
Register of the Angela Davis Academic Freedom Case & Trial and Defense Movement 1969-1972

Collection number: MSS 093

Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research
Los Angeles, California

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August 2006

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Collection Summary

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<http://www.socallib.org/>

Creator: Kalish, Donald

Title: Angela Davis Academic Freedom Case & Trial and Defense Movement, 1969-1972

Quantity: 2 Legal Boxes; .67 Linear Feet

Abstract: This collection holds 1 box which chronicles Angela Davis' academic freedom case from the viewpoint of academia, and the Davis trial from the viewpoint of the movement to free her. The 2nd box holds press clippings from a variety of corporate and social-movement sources.

Identification: MSS 093

Language of Material: English

Language of Material: Pamphlets in German News articles in Italian and French One political flyer in Spanish; Castilian

Biography of Donald Kalish and Angela Davis

Donald Kalish (12/4/1919-6/8/2000) was born in Chicago, Illinois. He lived much of his life in Los Angeles, California, and died there after a fruitful academic and activist career. Starting in 2001, an award was made in his name for the excellent intellectual work of undergraduates in the UCLA Philosophy Department.

His education from BA to PhD was done at University of California, Berkeley. He taught at University of California, Los Angeles from 1949-1990 in the Department of Philosophy and helped create the UCLA program in Logic and Semantics. Kalish served as Chair of the department from 1964-1970, and hired Angela Davis during that period.

His extramural activities included founding the Concerned Faculty of UCLA, acting as a member of the University Committee on Vietnam, and acting as Vice-Chairman of Peace Action Council, Los Angeles. He is known for his leadership role with the Peace Action Council in a 1967 protest against President Johnson's Vietnam policies at the Century Plaza Hotel, which brought out 10,000 people. A thousand

riot-officers were used to break up the demonstration. He also brought suit against the Federal Government due to the 1966 Tax Adjustment Act, demanding a refund on his telephone bill for \$4.92. The added taxes, Kalish Said, were solely to "provide funds for the war in Vietnam." In response to the Regents' attempted dismissal of Angela Davis, he said it "was an irrelevant point that she was a Communist," which was the main stated reason for the controversy.

His later activism revolved around the United States' foreign policy in Central America.

Angela Yvonne Davis was born January 26, 1944 in Birmingham, Alabama, the eldest of four children. She studied piano, dance, and the clarinet in a segregated middle-class black neighborhood. In the mid 1950's she and her mother Sallye Davis took part in Birmingham civil rights demonstrations and Angela helped to form interracial study groups. The study groups were disbanded by police and white vigilantes in the Davis neighborhood which came to be known as "Dynamite Hill"; the Davis home was once shaken by a bomb blast across the street.

Due to her outstanding academic work, at age 14 Davis received a scholarship from the American Friends Service Committee to study in integrated schools in the north. She studied at the Elizabeth Irwin High School, part of the Little Red School House in New York City's Greenwich Village, a small private school, favored by the radical community. Students at this school were, and still are, encouraged to be part of social justice struggles; she was exposed to communism at the school and joined the Advance youth group.

Davis then received a full scholarship to Brandeis University in Massachusetts, one of only three Black students in the freshman class. She encountered her future professor Herbert Marcuse at a political rally during the Cuban Missile Crisis. She majored in French; spent time in France, but returned to the United States to study philosophy. In 1965 she graduated magna cum laude. She was also elected to membership in the liberal arts society Phi Beta Kappa.

While working on her Philosophy graduate work was in Germany, she came to the conclusion that East Germany was dealing better with the residue of fascism than the West. At this point, she studied with Adorno and other Marxist philosophers. After winning her freedom in 1972, she would visit the East again. She returned to the University of California, San Diego to finish her graduate work, once again with Marcuse who had relocated there.

Throughout her years, Davis has maintained her activism for abolition of the prison-industrial complex. She is a founder of Critical Resistance, which organizes communities against prisons and unjust law-enforcement practices. She also serves on the board of the Prison Activist Resource Center.

In 1980 and 1984 Davis ran for Vice President on the Communist Party ticket along with Gus Hall.

