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Carlos Vega Collection

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An Ecuadorian-born community activist, Carlos Vega moved to Holyoke, Massachusetts, with his family in 1955. Settling in the working-class "Flats" neighborhood at a time when many of Holyoke's factories were relocating to the southern United States or Asia, the Vegas were one of the few Spanish-speaking families in the city, but when Carlos began to work on a local tobacco farm at the age of 14, he encountered the new influx of migrants from Puerto Rico who had been lured to the Connecticut Valley as agricultural laborers by the Department of Labor. With the Puerto Rican economy declining in the 1960s, many of these farm workers settled permanently in Springfield and Holyoke, but they soon discovered that the declining economy there combined with racism and urban decay blocked their hopes for upward mobility. Radicalized by the anti-colonial, antiwar, and Civil Rights

movements of the late 1960s, Vega emerged as an important community organizer in the 1970s, working with Fair Share, New Unity, Urban Ministry, and other progressive organizations. With a backdrop of riots, arson, and racial tension, these organizations focused on issues relevant to the Puerto Rican community, particularly voter education and registration, fair housing, and education. In 1982, Vega helped found Nueva Esperanza, a non-profit community development organization whose mission was to restore and maintain blighted buildings in South Holyoke. He worked with Nueva Esperanza for over 30 years, continuing until 2010 after a brain cancer diagnosis in 1995. He survived until April 2012.

The materials in the Vega collection reflect one activist's deep-seated interests in left wing movements in Central America, the Caribbean, Asia, South America, and Africa. Dating from the 1960s through 1980s, the approximately 300 leaflets, pamphlets, books, and newsletters offer sometimes scarce documentation of internationalist liberation movements such as the PAIGC in Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, the Tupamaros in Uruguay, and the EFLNA in Eritrea. Of particular note is a small group of materials documenting Vega's participation in the 1974 Venceremos Brigade and a collection of clippings, newsletters, notes, fliers, conference material, and newspapers from various groups such as New England Action Research, Friends of the Filipino People, The Latin American Student Association, and the Ethiopian Students Union of North America. Some printed materials are cataloged and housed with the rare books collection.

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Antiracism

Central and South America

Communism and Socialism

Massachusetts (West)

