

3 boxes

DESCRIPTION

The collection includes biographical material, personal correspondence, photographs, transcripts of unpublished writings, drawings and sketches as well as various student and labour publications.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Michael Alan Harmel was born to Irish immigrant parents in February 1915 in Johannesburg. He was an intellectual and revolutionary and became a radical socialist opposed to racism while studying at Rhodes University in the 1930s. After graduating from Rhodes with an MA in English literature, Harmel worked in London for the British Communist Party's newspaper *The Daily Worker*. He returned to South Africa in 1939, and immediately joined the Communist Party of South Africa. At the early age of 25 he was elected to the Johannesburg District Committee where he served as a District Secretary. After the dissolution of the Communist Party in 1950 Harmel worked tirelessly towards reconstitution of the Party and was a prominent member of the underground Party collective. Publicly he devoted most of his time to journalism. He was on the editorial board of *Liberation*, and also worked as a correspondent of *The Guardian*, *Spark* and *New Age*. Harmel also collaborated in the formation of the South African Congress of Trades Unions (SACTU) and was a founder member of the Congress of Democrats. He was one of the first to be banned under the Suppression of Communism Act which he defied and for which he was arrested. In 1959 Harmel became the first editor of the Communist Party's new journal, *The African Communist*. He wrote countless articles for that journal, largely under his pseudonym, A. Lerumo. He was also one of the commanders of Umkhonto we Sizwe. While tutoring in Marxism-Leninism to new recruits of the Communist Party, he played a leading role in drafting this Party's new programme.

In 1962 Michael Harmel was one of the first people to be placed under 24 hour house arrest for 5 years. Subjected to repeated state harassment he was instructed by the Communist Party to go into exile in London where he continued editing and producing *The African Communist*. While in exile, Michael Harmel continued his full-time work in both the MK and the Communist Party. He also played an important role in the shaping and work of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, as well as the establishment of the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Communist Party Harmel wrote a book containing the history of this party and entitled: "Fifty Fighting Years". It was published under his pseudonym A. Lerumo and translated into many languages.

Michael Harmel was sent to Prague to become the Communist Party's representative to the journal *World Marxist Review*. He worked and lived in Prague with his wife and daughter until his death at the age of 59 on 18 June 1974. He was survived by his wife Ray Harmel (1905 – 1998), his daughter Barbara, and his granddaughter Lisa.

CLASSIFICATION

A BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

A 1 Material about banning.

A 2 Obituaries and speeches at Michael Harmel's funeral in 1974.

B CORRESPONDENCE

B1.1-55 Letters written by Michael Harmel's father, Arthur Aaron Harmel for the period of 1930s- 1950s.

- B2.1-58 Correspondence which includes letters of Michael Harmel's daughter Barbara (Lamb) and The African Communist. 1970-1995.
- B3.1-21 Undated letters written by Arthur Harmel, Michael's father as well as letters to Barbara Harmel.
- B4.1-7 Notes of condolences and letters addressed to Barbara after her father's death.
- B 5 Collection of postcards.
- C UNPUBLISHED WRITINGS
- C1 The White People. A Satirical Fantasy.
 C1.1 Book 1 Part 1 (pages 1 – 69)
 C1.2 Book 1 Part 2 entitled "Advent" (pages 70 – 169)
 C1.3 Book 2 Part 1 entitled "Conquest" (pages 170 – 239)
 C1.4 Book 2 Part 2 entitled "Conquest" (pages 250 – 375)
 C1.5 Book 3 entitled "Liberation" (pages 376 – 474)
 C1.6 Epilogue (pages 475 – 480)
 C1.7 Correspondence (1990)
 C1.8 Notes by Barbara Harmel
 Including typescript notes by unknown, probably assessing possible publication.
- C2 Ray's Story Ray Harmel Autobiography, written in London in 1993.
- C3.1-13 Poems and various short stories for the period of 1933- 1936.
- C4.1-3 Articles
- D PUBLICATIONS
- D1 The Adelphi" A South African Monthly Review of Literature, Public Affairs and The Arts.
 D1.1 Copies of various articles, May 1934 - September 1934.
 D1.2 Issues: May – September 1934.
 D1.3 Issues: July 1962 – June 1963.
- D2 Copies of various articles published in The Rhodian for the period of 1933 – 1938.
- D3 Labour Monthly. Issues: April 1955, June 1964, April 1965, October 1966, December 1966, April 1970, August 1972, August 1974.
- D4 World Marxist Review. Issues: January 1974, August 1974 (plus duplicate)
- D5.1-4 The Rhodian The Magazine of Rhodes University College, Grahamstown. Issues: Vol. XIV No.2, Summer Term, 1936; Vol. XV No.1, Winter Term, 1937; Vol. XV No.2, Summer Term, 1937; Vol. XVI No.1, Winter Term, 1938.
- D6 The African Communist, No.59/1974.
- E NEWSPAPERS AND NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS
- E1 Various newspapers for the period of 1936 – 1994.
- E2 Scrap book containing sketches, newspaper clippings and articles written by Michael Harmel.

F MISCELLANEOUS

The material includes: articles published in South African Pharmaceutical Journal (1937-1938), Statements on Apartheid, various booklets and pamphlets and Obituary of Olive Schreiner written by Michael Harmel.

G PHOTOGRAPHS

- G1 Michael Harmel as a boy.
- G2 Michael Harmel as a student with friends (1930s)
- G3 Michael with his wife Ray Harmel (1940s & 1960s)
- G4 ditto
- G5 Michael's Harmel with wife Ray, daughter Barbara and father Arthur.
- G6 Barbara Harmel in 1950's and 1960's with her mother Ray and husband Geoff Lamb.
- G7 Michael Harmel (1930's, 1950's and 1960's) during his visits to France, England and Bulgaria.
- G8 Arthur Harmel (Michael's father). Includes Arthur with his brother Edward (Ted) and his wife Tille as well as with some other family members. 1930s and 1940s.
- G9 Michael's brother Edward (Ted) and his wife Tille on their wedding day.
- G10 Michael Harmel with a group of people at Central Indian High School (date unknown).
- G11 Unidentified international conference/congress of communists in Europe.
- G12 Michael Harmel and Yusuf Dadoo at a meeting (no date and place available).
- G13 Yusuf Dadoo speaking at a meeting (date and place unknown).
- G14 Michael Harmel attending a meeting (no date or place available).

H MEMORABILIA

- H1 Medal commemorating 100 years of the 1st International (1864-1964).
- H2 Badge of the Organization of the International Journalists (1946-1966).