Ronald Reagan, in his role as Governor of California, said that Davis would never teach in University of California system after her controversial time at UCLA. Nevertheless, she is currently a tenured professor at UC Santa Cruz in the History of Consciousness and Feminist Studies program

Note

Collection Background

Angela Davis was hired to teach courses in the UCLA Philosophy Department by then-chair Donald Kalish in the summer of 1969. Although ostensibly a one-year appointment, based on precedent, there was every reason to believe she would be rehired for a second year, provided her doctoral work and teaching were recognized.

At this point William Tulio Divale, an FBI student informant, wrote a letter printed on July 1, 1969 in the

Title: Daily Bruin

, UCLA's student newspaper, revealing that a member of the Communist Party, USA had been appointed to the Philosophy Department. This was followed by an article of July 9, 1969 in the

Title: San Francisco Examiner

which openly stated the Philosophy lecturer was Davis.

The Vice-Chancellor Saxon then asked Davis to declare whether she was a member of the Communist Party, USA (CPUSA), since a 1949 policy of the Regents stated that no member of the Communist Party could teach at the University of California. This set in motion actions by many members of the Philosophy Department, other UCLA faculty, and academics across the country to decry what they considered a political test and a threat to academic freedom. She stated to an investigating committee that she was indeed a member of the Che Lumumba Club, affiliated with the CPUSA.

Attempts by the Regents were made to withhold her pay and keep her from teaching, but Kalish still allowed her to teach. A kind of circus then evolved as to whether students could receive credits for her courses. Her lectures were monitored, and while it was reported that she did not use her position to indoctrinate students to Communism, and that her commitment to teaching was very strong, it was her public speaking that truly placed her teaching position in jeopardy. One such public statement was that mass demonstrations had been what secured the favorable decision by the Superior Court of California to stop her dismissal, which many regents considered a 'deliberate falsehood'. She was also quoted as telling others to openly fight against systems of oppression. Many of these speeches were organized around defense of the Black Panther Party, and specifically around the Soledad Brothers. These extramural speeches were deemed to be

dangerous to 'academic freedom' and it was decided by the Regents that Davis would not be rehired for the second year.

One of the Soledad Brothers, George Jackson, and Davis became quite close through correspondence, and some of these romantic letters would be used by her counsel in her defense. Her relationship with George and his brother Jonathan would change her life. In San Rafael, California, at the Marin County Courthouse on August 7, 1970, Jonathan attempted to take hostages, including a judge, in order to free his brother. Jonathan Jackson was killed in the process, and the authorities traced the guns back to Davis, which she had bought to defend the legal headquarters of the Soledad Brothers. The conspiracy charges leveled against her carried the death penalty

A federal fugitive warrant was issued. Davis became the third woman to be on the FBI's top ten list while she was underground for two months. She was found in New York City, extradited to California, and held without bail until the end of her trial, June 4, 1972.

A mass movement mushroomed across the country, as well as around the world, for her release.

The jury acquitted her on all counts after only thirteen hours of deliberation. She was represented by John Abt, also counsel to the CPUSA. After her release, she traveled to East Germany, the USSR, and elsewhere to give speeches on her experiences and to thank her supporters.

During her incarceration, activists across the world claimed her trial was based on a frame-up stemming from her celebrity and vocal support of the Soledad Brothers; the government needed to punish someone for the escape attempt and for the revolutionary orientation of the actions. United States authorities, on the other hand, claimed that the Communist Party ordered Angela to stay in the country, and that her case was being used to create support for the Party.

Scope and Contents of the Collection

The Collection of the Angela Davis Academic Freedom Case & Trial and Defense Movement, 1969-1972, is comprised of three series.

Series 1: The Academic Freedom Case materials give insight into the ways in which academic freedom is policed inside the university amidst varying levels of authority, mostly looking at the Regents of the University of California, UCLA administrators, and faculty

Series 2: The Trial and Defense Movement papers demonstrate one way in which a mass movement can be carried out, from behind the scenes planning, to the materials that movements use to garner support for an issue. Most of these materials come from the National United Committee to Free Angela Davis (NUCFAD), along with some other groups affiliated with the cause to free Davis.

Series 3: The Press Clippings show the UCLA case and trial from various viewpoints of mostly print media. By looking at these differing sources, one can compare the coverage of for-profit media and social-movement media on these issues.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged, in the bulk of cases, chronologically.