Political activism

Printed materials

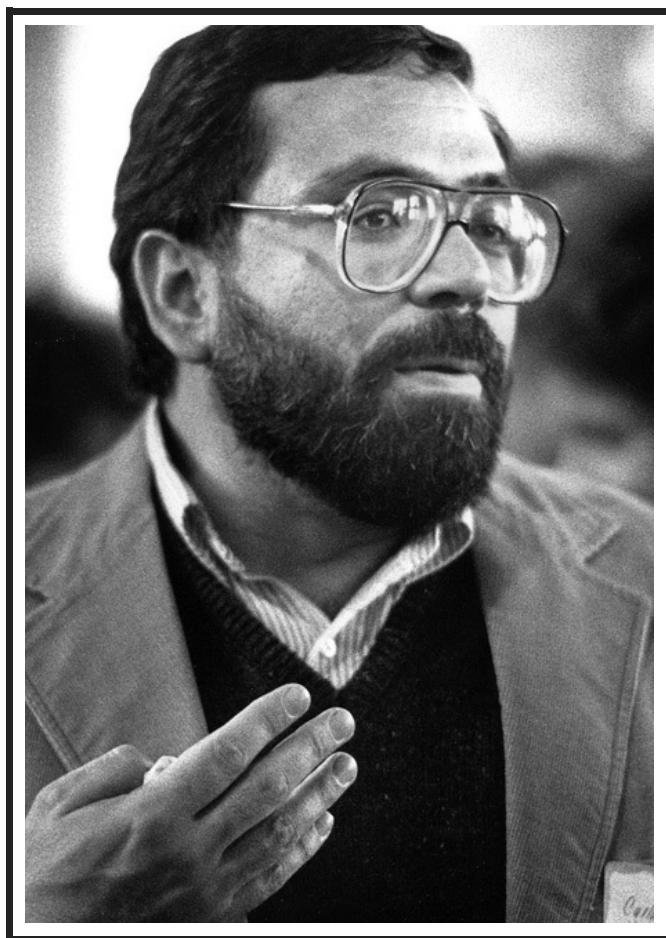
Social justice

Background on Carlos Vega

An Ecuadorian-born community activist, Carlos Vega moved to Holyoke, Massachusetts, with his family in 1955, settling in the city's "Flats" neighborhood, a working-class community then populated largely by Irish and French Canadians. As a child, Vega witnessed the end of the post-war economic boom and the downturn in Holyoke's fortunes as many of the factories that formed the city's lifeblood began to relocate to the U.S. South or Asia.

By the time he was 14, Vega found that the only job he could get was on the local tobacco farms where he first encountered the new influx of migrants, mostly from Puerto Rico. Driven by the dire economic situation on the island and the promise of agricultural employment extended by the U.S. Department of Labor, many of these migrants settled permanently in the Pioneer Valley, but they soon discovered that the economy here was little better than the economy they had left. Exacerbated by racism and rising urban decay, this newest wave of migrants were blamed for the downturn and found their hopes for upward mobility blocked.

Radicalized by the anti-colonial, antiwar, and Civil Rights movements of the late 1960s, Vega emerged as an important community organizer in the 1970s, working with Fair Share, New Unity, Urban Ministry, and other progressive organizations: anything that involved civic engagement and feeling for social justice. With a backdrop of riots, arson, and racial tension, these organizations focused on issues relevant to the Puerto Rican community of Holyoke, particularly voter education and registration, fair housing, education, employment, and safe streets.



Carlos Vega

Vega's impact on Holyoke ranged from involvement in the desegregation lawsuits against the city's schools in the 1970s to

perhaps his most lasting legacy, Nueva Esperanza, a not-for-profit community development organization seeking to restore and maintain blighted buildings in the city and saving 30 buildings and developing space for small business and nearly 400 units of affordable housing. Two years after being diagnosed with brain cancer in 1995, Vega resigned as Executive Director, but remained active on the Board of Directors. He survived until April 2012.

Scope of collection

The materials in the Vega collection reflect one activist's deep-seated interests in left wing movements in Central America, the Caribbean, Asia, South America, and Africa. Dating from the 1960s through 1980s, the approximately 300 leaflets, pamphlets, books, and newsletters offer sometimes scarce documentation of internationalist liberation movements such as the PAIGC in Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, the Tupamaros in Uruguay, and the EFLNA in Eritrea. Of particular note is a small group of materials documenting Vega's participation in the 1974 Venceremos Brigade and a collection of clippings, newsletters, notes, fliers, conference material, and newspapers from various groups such as New England Action Research, Friends of the Filipino People, The Latin American Student Association, and the Ethiopian Students Union of North America. Some printed materials are cataloged and housed with the rare books collection.

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Crispus Attucks Contingent

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Cuba

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Cuba: Venceremos Brigade: Journal and notebook

1974

Box 1: 6

Cuba: Venceremos Brigade: notes, souvenirs, handouts

1974

Box 1: 7

Cuba: Venceremos Brigade: 'Puerto Rico -- Solidarity statement'

1974

Box 1: 8

Cuba: Venceremos Brigade: Welcome to Oriente 'Venceremos Brigade' [pamphlet]

1974

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Cuba: Venceremos Brigade: XV aniversario Cuva Programa

1974

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Ethiopian Students Union in North America: "Mass organization: an overview"

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1973

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Zimbabwe

1979

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Series 2. Books and pamphlets

1962-1993

All works in this series are inventoried separately in the general library catalog.

