

U DJM

Papers of Joan McMichael

1930s-1980s

Biographical Background:

Dr. Joan McMichael was born on 8 February 1906 in India as Joan Katherine MacPherson. She graduated as a doctor from Edinburgh University and married her first husband John McMichael in c. 1930. She joined the Labour Party and then the Communist Party in 1936. She was involved in Medical Aid for Spain during the Spanish Civil War and went on to support Medical Aid for China. At the beginning of the Second World War she worked for the blood transfusion service in Slough, later becoming Medical Officer for Health in West London. She married her second husband Bill (Gabriel) Carritt in 1943 and there is also some material relating to his activities in this collection. McMichael and Carritt were both leaders of the post-war squatters' movement, and during this time they enabled homeless families to move into empty luxury flats.

In the late 1940s Joan McMichael was elected a Communist councillor for Westminster and she sat on Communist Party committees concerned with children, women and social services. As part of these activities, in addition to frequent visits to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, she led or was a member of delegations to the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Grenada and Guatemala. McMichael founded the Medical Aid Committee for Vietnam [MACV] in 1965, and she remained honourable secretary of this organisation and its successor, Medical and Scientific Aid for Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia [MSAVLC], until her death in 1989. Through her commitment to the cause of peace in Vietnam she held discussions with Ho Chi-Minh about how British supporters could help with the medical needs of the country. Joan McMichael had four children, and she married for the third time, a fellow Communist campaigner, Jack Askins, in the mid-1980s. She died aged 83 on 6 August 1989.

Custodial history:

Received from her son Jonathan Carritt, October 2008

Description:

The bulk of this collection comprises publications, reports, minutes, correspondence, press cuttings, notebooks and photographs from the Medical Aid Committee for Vietnam [MACV] and the Medical and Scientific Aid for Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia [MSAVLC]. There is also one box of posters from campaigns including the anti-Vietnam War movement. The remainder of the collection is largely related to the Communist Party and its supporting organisations.

There are left wing pamphlets, documents about British Communist Party policies and campaigns and photographs from Communist Party delegations to Eastern Europe. There is also material about the Socialist Medical Association and pamphlets, photographs and conference papers relating to medical aid for Africa, Lebanon, Spain and China.

Extent: 34 boxes, 5.67 linear metres

Related material:

Anti-Vietnam War Movement -

Papers of Tony (Anthony John) Topham [U DTO]

Papers of Lt Commander Edgar Philip Young RN (retired) and Amicia More Young [U DYO]

The Communist Party -

Papers of Jock Haston [U DJH]

Papers of Harold Laski and Frida Laski [U DLA]

Socialist Medical Association -

Archives of the Socialist Health Association [U DSM]

Access conditions:

U DJM (34 boxes, 5.67 linear metres) is currently un-catalogued. In some cases a draft or box list may exist which may allow us to provide access to the collection ahead of the material being catalogued. If you are interested in this collection please contact archives@hull.ac.uk clearly outlining your interest and timescales

Language:

Some material is in Vietnamese