Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: Holt Labor Library at CSU Dominguez Hills
Title: Jim Hamilton Papers
creator: Hamilton, James
Identifier/Call Number: HLL.2019.006
Physical Description: 1.67 Linear Feet
Physical Description: 4 boxes
Date (inclusive): 1962-2012
Language of Material: Collection material is in English.
Abstract: This collection includes the papers of Jim Hamilton, an active member of the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), Local 688 in St. Louis, Missouri, who held various administrative roles in the union and advocated for rank-and-file reform. It includes correspondence, convention reports and publications, flyers, newsletters, meeting notes, constitution proposals, newspaper articles, contracts, and color photographs.
Processing Information
Allison Ransom processed the collection and created the finding aid in ArchivesSpace at the Gerth Archives and Special Collections, California State University, Dominguez Hills.
Custodial History
The Jim Hamilton Papers were donated to the Holt Labor Library in San Francisco, California between 2005 and 2013, and were acquired by the Gerth Archives and Special Collections at California State University, Dominguez Hills in 2019.
Related Collections
Berta Green Langston Papers, HLL.2019.002; Marjorie and Paul Colvin Papers, HLL.2019.003; William and Beatrice Eisman papers, HLL.2019.004; Thomas F. Barton Papers, HLL.2019.005.
Conditions Governing Access
There are no access restrictions on this collection.
Conditions Governing Use
All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the Director of Archives and Special Collections. Permission for publication is given on behalf of Special Collections as the owner of the physical materials and not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained.
Arrangement
Scope and Contents
The Jim Hamilton Papers (1962-2012) comprises correspondence, convention reports and publications, flyers, newsletters, meeting notes, constitution proposals, newspaper articles, and color photographs documenting Jim Hamilton's involvement with the Teamsters Democratic Union (TDU), Local 688 in St. Louis, Missouri, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), and various radical political organizations. A file documenting the 1984 St. Louis Lampert International Airport taxi drivers' strike is present, as well as flyers and letters regarding the election of Hamilton to various offices within Local 688, including shop steward, shop secretary, shop secretary treasurer, and to the political education committee and as a delegate to the city-wide shop conference. Convention documents, newsletters, and leaflets chronicling the activities of national TDU chapters are present in the collection as well. Flyers, newsletters, and pamphlets reflecting the activities of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, and the United Automobile Workers (UAW) are included, as are color photographs depicting Jim Hamilton at union conventions, with a member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), and with various members of political organizations in Mexico, Yugoslavia, Italy, and France. The collection also includes letters, newsletters, and flyers which chronicle Hamilton's involvement with various Socialist and other political organizations including the Spartacist League, Workers Socialist League, the Young People's Socialist League, the American Socialist Organizing Committee, and the Communist International League, among others.
Biographical / Historical
Jim Hamilton was a taxi driver in St. Louis, Missouri and a member of the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), Local 688. He was also a charter member and first recording secretary of the Public Service Workers in Columbia, Missouri, and in 1972-1973 he participated during the Teacher's Union Local 420 strike. As a shop steward for Local 688, he implemented changes such as providing written copies of shop meeting minutes to all member taxi drivers, and called for reform within
the Labor Health Institute (LHI), which was a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) that benefitted members of Local 688, in addition to helping workers write grievances and negotiate contracts. He was also a delegate to the city-wide shop conference in 1978, where he advocated for improving working conditions for taxi drivers by negotiating with airport administrations. His leadership laid the groundwork for his campaign for Shop Secretary Treasurer of Local 688 in 1981, for which he ran among Bob Matthews, candidate for President, and Jesse Mize and Bufford Logan for Trustees, on a program of maintaining union democracy, using militant action against companies by way of strikes and boycotts, fighting race and sex discrimination within the union, and opposing anti-labor laws. He consistently advocated for maintaining democratic leadership within the organization, and in 1981 campaigned to serve as a "delegate for change" at the International Teamsters Convention to attempt to build a rank-and-file movement within the Teamsters to reinstate membership control, freeze due fees, and promote membership control over political action and union politics. He also ran to serve on the Political Education Committee for the Teamsters Local 688 to suggest a separate political party that would advocate for workers rights and collaborate with other organizations including the St. Louis Coalition Against the Draft.

Jim Hamilton advocated for rank-and-file reform within the TDU, which was formed in 1976 by members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT). He believed that the TDU should be involved in political affairs and was a proponent of using militant action to effect meaningful change within the union. After the IBT endorsed Ronald Regan in 1980, whose administration many Teamsters believed initiated many pay cuts and contract violations within their union and others, there was a push to instate a group that would challenge political parties within the union bureaucracy. At the TDU Convention in Detroit in 1981, Hamilton was a member of the "TDU'ers for Militant Action" group alongside Jesse Mize and Steve Conn from St. Louis, and Hal Leyshon from New York, which proposed to fight racism and sexism within the union, improve contract negotiations, and keep the government out of internal union affairs. In addition to internal political reform, the group also advocated for the creation of an international worker's party based on unions. This motion was acknowledged in 1982 in a convention resolution published by the Fighting Teamster newsletter that called for designating the TDU as an organization that should establish a congress of labor along with the AFL-CIO unions, the IBT, and the United Mine Workers, among others. In advance of the 1982 TDU convention, the International Workers Party (Fourth International), Chicago Workers, and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) called upon their members to include a discussion about the creation of an international labor party on the convention's agenda. In that year, Hamilton was the recording secretary for the Teamster Workers for a Fighting Union, which sought to achieve these goals.

