revolutionary Position on the Negro Question (1958, published 1975). In a June 1950 interview, Haywood and Gabriel d'Arbousier, secretary-general of Rassemblement Democratique Africain, discuss the similarities and differences between the struggles of Africans and Blacks in the United States. A discussion between Haywood and Jesse Gray covers the National Maritime Union during the 1940s. Speeches consist of outlines, drafts, and handwritten notes for 15 speeches from the 1970s through the early 1980s, for a 1975 national Fight Back Conference (typed on the back of Fight Back flyers); the founding congress of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist); the publication of Black Bolshevik; and the commemoration of the Sharpeville Massacre (1980). Many contain accounts of the history of the CPUSA and Haywood's involvement with the Party (78th Birthday, 1976) and the development of the Black liberation movement (Binghamton 1976, and Atlanta 1978).

The manuscript for Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist (Chicago: Liberator Press, 1978) consists of 22 chapters, an introduction, and an epilogue. The manuscript's reverse chronological organization has been retained. Part of the original manuscript for many chapters (starting with chapter 5) became the next corresponding chapter; hence the typed chapter headings on most chapters are incorrect according to the published version. It is generally not possible to determine the original, first, second, or final drafts.

Writing by others consists of published (articles and book chapters) and unpublished material (dissertations and other academic papers) by other authors and/or organizations. This material is arranged alphabetically by author or title.

Arranged into two subseries: 1. Writing by Haywood; and 2. Writing by others.

Writing by Haywood 1933-1982

Articles and essays

Arranged alphabetically.

b. 4 f. 13  "Black Political Power" 1964
b. 4 f. 14  Communism in Africa ca. 1950
b. 5 f. 1  "CPUSA and Black Liberation Movement" ca. 1980
b. 5 f. 2  "For a Full and Unconditional Support to Negro People's Freedom Struggle" 1959
For a Revolutionary Position on the Negro Question

b. 5 f. 3
1957-1958

b. 5 f. 4
Second edition 1976

b. 5 f. 5
Includes two drafts of Haywood's introduction, correspondence, and manuscript of book by Roxanne Mitchell and Frank Weiss.

b. 5 f. 6
"Harold Cruse Exaggerates the Role of the Negro Bourgeoisie in the Liberation Struggle" 1963

b. 5 f. 7
Interview with Gabriel D’Arboussier 1950

b. 5 f. 8
Interview with Jesse Gray on the National Maritime Union 1975

Negro Liberation

b. 5 f. 9
Partial manuscript 1948
Includes parts of chapters 5 and 7.

b. 5 f. 10
Introduction for reprint 1976

b. 5 f. 11
"On Race," various drafts 1940

b. 6 f. 1
Response (drafts) to Doxey Wilkerson's "A On the Concept of Negro" ca. 1951-1952

b. 6 f. 2
"Struggle for the Leninist Position on the Negro Question in the U.S.A.," The Communist 1933

Speeches

b. 6 f. 3
Speech on Supreme Court decision of 1954, desegregating schools (partial manuscript) 1970 April

b. 6 f. 4
Outline and drafts for "How I Came to the Position" ca. 1970s
Speech labeled "Newark," so possibly for a conference in Newark, New Jersey.

b. 6 f. 5
Unidentified speech ca. 1970s

b. 6 f. 6
Unity Conference of Provisional Organizing Committee speech ca. 1970s

b. 6 f. 7
Notes for 75th birthday speech 1973

b. 6 f. 8
Fight Back Conference speech 1975

b. 6 f. 9
Testimonial dinner for Haywood on his 78th birthday

b. 6 f. 10
Outline for speech 1976 February

b. 6 f. 11
Drafts of speech and flyer for dinner 1976 March

b. 6 f. 12
"Speech at Binghamton on the 60s Revolt" 1976
Includes outline and various drafts.

b. 6 f. 13
"Atlanta Speech" (on the future of the Black liberation movement) ca. 1978
Includes various drafts.

b. 6 f. 14
Boston Globe speech ca. 1978

b. 6 f. 15
University of Massachusetts and Boston State University for Communist Youth Organization (draft) ca. 1978

b. 6 f. 16
Draft labeled "Chinese speeches" 1978

b. 6 f. 17
Communist Party (M-L) Founding Congress "Message of Support" (draft) ca. 1978

b. 6 f. 18
Commemoration of Sharpeville Massacre (draft) 1980

b. 6 f. 19
Remarks for "Who We Are and What Type of Organization Do We Want?" CP(ML) 2nd Congress (draft) 1981 May 23
"Toward a Revolutionary Program for Negro Freedom" draft outline in collaboration with Gwendolyn Midlo

*Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist*

Prologue

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Chapter 6

Chapter 7

Chapter 8
Guide to the Harry Haywood papers

Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist (cont.)
Chapter 8 (cont.)

b. 10 f. 8  Notes
b. 10 f. 9  Draft with notes
b. 11 f. 1  Draft with edits
b. 11 f. 2-3  Footnotes and drafts

Chapter 9

b. 11 f. 4-5  Notes
b. 11 f. 6-7  Drafts

Chapter 10

b. 11 f. 8  Notes
b. 11 f. 9  Various drafts
b. 12 f. 1  Chapter 11

b. 12 f. 2  Outline
b. 12 f. 3  Notes and inserts
b. 12 f. 4-5  Various drafts

Chapter 12

b. 12 f. 6  Notes
b. 12 f. 7-8  Various drafts

Chapter 13

b. 12 f. 9  Notes and drafts
b. 13 f. 1  Possible final version
b. 13 f. 2  Chapter 14, notes and drafts
b. 13 f. 3-5  Chapter 15, notes and drafts
b. 14 f. 1-3  Chapter 16, notes and drafts
b. 14 f. 4-6  Chapter 17

b. 15 f. 1-4  Notes and drafts
b. 15 f. 5  Possible final version

Chapter 18

b. 15 f. 6  Notes and drafts
b. 16 f. 1  Chapter 19 drafts
b. 16 f. 2-4  Various drafts
b. 16 f. 5-6  Chapter 20, notes and drafts
b. 17 f. 1-2  Chapter 20 drafts
b. 17 f. 3-6  Chapter 21 drafts
b. 18 f. 1  Chapter 21, notes and drafts
b. 18 f. 2-4  Chapter 22, notes and drafts
b. 18 f. 5  Epilogue, notes and drafts
b. 19 f. 1-3  Epilogue, notes and drafts
b. 19 f. 4-6  Miscellaneous notes and fragments
b. 20 f. 1-3  Miscellaneous notes and fragments
b. 20 f. 4  Publicity (press release, review, and book cover) 1980
b. 20 f. 5  Notes (mostly handwritten)

b. 20 f. 6  Blacks and politics
Writing (cont.)
Writing by Haywood (cont.)
Notes (mostly handwritten) (cont.)

b. 20 f. 7
Neocolonialism

b. 20 f. 8
Slavery
Includes clippings.

b. 20 f. 9
Soviet Union and Socialism

b. 20 f. 10
Miscellaneous

b. 20 f. 11
Personal 1967-1982
Includes personal correspondence, receipts and other ephemera, and notes.

Writing by others 1941-1989

b. 21 f. 1
*Beijing Review*, vol. 26, #34 1983 August 22

b. 21 f. 2
Bettelheim response ca. 1980
Response to Professor Bettelheim's *China Since Mao*.

b. 21 f. 3
"Class Struggle and the Black Liberation Struggle: Who Will Lead?" 1973

b. 21 f. 4
*Cleaver, Eldridge. "Education and Revolution," The Black Scholar (photocopy)* 1969 November

b. 21 f. 5
CPUSA typescript against revisionism undated

b. 21 f. 6
*The Eighties: A Journal for Marxist-Leninist Debate*, vol. 3, #4 1983 Fall

b. 21 f. 7
*Forward Motion: A Marxist Newsletter*, vol. 3, #3 1984 August-September

b. 21 f. 8

b. 21 f. 9
Harris, Robert. "On the Origin of the Afro-American Nation" 1979

b. 21 f. 10
*I. F. Stone's Weekly* 1965 April-July
Includes 3 issues.

b. 21 f. 11
Ignatin, Noel. "The Black People, the Right of Self-Determination and the Movement among Whites" ca. 1960s-1970s
Includes Haywood's notes.

