

Descriptive Summary

Title:

Carlos Moore Papers

Dates: 1964-2003

Collection number:

2

Creator:

Moore, Carlos b.1942-

Extent:

4 linear feet (9 boxes), 59 cassette tapes, 29 video tapes

Repository:

University of California, Los Angeles. Library. Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies, UCLA

Los Angeles, California 90095-1545

Abstract:

This collection of correspondence, published and unpublished manuscripts, flyers, scrapbooks, audio and video material documents the life and work of Carlos Moore. Carlos Moore Wedderburn was born in Camaguey, Cuba, in 1942 to working class parents. At the age of 21 Carlos Moore left Cuba as an exile and lived in Egypt, France, Nigeria and Senegal while supporting himself and speaking out against racism in Cuba under Castro's rule.

During this time he was a news reporter and a noted scholar and has published several books, most notably *Fela, Fela: This Bitch of a Life* 1982, and *Castro the Blacks and Africa*, 1988. Special items in the collections include letters from Stokely Carmichael and Leopold Senghor and a taped phone conversation with Malcolm X.

Physical location:

This collection is currently housed at UCLA's Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies Library and Media Center. Collection materials are in English, Spanish, and French.

Access

Access is available by appointment for UCLA student and faculty researchers as well as independent researchers. To view the collection or any part of it, please contact the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies Librarian.

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Preferred Citation

Carlos Moore (Papers, 2), Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies, UCLA, University of California, Los Angeles.

Acquisition Information

Donated by Carlos Moore to the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA.

Biography

1942-1958

Carlos Moore was born Charles George Moore Wedderburn in Camaguey, Cuba, in 1942 to Jamaican immigrants Rebecca Winifred Wedderburn and Victor Moore. Moore never knew his biological father, Whitfield da Costa Marshall, a Trinidadian man whose parents had emigrated from Barbados to Trinidad. The fourth of six children, Moore was raised by working class parents who struggled to support him and their other children. During his childhood Moore experienced economic and social hardship which accompanied his parents' inability to secure regular employment in a racist society that discriminated against Black citizens. His parents divorced in 1952, and in 1958 when Moore was fifteen years old and Cuba was in the midst of civil war, his father and Cost Rican step-mother sent for him and his siblings to come to Harlem in New York City so they could take advantage of the opportunities for a better life in the United States.

1958-1974

Moore attended Boys High School in Harlem until 1961 before returning to Cuba where Fidel Castro and his army had recently claimed victory over Cuban Dictator Fulgencio Batista. Once in Cuba Moore attended the Instituto Pre- Universario de La Havana in preparation for entering the University to study sociology and anthropology. He hoped to

examine questions of race, but the University denied him entrance in his proposed field of study and labeled his academic interests “useless to the Revolution”. He quickly became disaffected with the Castro regime and was imprisoned twice for being a vocal critic of its curtailment of basic rights for all Cubans and racism towards Black Cubans. Charged with “racial subversion,” Moore was sent to Villa Marista, a prison notorious for executing its wards. Robert Franklin Williams, NAACP leader and proponent of armed self-defense for African Americans against the Ku Klux Klan and other terrorist White supremacist groups, intervened on Moore’s behalf and saved his life. Williams had recruited Moore to work with him on Radio Free Dixie, a revolutionary political radio program which was broadcast from Cuba into the United States. While in Cuba Moore also worked for the Ministry of Communications reading contents of letters to determine if they contained subversive materials. Moore was arrested a second time for continuing to speak against racism in Cuba and was sent to an undisclosed labor camp in Camaguey, the province of his birth.

In 1963 Moore fled into the Guinean embassy to seek asylum, and months after left Cuba on the cargo ship Cetinje to Egypt, which he left after a year due to the repressive regime under Gamal Abdul Nasser. Moore then traveled to Europe, seeking asylum unsuccessfully in Italy and Switzerland before being allowed to stay in France on the condition that he arrange repatriation to Cuba. The threat of imprisonment and/or death in Cuba caused Moore to refuse to return to his home country, and the Cuban embassy stripped him of his passport.