Access

The collection is available for research only at the Library's facility in Los Angeles. The Library is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. Researchers are encouraged to call or email the Library indicating the nature of their research query prior to making a visit.

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Related Materials

Archival Collections

Note

- Peace Action Council Records
- Black Panther Party Records
- Angela Davis Collection in Poster Collection
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Title: The Black Panther
in Periodicals Collection

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Title: Ramparts

February 1971 in Periodicals Collection

- Angela Davis Case, Summary Of- 1971- Los Angeles, CA. In Audio Collection
- James Baldwin- 'On Defense of Angela Davis'- 5/1972- University of California, Los Angeles. In Audio Collection
- Angela Davis, Peace And Justice Statewide Demonstration- 5/20/1972- San Jose, CA. In Audio Collection
- James Baldwin Discusses Angela Davis Case In Context Of Present Day Social Structure- 5/24/1972- Los Angeles, CA. In Audio Collection
- Dr. Angela Davis-'A Night of Triumph- A Projection of the Future'- 6/9/1972- Los Angeles, CA. In Audio Collection

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Books

Note

- Mitchell, Charlene. "The Fight To Free Angela Davis: its importance for the working class" Report to 20th National Convention Communist Party USA, 1972. In Black Studies pamphlets.
- Davis, Angela Y.

Title: Blues Legacies and Black Feminism

. New York: Pantheon Books, 1998. In Art section.

- Davis, Angela Y.

Title: Women Race & Class

. New York: Random House, 1981. In Women Studies Section.

Separated Materials

Poster Collection- Angela Davis Posters

Note

- Poster ("Free Angela Davis" showing Angela on a microphone)
- Magazine article,

Title: LIFE,

9/11/1970

Index Terms

When possible, Library of Congress subject headings are used.

Names:

Davis, Angela Yvonne, 1944- defendant.

Davis, Angela Yvonne, 1944-

Kalish, Donald

Organizations:

National United Committee to Free Angela Davis

Communist Party of the United States of America.

Regents --California

University of California, Los Angeles.

Subjects:

Academic Freedom.
Communism.
Racism.
Trials (Conspiracy)--California.
Social movement --United States.

Places:

Los Angeles (Calif.)
San Rafael (Calif.)
Marin County (Calif.)
New York (N.Y.)
Germany (East)

Document Types:

Letters.
Newsletters
Ethnic press
Press, Communist
Newspapers
Pamphlets

Location of Originals

Files contain photocopies of correspondence between members of the UCLA Philosophy Department and UCLA administrators. Originals are in the Donald Kalish Papers at the Special Collections of UCLA.

Custodial History

Papers were lent to the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research by Donald Kalish in 1984. Appropriate papers were returned to Kalish in 1988 and the whole of his papers are kept at UCLA in Special Collections. Papers were organized to some extent in that period. The most recent reorganization finally moves papers according to some of those original categories, and creates a few new ones.

Note

Major changes from the first organization were to create a separate folder for the German language materials, and to put all the newsprint into one box of its own.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Angela Davis Academic Freedom Case & Trial and Defense Movement Records, Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research, Los Angeles, California.

Acquisition Information

Loan from Donald Kalish, 15 August 1984 to 8 October 1988

Series 1 **UCLA Academic Freedom Case, 1969-1972**

Physical Description: .7 legal boxes

Scope and Content Note

This series is comprised of correspondence, resolutions, editorials and reports related to the termination of Angela Davis for membership in the Communist Party, USA and her extramural speeches.

- box-folder 1/1 **University correspondence between members of the UCLA Philosophy Department and Vice-Chancellors, the Chancellor, and the University President. Begins with letters confirming the hiring of Angela Davis and then continues through the controversy. One letter by Davis. 4/16/1969-6/18/1971**
- box-folder 1/2 **Correspondence of support for Davis between Kalish and various members of the UCLA community as well as other academic and professional institutions: Stanford, Yale, American Philosophical Association, York University of Ontario, University of Wisconsin, Cornell, Princeton, and a letter from a former student of Davis. 9/12/1969-3/7/1970**
- box-folder 1/3 **Disagreements/Red-baiting**
- box-folder 1/4 **Resolutions by academic and citizen groups supporting Davis' right to teach. Associated Students of University California, Berkeley. Associated Students of UCLA. 25th Assembly District Democratic Club (San Jose, California). USC University Senate. 8/22/1969-1/12/1970**
- box-folder 1/5 **Press releases put out by faculty of the UCLA Philosophy Department.**
- box-folder 1/6 **Radio news editorials and rebuttals by members of the UCLA Philosophy Department, including a letter by Davis. Radio news editorials and rebuttals by members of the UCLA Philosophy Department, including a letter by Davis.**
- box-folder 1/7 **Report by the American Association of University Professors printed in August 1971 and a paper ("The Constitutional Rights of Communist Teachers and the Angela Davis Case") given at the 1972 annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association.**