b. 21 f. 12

b. 21 f. 13
Institute of the Black World. "About the Institute of the Black World" undated

b. 21 f. 14
Jackson, Agnes Moreland. "UCLA's Angela Davis: What She's Rapping About" undated

b. 21 f. 15
*Lawson, Elizabeth. Study Outline: History of the American Negro People 1619-1918* 1941

b. 21 f. 16
*Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine*, vol. 34 1982 October

b. 21 f. 17
National Black United Front (NBUF). "NBUF: Welcome to Black Belt South" ca. 1980s

b. 21 f. 18
"National Minorities: Equality, Autonomy, and Unity" ca. 1973

b. 21 f. 19

b. 22 f. 1
"The Negro Question and the Right to Revolution" draft typescript ca. 1960s
Typescript quotes Haywood extensively but does not seem to have been written by him.

b. 22 f. 2
*New Program of the Communist Party USA: The People vs. Corporate Power* 1982 January

b. 22 f. 3

b. 22 f. 4
Peoples College. "On the Withdrawal of Peoples College from the Sibeko Memorial Committee" 1979 June 28
Writing (cont.)
Writing by others (cont.)
b. 22 f. 5 Political Affairs, vol. 39, #12, and vol. 41, #12 1960-1962
b. 22 f. 6 Position paper of the Unemployment Workshop, a Political Action Conference 1964 December 19
b. 22 f. 7 Stalinist Workers Group Bulletin 1968-1973
b. 22 f. 8 Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). “The General Condition of the Arkansas Negro: A SNCC Special Report” 1965 April
b. 22 f. 9 “Total Control as the Only Solution to the Economic Problems of Black People,” National Black Economic Conference undated
b. 22 f. 10 Workers’ Tribune #9 1982 July-August
b. 22 f. 11 Unknown typescripts and fragments ca. 1970s

Subject files 1950-1984
This series contains printed matter (mostly newspaper clippings) and some typescripts on various topics, individuals, and geographic locations. Dates refer to dates of documents.

Arranged alphabetically by last name, topic, or geographic location.

b. 22 f. 12 Agriculture ca. 1974
b. 22 f. 13 Belize 1982
b. 22 f. 14 Black conditions ca. 1950s
b. 22 f. 15 Black families 1965-1983
b. 22 f. 16 Black leaders 1982-1983
b. 22 f. 17 Blacks and political parties 1978-1981
b. 22 f. 18 Brazil 1983
b. 22 f. 19 Cambodia 1982
b. 22 f. 20 “Changing Black Living Patterns” (statistics) 1974
b. 22 f. 21 Chile 1983
b. 22 f. 22 China 1982-1983
b. 22 f. 23 Civil rights 1963-1984
b. 22 f. 24 Cluss, Adolf 1984
b. 22 f. 25 Communism and poverty 1982
b. 22 f. 26 Cuba 1982-1983
b. 22 f. 27 Disarmament 1982-1983
b. 22 f. 28 Education 1983
b. 22 f. 29 El Salvador 1982-1984
b. 22 f. 30 Europe 1983
b. 22 f. 31 Grenada 1983
b. 22 f. 32 Guatemala 1982
b. 22 f. 33 Haig, Alexander 1980
b. 22 f. 34 Hicks, Granville 1982
b. 22 f. 35 Hunger and poverty in the U.S 1983-1984
b. 22 f. 36 Industrial corporations 1982-1983
b. 22 f. 37 Iran 1982
b. 22 f. 38 Israel 1982
| b. 22 f. 39 | Jackson, Jesse 1983-1984 |
| b. 23 f. 1 | Japan 1982 |
| b. 23 f. 2 | Jobs and unemployment 1983 |
| b. 23 f. 3 | Just, Ernest Everett 1984 |
| b. 23 f. 4 | Labor unions 1977-1984 |
| b. 23 f. 5 | Mexico 1982-1984 |
| b. 23 f. 6 | Mills, C. Wright 1983 |
| b. 23 f. 7 | National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) 1983 |
| b. 23 f. 8 | The New Right movement ca. 1980 |
| b. 23 f. 9 | Nicaragua 1981-1983 |
| b. 23 f. 10 | Nigeria 1983 |
| b. 23 f. 11 | Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) 1983 |
| b. 23 f. 12 | Reagan, Ronald 1980-1984 |
| b. 23 f. 13 | The South 1972-1983 |
| b. 23 f. 14 | South Africa 1983 |
| b. 23 f. 15 | Soviet Union 1982-1983 |
| b. 23 f. 16 | Venezuela 1983 |
| b. 23 f. 17 | Vietnam War 1965 |
| b. 23 f. 18 | Watts Riots 1966 |
| b. 23 f. 19 | Women in academia 1983 |