Abraham, Cleo. Urban city / by Cleo Abraham. New York : Carlton Press

1972

The Adventures of Fat Freddy's cat. San Francisco : Rip Off Press

Agostinho Neto, António, 1922-1979. Messages to companions in the struggle / [by Agostinho Neto]. Richmond, B.C. : LSM Information Center

1972

Alavi, Hamza, 1921-2003. Peasants and revolution / Hamza Alavi. Ann Arbor, Mich. : Radical Education Project

1965

Andreas, Joel. The incredible Rocky vs. the power of the people! : featuring America's richest family / by Joel Andreas. Berkeley, Calif. : North American Congress on Latin America

1975

Angola, the struggle for liberation. Highland Park, Mich. : Sun Press

1976

Así vemos el Moncada / [edición: Mercedes Vich]. La Habana : Gente Nueva

1973

Austveg, Inger, 1915- Dag y sus amigos / [Inger Austveg] ; edición, Lupe de la Torre ; diseño e ilustraciones, José González Rodríguez. La Habana : Gente Nueva

1973

Autin, Diana M. T. K. Young people and the law / by Diana Autin ; illus. by Aaron McClellan. Ann Arbor, Mich. : Youth Liberation Press

1978

Baran, Paul A. The economics of racism / by Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy. Somerville, Mass. : New England Free Press

1966

Baron, Harold M., 1930- The demand for Black labor : historical notes on the political economy of racism / Harold M. Baron. Somerville, Mass. : New England Free Press

1971

Beishenaliev, Shukurbek, 1928- Un corderito con cuernos / Sh. Beyshenaliev ; [traducido del ruso por J. López Ganivet ; dibujos de L. Iliná]. Moscú : Progreso

1980

The Black scholar. [San Francisco, Calif., etc. : Black World Foundation]

Blanco, Hugo. Hugo Blanco on Chile & Peru. New York : Pathfinder Press

1972

Boggs, James. Manifesto for a Black revolutionary party. [Philadelphia : Pacesetters Pub. House

1969
Boggs, James. The awesome responsibilities of revolutionary leadership / : [James and Grace Boggs]. [Detroit : Committee for Political Development
1973
Brazier, Arthur M. Black self-determination; : the story of the Woodlawn Organization, / by Arthur M. Brazier. Grand Rapids, : Eerdmans
1969
Breitman, George. Malcolm X, the man and his ideas. [New York : Pathfinder Press
1971
Brinton, Maurice. The Bolsheviks & Workers' control, 1917 to 1921 : the State and counterrevolution. London : 'Solidarity'
1970
Brooks, Thomas R. To build a new world : a brief history of American labor / by Thomas R. Brooks. New York : League for Industrial Democracy
1965
Bülbül, 1936- "I'm not for women's lib-- but" / Bülbül. Stanford, CA : New Seed Press
1973
Cannon, Terry. Free and equal : the end of racial discrimination in Cuba / by Terry Cannon and Johnnetta Cole. [New York] : Venceremos Brigade
1978
Casa de las Américas. [La Habana^t: Casa de las Américas].
Castro, Fidel, 1926- The speeches of Fidel in Chile. [Montreal] : Editions Latin America
1972
Compean, Mario C., 1940- La Raza Unida Party in Texas. : Speeches, / by Mario Campean and José Angel Gutierrez. Introduction by Antonio Camejo. N.Y. : Pathfinder Press
1970
Cristianos hoy : testimonios de liberación. Quito, Ecuador : Fraternidad
1993
Cuba. Cuban family code. [New York : Center for Cuban Studies
1977
De Leon, Daniel, 1852-1914. Industrial unionism : selected editorials / Daniel De Leon. New York, N.Y. : New York Labor News Co
1963
De Leon, Daniel, 1852-1914. Socialist reconstruction of society : the industrial vote / by Daniel De Leon. New York, N.Y. : New York labor news company
1963
Debray, Régis. The long march in Latin America : guerrilla movements : theory and practice / Régis Debray. Boston : New England Free Press
1966
Diego, José de, 1866-1918. El caballero de la raza. [San Juan : Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña
1966
Documents of the Chicano struggle. New York, N.Y. : Pathfinder Press
1971
Documents of the Palestinian resistance movement. New York : Pathfinder Press
1971
Doing it!. [Worthington, Ohio : Urban Alternatives Group]
Du Bois, W. E. B. (William Edward Burghardt), 1868-1963. Back toward slavery : excerpts from Black reconstruction in America / by W.E.B. Du Bois. Somerville, Mass. : New England Free Press
1969
Ecuador : the cry of freedom! = El grito de libertad! / sung by Jatari. Brooklyn, N.Y. : Paredon Records
1976
El levantamiento indígena y la cuestión nacional. Quito, Ecuador : Ediciones ABYA-YALA : CDDH, Comisión por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos
1996
El Parlamento Indígena del Cantón Guamate : una experiencia democrática de gestión del desarrollo local. Quito, Ecuador : Silva
1998
El Salvador : canto y lucha : song & struggle / [Roque Dalton, Jaime Suárez Quemain, and other poets]. Chicago, Ill. : Latin American Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago
1982
EPICA Task Force. Nicaragua, a people's revolution / by the EPICA Task Force. [Washington, D.C.] : The Task Force
1980

