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Science for the People Records

Digital

1966-2014 (*Bulk:* 1969-1992)

6 boxes (7 linear ft.)

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At the height of the antiwar struggle in the late 1960s, a group of scientists and engineers based in Cambridge, Mass., began to

turn a critical eye on the role of their fields in the larger political culture. Calling themselves Scientists and Engineers for Social and Political Action (SESPA), the group took the slogan "Science for the People," which in turn became the name of their organization. With a collective membership that spread nation-wide, Science for the People was a voice for radical science and an active presence framing several of the scientific debates of the day. Through its vigorous publications, SftP explored issues ranging from the impact of military and corporate control of research to scientific rationalization of racism, sexism, and other forms of inequality; and they contributed to the discussions of recombinant DNA, sociobiology, IQ and biological determinism, women's health care, nuclear power, and the rise of biotechnology. Many members were engaged in supporting anti-imperialist resistance in Central America and Asia during the 1980s. The organization gradually waned in the 1980s and published the last issue of its magazine in 1989.

Donated by several members of the organization, the Science for the People collection provides a window into the organization and operation of a collective devoted to radical science. In addition to meeting minutes and notes, and some correspondence, the collection includes a nearly complete run of the Science for the People magazine, and a substantial representation of the national and Nicaragua newsletters and topical publications. Photographs from the group's trip to China and other areas abroad in 1978 are available online, along with videos of the talks and sessions from a 2014 conference on the history and legacy of SftP.

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Background on Science for the People

In the late 1960s, a group of radical scientists and engineers began to turn a critical eye on the role of their fields in the larger political culture. Calling themselves Scientists and Engineers for Social and Political Action (SESPA), announcing that "if you are tired of science for the pentagon or science for business, try science for the people." Their slogan "Science for the People" (SftP), became the name of their organization.

With a collective membership, decentralized, and little hierarchy, SftP was truly a grassroots organization, spawning chapters nationwide, usually based in research universities, though not limited to them. As Herb Fox, one of the group's founders noted, there was a vigorous debate in the early years of the organization over precisely what SftP should be: whether they should see themselves as engaged primarily in class struggle (in a Marxist sense) emphasizing the issues of science, as an organization devoted to using science in the interest of the people, or more generally as a group that would take a critical approach to examining the social and political impact of science and the misuse of science.

From these sometimes contentious beginnings, SftP emerged into a powerful voice for radical science, communicating its ideas through the bi-monthly magazine it published from 1970 to 1989 and a string of pamphlets and books on the major scientific issues of the day. In the 1970s and 1980s, members of the organization were influential in building opposition to military and corporate control of research and to scientific rationalization of racism, sexism, and other forms of inequality. SftP were indispensable participants in high-profile debates over recombinant DNA technologies; sociobiology, IQ, and biological determinism; women's health care; nuclear power; and the rise of biotechnology. Many of its members were engaged in supporting anti-imperialist resistance in Central America and Asia during the 1980s.



Although the organization gradually waned in the 1980s, publishing the last issue of its magazine in 1989, the issues it confronted have not. After a conference on the history of the organization was held at UMass Amherst in 2014, Science for the People has reorganized, with chapters reappearing at universities around the country including University of Michigan, MIT, and UMass Amherst.

Scope of collection

The Science for the People Records documents the organizational life, publication history, and research of the science activist group from 1966 to 1992, as well as a conference about the group held in 2014.

The collection contains a nearly complete run of the Science for the People magazine which was published bi-monthly from 1969-1989; in addition there are various publications about sociobiology, racism, sexism, and war. There are organizational notes, as well as national and regional newsletters from New York, Nicaragua, and Boston chapters. There are also subject files related to the organization's research pertaining to sociobiology, recombinant DNA, nuclear power, anti-war, and other topics. Photographs from the group's trip to China and other areas abroad in 1978 are available online, along with videos of the talks and sessions from a 2014 conference on the history and legacy of SftP.

The collection is organized into three series:

Series 1: Organizational Materials

Series 2: Publications

Series 3: Subject Files

Series descriptions

Series 1. Organizational Materials

1970-2014

.5 boxes (.75 linear feet)

Series 1 contains documents related to the organization's day to day operations. There are meeting notes from the steering committee, board of directors, and various chapters. There are national newsletters and those for the Boston and Nicaragua chapters. It also contains promotional materials, correspondence between members, videos from a 2014 conference, and information about the Valentine and Unity Caucuses.

Series 2. Publications

1959-2004

2 boxes (3 linear feet)

Series 2 contains publications by Science for the People, and various regional SftP groups. This includes issues of the bimonthly SftP magazine from 1970-1989. There are also subject specific publications relating to topics including food resources, nuclear power, sociobiology, the military, and health care produced by the national SftP organization and local chapters.

Series 3. Subject Files

ca.1970-2004

3.5 boxes (3.25 linear feet)

Series 3 contains topical research for a variety of subjects which SftP published about or discussed. It contains information on China, food, energy, nuclear power, recombinant DNA, sociobiology, and war.