Series 2 Trial and Defense Movement, 1970-1972

Physical Description: .7 legal boxes

Scope and Content Note

This series is comprised of correspondence, resolutions, trial bulletins, newsletters, and political education materials on the trial of Angela Davis for conspiracy to murder.

- box-folder 1/8 **National United Committee to Free Angela Davis(NUCFAD) Administrative Papers**
box-folder 1/9 **NUCFAD form letters letters requesting political solidarity and commitment, fundraising letters, petitions from NUCFAD.**
- box-folder 1/10 **Letters to Supporters**
box-folder 1/11 **Hate Mail**
box-folder 1/12 **Resolutions by various Democratic Clubs and one from the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU).**
- box-folder 1/13 **NUCFAD newsletters: "Free Angela" and "Because We're Oppressed" newsletters. 1970-1972**
box-folder 1/14 **Trial bulletins published by the state as well as community groups.**
box-folder 1/15 **Press releases and press correspondence by NUCFAD and the Committee for Defense of the Bill of Rights. 10/15/1970-4/15/1972**
- box-folder 1/16 **Statements and reports on the trial. Various communist materials. Many undated.**
box-folder 1/17 **Protest Materials & Political Event Flyers**
- 44cm. by 46cm "Free Angela Davis" poster, with Davis on a microphone, removed and put with other political posters of Davis in the SCL collection.
- box-folder 1/18 **Statements by Angela**
box-folder 1/19 **East Germany solidarity materials. Two pamphlets, one published post-trial and follows her travels in East Germany. One open letter from Attorney Professor Dr. Friedrich Karl Kaul. Five statements by the Women's International Democratic Federation.**
- box-folder 1/20 **Political pamphlets from various sources on the Angela Davis trial.**

Series 3 News Clippings, 1969-1977

Physical Description: 1 legal box

Scope and Content Note

This series is comprised of clippings from a variety of media sources on the UCLA case and the Trial, along with a Brandeis 1965 Yearbook.

- box-folder 2/1 **University of California media, 7/1/1969-10/27/1970**
- box-folder 2/2 **Los Angeles Times, 9/19/1969-4/28/1977**
- box-folder 2/3 **Santa Monica Evening Outlook, 9/19/1969-12/20/1969**
- box-folder 2/4 **San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle, July 9, 1969-December 1969**
- box-folder 2/5 **Other California Newspapers, 10/7/1969-3/17/1972**
- box-folder 2/6 **Non-California (United States) Newspapers, 9/27/1969-April 1971**
- box-folder 2/7 **Social-Movement/Ethnic Media (The Black Panther; Muhammad Speaks; Soviet Woman; Feminist and Jewish papers), 1970-1971**
- box-folder 2/8 **Italian and French Media, 10/25/1970-1/20/1971**
- box-folder 2/9 **CPUSA Affiliated Media (People's World; Daily World; World Magazine), 6/20/1969-12/31/1970**
- box-folder 2/10 **CPUSA Affiliated Media (People's World; Daily World; World Magazine), 2/2/1971-10/14/1972**
- box-folder 2/11 **Television Commentaries on the Trial (January and February 1971)**
- box-folder 2/12 **Magazine Coverage, 1971-1972**

One article removed: LIFE Magazine, 9/11/1970, which now resides with the Angela Davis poster collection of the SCL.

Note

There is one article from Frontier, 1956, entitled "How to Fire a Communist".

- box-folder 2/13 **Random Clippings Without Dates**
- box-folder 2/14 **Brandeis University Yearbook, 1965**