Epton, Bill. Electoral politics : its problems and prospects / Bill Epton. Harlem, N.Y. : Black Liberation Press
1980

Erich, John comp. Student power, participation and revolution. / Edited by John and Susan Erlich. New York, : Assn. Press
1971

The fat capitalist's song on the death of Che Guevara. New York : Times Change Press
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Fiestas y costumbres de Puerto Rico : una selección de la prosa costumbrista del siglo 19. [San Juan : Instituto de Cultura
Puertorriqueña
1966

Fox, Sam. Free / by Sam Fox. Miami Beach, Fla. : Hansen Publications
1969

FPS; : a magazine of young people's liberation. [Ann Arbor, Mich. : Youth Liberation Press]

Fried, Joseph P. Housing crisis U.S.A. / [by] Joseph P. Fried. Foreword by John V. Lindsay. New York, : Praeger
1971

Genovese, Eugene D., 1930-2012. The legacy of slavery and the roots of Black nationalism / Eugene D.Genovese. Boston : New
England Free Press
1970

The Great socialist cultural revolution in China. Peking, : Foreign Languages Press
1966

Guatemala, dare to struggle, dare to win. Brooklyn, N.Y : Concerned Guatemala Scholars
1982

Guevara, Che, 1928-1967. On Vietnam and world revolution / [by] Che Guevara. [New York : Merit Publishers
1967

Guevara, Che, 1928-1967. Vietnam & the Third World : [Che Guevara's message to the Tri-Continental, April '67]. Ithaca, N.Y. :
Glad Day Press
1967

Guinea-Bissau, toward final victory! : selected speeches and documents from PAIGC (Partido Africano da Independencia da
Guiné e Cabo Verde) / [edited by LSM]. Richmond, B.C. : LSM Information Center
1974

Haverstock, Nathan A. Cuba in pictures, / by Nathan A. Haverstock and John P. Hoover. New York, : Sterling Pub. Co.
1974

Haymarket People's Fund (Boston, Mass.) Annual report / Haymarket People's Fund. Boston, Mass. : The Fund.

Hernández M., Temístocles. La rebelión de los incautos : Indoamérica e Hispanoamérica / Temístocles Hernández M. Quito,
Ecuador : Ediciones T. Hernández
1998

The Hippies. / Editors: Jan Meadoff [and] Michael Rosenberg. Photographers: Sandy Fontwit [and others]. San Francisco :
Idlewild Pub. Co.
1967

Hoover, J. Edgar (John Edgar), 1895-1972. A study of communism. New York, : Holt, Rinehart and Winston
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How to start a high school underground newspaper. Ann Arbor, Mich. : Youth Liberation Press
1978

Humanizing city life. [Worthington, Ohio : Urban Alternatives Group]
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Ioseliani, Otia, 1930-2011. Un día / Otia Yoseliani ; [traducido del ruso por J. López Ganivet]. Moscú : Editorial Progreso
1974