Hamilton's interest in a labor party that incorporated various unions and other workers contributed to his involvement with various radical political organizations, including the Spartacist League, which formed the International Liaison Committee for a Worker's International (ILC) and also proposed for an independent political party, known as the Freedom Labor Party. Hamilton also traveled to France, Italy, Yugoslavia, and Germany to meet with members of other political organizations, including the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), attended the World Worker's Conference in Mexico City, and was involved with the Communist International League.

Preferred Citation
[Title of item]. Jim Hamilton Papers, HLL.2019.006, Gerth Archives and Special Collections, California State University, Dominguez Hills.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Socialism--United States--History--20th century
Socialism--Europe --20th century
Teamsters--Labor unions--Organizing--United States
Strikes and Lockouts -- Taxicab drivers -- Saint Louis, Missouri
Teachers' unions -- United States
Series I. Labor Unions I. 1964-2012, undated

Scope and Contents
Series I. contains convention resolution reports, constitution proposals, minutes, press releases, and flyers which document Jim Hamilton's involvement with the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), Local 688. Of note are newspaper clippings, newsletters, meeting notes, contracts, and grievance reports which reflect Hamilton's participation in the St. Louis Lambert International Airport taxicab drivers' strike, as well as flyers and letters regarding various union position elections, such as Jim Hamilton's campaigns for shop secretary, secretary treasurer, and to the political education committee, as well as other union members' campaigns for similar roles. Also present are the Fighting Teamster and Teamster Truth Local 688 newsletters, as well as newsletters, leaflets, and convention documents that chronicle the activities of national TDU chapters and Jim Hamilton's proposed amendment to the TDU constitution. The series also contains convention documents from the 1981 International Brotherhood of Teamsters convention, newsletters, flyers and pamphlets regarding the conventions and organizing efforts of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, and color photographs depicting people associated with various organizations.

Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically.

box 1, folder 1-2
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO 2002-2012
Scope and Contents
Contains one color photograph of a student at Long Middle School.

box 1, folder 3
Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) Color Photograph undated

box 1, folder 4
"Ford Worker, Dennis Gallis" Color Photograph undated

box 1, folder 5
International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) 1981, undated
Scope and Contents
Includes one photograph of Ray Adams and Gene Elcan (?)..

box 1, folder 6

box 1, folder 7
St. Louis, Missouri-Area Labor Leaflets 1997, 2000-2012
Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) 1964-1996, undated
Local 688 1965-1990, undated
Scope and Contents
Contains one color photograph.

box 2, folder 1-2

box 2, folder 3
Elections 1965, 1980-1985, undated
Fighting Teamster Newsletter 1982-1983
Newsletters 1981-1989
Newspaper Clippings 1978-1982
Teamster Truth Newsletter 1979, undated

box 2, folder 4
National Chapters 1964-1996, undated
Scope and Contents
Contains one color photograph.

box 3, folder 1-2
United Automobile Workers (UAW) 1976, 1980
Scope and Contents
Contains color photographs.
Series II. Political Activities 1963-2012, undated

Scope and Contents
Series II. contains letters, newsletters, and flyers that reflect the activities of various socialist organizations such as the Spartacist League, the Workers Socialist League, the Young People's Socialist League, and the American Socialist Organizing Committee, among others. Also included are draft resolutions and typed manuscripts of articles from Greece, France, and Austria concerning the Communist International League, letters and flyers regarding the Action Committee for (the) Defense of Political Prisoners in Spain, and newsletters by the Student Fair Play for Cuba Committee and the Bolivian periodical *Masas*. The series also includes *The Young Socialist* and *Labor News*, a publication of the Socialist League. The series also contains color photographs depicting people in various organizations in the United States, Mexico, Italy, Yugoslavia, and France.

Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically.

box 3, folder 5  
Action Committee for Defense of Political Prisoners in Spain 1975, undated
box 3, folder 6  
American Socialist Organizing Committee 1963-1965
box 3, folder 7  
box 3, folder 8  
Freedom Socialist Party 2012, undated
box 3, folder 9  
Independent Socialist Club 1966, undated
box 3, folder 10  
"Jim with Conrad François in Paris at cafe near HQ" Color Photograph undated
box 3, folder 11  
*Labor News* 1981

Scope and Contents
Contains Volume 5, Number 3-4, 6-8.

box 3, folder 12  
"Labor Party Conference, Kansas City," Color Photographs undated
box 3, folder 13  
Latin America 1973, undated
box 3, folder 14  
"May Day, 1983, in Milano, Italy" Color Photograph 1983
box 3, folder 15  
Proletarian Tasks Tendency 1983
box 4, folder 1  
Reconstruction of the Fourth International 1975, 1982
box 4, folder 2  
Rijeka, Yugoslavia Color Photographs undated
box 4, folder 3  
Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) Color Photograph undated
box 4, folder 4  
Spartacist League 1963-1972, 1997
box 4, folder 5  
*Strike!* Bulletin, Socialist Party of Ohio undated

Scope and Contents
Contains Volume 1, Number 5.

box 4, folder 6  
Student Peace Union 1963
box 4, folder 7  
*The Young Socialist* 1962-1963

Scope and Contents
Contains Volume 5, Number 8; Volume 6, Number 3-6, 9; Volume 7, Number 1.

box 4, folder 8  
"Trotskyst Work in the Trade Unions" series, *Workers Vanguard* 1973
box 4, folder 9  
Worker's Labor Party 2000, undated
box 4, folder 10  
Worker's Socialist League 1965, 1976-1990, 2004
box 4, folder 11  
World Worker's Conference, Mexico City undated

Scope and Contents
Contains color photographs.

box 4, folder 12  
Young People's Socialist League 1963-1964, undated