While living in political limbo in Paris, Moore met and married an African American woman named Anita (Shawna) Ramos and fathered a son, Kimathi, in 1966. Without working papers, Moore struggled to support himself and his family. During this time he was

also politically active and organized the front organization “Afro American Committee in Paris” at the behest of Malcolm X to support the Lumumbist cause in the Congo. Under the guise of planning discussion meetings, this organization intended to raise funds and recruit militants to fight in the Congo, and planned a rally where Malcolm X was to be the keynote speaker. When the time for the rally came, Malcolm X was denied entry into Paris. On 9 February 1965, the day after he was denied entry into the country, Moore conducted a telephone interview with Malcolm X which he taped and published in French, United Kingdom, and United States magazines. Several weeks later, Malcolm X was assassinated in the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem. In 1970, after years of struggle with the French Government and harassment by the French secret police, Moore was granted asylum in France and received working papers. He began working as a journalist for Agence France Presse, and shortly thereafter he enrolled in University of Paris-7 to study for his PhD.

In 1974 Moore was offered and accepted the post of Publicity Officer of FESTAC (Second World Black Festival of Arts and Culture) in Lagos, Nigeria. During his time in Nigeria Moore met Fela Kuti and formed a relationship with the famed musician which led to the publication of Kuti’s biography *Fela, Fela: This Bitch of a Life* in 1982. Due to his association with Kuti, his activities against the dictatorial regime in Nigeria and pressure from the Cuban government, Moore is dismissed from his position and briefly imprisoned.

1974-1991

In 1975 Moore fled Nigeria and settled in Senegal until 1980. While in Senegal Moore conducted research for his Doctoral thesis which he completed in 1979. However past persecution had taken a toll on his health. In 1980 Moore left Senegal for Paris where

he was advised to undergo treatment for severe stress-related ailments. Despite his ill health, Moore embarked on a second PhD which he successfully defended in 1983 and began working for the French Weekly review *Jeune Afrique*. In 1987 Moore accepted a professorial position at Florida International University, in Miami, and organized the conference on “Negritude, Afro Cultures and Ethnicity in the Americas” in tribute of Aime Cesaire. The gathering also featured Maya Angelou, Alex Haley, and Leopold Senghor. Moore left Florida International University due to conflicts with the anti Castro Cubans in Miami and moved to the island of Guadeloupe where he married his second wife, Josy (Ayeola) Elise, in 1992, and helped her raise her two children Kimathy and Adriana.

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 left Cuba in a precarious position. Moore wrote Fidel Castro warning him that unless he seriously sought to rectify race relations in Cuba, he could face an upheaval that would allow U.S. capitalist interests to impose their imperialistic will upon the nation. This letter opened the way for Moore to regain entrance into his birth country.

1991- 2003

In May 1996 Carlos Moore accepted an appointment as Senior Lecturer in International Relations of Latin America in the Institute of International Relations at the University of the West Indies which he held until 31 July 2002. In 1997 Moore returned to the island of this birth for the first time in 34 years. After suffering a near-fatal accident, Moore resigned from the University of the West Indies to pursue his life-long research on race and complete his memoir, and moved to Brazil, where he now lives with his second wife and adopted daughter, Rosana. He continues to research and speak out against racism.

Published Works

Fela: This Bitch of a Life [American edition]. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2009.

Pichon: a memoir: race and revolution in Castro's Cuba. Chicago, Ill.: Lawrence Hill Books, 2008.

A África que Incomoda. Belo Horizonte, Nyandala Editora, 2008.

Racismo & Sociedade. Belo Horizonte. Editora Mazza, 2007.

African presence in the Americas. Co edited with Tanya R. Saunders and Shawna Moore. Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1995.

Castro, the Blacks and Africa. Los Angeles: Center for African American Studies. University of California, 1988.

Fela: Cette Putain de Vie. Paris: Editions Khartala, 1982.

Fela, Fela : this bitch of a life [translated from French by Shawna Moore]. London: Allison & Busby, 1982.

Were Marx and Engels White Racists? Chicago: Institute of Positive Education [Third World Press], 1972.

Scope and Content

This collection of correspondence, published and unpublished manuscripts, flyers, scrapbooks, and audio and video material documents the life and work of Carlos Moore. Special items to note are correspondence from Stokely Carmichael and Leopold Senghor and audio recordings with Malcolm X.

The collection is organized into the following series and sub series:

Biographical/ Genealogical Information

Correspondence

Intellectual Works

Intellectual Works- Published

Intellectual Works- Unpublished

Intellectual Works- Published Interview

Intellectual Works- Conference Presentation

Lectures/ Book talks

Negritude Conference

Negritude Conference- Clippings

Negritude Conference- Correspondence

Negritude Conference- Flyers

News clippings

News clippings- Book review

Audio

Video -Negritude Conference

n.b. Researchers who would like to indicate errors of fact or omissions in this finding aid can contact the librarian at dhunter@bunche.ucla.edu

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Subjects

Moore, Carlos

Cuba --Relations --Caribbean Area.