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1976

James, C. L. R. (Cyril Lionel Robert), 1901-1989. Dialectic & history : an introduction / C.L.R. James. Cambridge, Ma. : Radical
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Kahn, Si. Organizing, a guide for grassroots leaders / Si Kahn. Silver Spring, Md. : National Association of Social Workers
1991

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1970

Kilpatrick, Admiral. A veteran communist speaks ... on the struggle against revisionism / by Admiral Kilpatrick. [Chicago] : The
Communist League
1972

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1976

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1966

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1969

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1976

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1990

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1971

Los Agachados de Rius. Mexico, D.F. : Editorial Posada
1968-1977

Los cuentos de los abuelos : tradición oral de los indígenas Siona y Kofán del Putumayo = Our grandparents' stories : oral tradition of the Siona and Kofán Indians of Putumayo / Jaime Hernando Parra R. [recopilador] ; [English translation, Susan Virsano Bellow]. [Quito, Ecuador] : Ediciones Abya-Yala
1997

Los Supermachos de San Garabato. México : Editorial Meridiano.

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1974-1978

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1976

Machel, Samora, 1933-1986. Mozambique : revolution or reaction? : two speeches / by Samora Machel. Richmond, B.C. : LSM Information Center
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Marx, Engels, and Lenin on the dictatorship of the proletariat : questions and answers. New York : Books New China, Inc.
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Resources for Community Change. Gonna rise again! : Economic organizing for hard times / by Resources for Community Change. Washington : R.C.C.

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1978

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1984

Rius. Cuba for beginners; : an illustrated guide for Americans (and their government) to socialist Cuba. New York, : Pathfinder Press

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1981

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The Second declaration of Havana : with the first Declaration of Havana. New York : Pathfinder Press

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1962

Shih, Chan. A brief history of the United States / Shi Chan ; translated by the Chinese Translation Group. Emeryville, CA : The Group

1976

Silber, Irwin, 1925-2010. Grasping revolutionary theory : a guide for Marxist-Leninist study groups / by Irwin Silber. New York, N.Y. : Weekly Guardian

1977

Sketchley, Peter, 1947- Casting new molds : first steps toward worker control in a Mozambique steel factory : a conversation with Peter Sketchley and Frances Moore Lappé / illustrations by Lisa Kokin. San Francisco, CA : Institute for Food and Development Policy

1982

Somos : We are : Five contemporary Cuban poets / [edited by Anita Whitney ; illustrated by the Cuban artist Nuez]. New York : Times Change Press

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Source, inc. Communications. [Chicago, Ill., : Swallow Press

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Sumwalt, Martha Murray. Ecuador in pictures. New York : Sterling Pub. Co.

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Tricontinental (English ed. : bimonthly) Tricontinental. Havana : Executive Secretariat of the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America

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1966-1980

Tricontinental (Spanish ed. : monthly) Tricontinental. La Habana, Cuba : Secretariado Ejecutivo de la Organización de Solidaridad de los Pueblos de Africa, Asia y América Latina.

Tricontinental. San Francisco, CA : Peoples Press ; Paris, France : Distributed by OSPAAAL.

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Weid, Jean Marc van der, 1946- Brazil, 1964 to the present : a political analysis: an interview with Jean Marc von der Weid. Montreal : Editions Latin America
1972
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1974
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1968
Work, family, and health : Latina women in transition / edited by Ruth E. Zambrana. Bronx, N.Y. : Hispanic Research Center, Fordham University
1982

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Jesse Maceo Vega-Frey, Apr. 2012, 2014.

Related Material

Wistariahurst Museum houses the major Vega collection, the **Carlos Vega Collection of Latino History in Holyoke**.

The **Interference Archive** contains a collection of Vega's OSPAAAL (Organización de Solidaridad con los Pueblos de Asia, África y América Latina) posters.

Carlos is a 13 minute documentary on Vega's life directed by Scott Hancock.

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Contributors

Vega, Carlos [main entry]
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