Inventory

Series 1. Organizational Materials

1970-2014

.5 boxes (.75 linear feet)

American Association for the Advancement of Science Meeting in Boston

1976

Box 5: 1

Benefit Cocktail Party Invitations

undated

Box 1: 1

Board of Directors

1990-1991

Box 1: 2

Board of Directors: Ross Feldberg notes

1990-1992

Box 1: 3

Boston Area Science for the People

1973-1974

Box 1: 4

Boston Area Science for the People: Meeting Notes

1976

Box 1: 5

Conference: Posters

2014

Folder OS 1

Conference: Planning and Promotion

2014

Box 1: 6

Conference: Promotional Bags

2014

Box 6

Conference: Session Videos

2014 Apr

Science for the People: Stories from the Movement

2014 Apr 11

Plenary 1

The History and Lasting Significance of Science for the People

2014 Apr 12

Plenary 2

Science and Ideology

2014 Apr 12

Session 1, Panel 1

Math and Computer Technology

2014 Apr 12

Session 1, Panel 2

Teaching Social Justice in Science

2014 Apr 12

Session 1, Panel 3

The Militarization of Science: SftP's Historical Impact and Current Challenges

2014 Apr 12

Session 1, Panel 4

Agriculture Science and Food Justice

2014 Apr 12

Session 2, Panel 5

Challenging Myth of Race and Gender

2014 Apr 12

Session 2, Panel 6

Toxics and Occupational and Public Health

2014 Apr 12

Session 2, Panel 7

DC Metro Science for the People: Continuing our Legacy in the 21st Century!

2014 Apr 12

Session 2, Panel 8

Keynote Lecture

2014 Apr 12

Mentoring Comrades: The Dialectics of Political Mentoring in the Natural Sciences

SftP in the World

2014 Apr 13

Session 3, Panel 9

Climate Change and Energy Technology and Policy

2014 Apr 13

Session 3, Panel 10

Women and Science

2014 Apr 13

Session 3, Panel 11

Health, Medicine, Pro- and Anti-People Healthcare Models

2014 Apr 13

Session 3, Panel 12

Closing Plenary: "SftP 2.0...Where Do We Go From Here?"

2014 Apr 13

Plenary 3

Correspondence

1978-1979

Box 1: 7

Correspondence: Promotional Mailings

ca.1981

Box 1: 8

Correspondence: Schneider, Scott

1977

Box 1: 9

Correspondence: Weinrub, Al

1976-1983

Box 1: 10

The Fundamental and Principal Contradictions in SftP

undated

Box 4: 38

Historical Benchmarks

1970-1979

Box 1: 11

Impact: Report on Science and Technology

ca.1980

Box 1: 12

Internal Discussion Bulletin

1979

Box 1: 13

Internal Discussion Bulletin

1982

Box 1: 14

Magazine: Solicitations for Subscriptions

ca.1975-1980

Box 1: 15

Magazine: Statistics

1979

Box 1: 16

Nature article: Science for the People

1978 Aug

Box 4: 39

Newsclippings

1970-1972

Box 1: 17

Newsclippings

1970-1972

Box 1: 18
Newsletter: Boston
1974-1975
Box 1: 19
Newsletter: National
1976 Jan
Box 1: 20
Newsletter: National
1981 Feb
Box 1: 21
Newsletter: National
1981 Jun-Jul
Box 1: 22
Newsletter: National
1981 Aug-Sep
Box 1: 23
Newsletter: National
1981 Oct-Nov
Box 1: 24
Newsletter: National
1981 Dec-1982 Jan
Box 1: 25
Newsletter: National
1982 Feb-Mar
Box 1: 26
Newsletter: National
1982 Apr-May
Box 1: 27
Newsletter: National
1982 Jun/Jul
Box 1: 28
Newsletter: National
1982 Aug-Sep
Box 1: 29
Newsletter: National
1982 Oct-Nov
Box 1: 30
Newsletter: National
1982 Dec-1983 Jan
Box 1: 31
Newsletter: National
1982 Feb-Mar
Box 1: 32
Newsletter: National
1983 Aug-Sep
Box 1: 33
Newsletter: National
1983 Oct-Dec
Box 1: 34
Newsletter: National
1984 Spring
Box 1: 35
Newsletter: National
1984 Fall
Box 1: 36
Newsletter: National
1985 Spring
Box 1: 37
Newsletter: New York

ca.1975
Box 1: 38
Newsletter: Nicaragua
1987
Box 1: 39
Newsletter: Nicaragua
1988
Box 1: 40
Newsletter: Nicaragua
1989
Box 1: 41
Newsletter: The Principal Investigator
1990
Box 1: 42
Newsletter: SESPA
ca.1969
Box 1: 43
Organizational Chart
undated
Box 5: 2
Organizational Structure: Discussion
ca.1970
Box 1: 44
Position Paper on the Four Questions
1975
Box 1: 45
Promotional Brochures
ca.1970-1980
Box 1: 46
Publication Promotion
ca.1981
Box 5: 3
Revolution's Evolution: Radical Group 10 years later
1979 Jun
Box 4: 40
Steering Committee
1973-1974
Box 1: 47
Steering Committee
1975
Box 1: 48
Steering Committee
1988-1989
Box 1: 49
Twentieth Anniversary Benefit Reception
1989 Jun 8
Box 1: 50
Unity Caucus
1974-1975
Box 1: 51
Valentine Caucus
1975
Box 1: 52
Series 2. Publications
1959-2004
2 boxes (3 linear feet)
Science for the People magazine
1970 Aug-Dec
Box 1: 53

Science for the People magazine
1971 Feb-Jul
Box 1: 54

Science for the People magazine
1971 Sep-Nov
Box 1: 55

Science for the People magazine
1972 Jan-Mar
Box 1: 56

Science for the People magazine
1972 Jul-Nov
Box 1: 57

Science for the People magazine
1973 Jan-May
Box 1: 58

Science for the People magazine
1973 Jul-Nov
Box 1: 59

Science for the People magazine
1974 Jan-May
Box 1: 60

Science for the People magazine
1974 Jul-Nov
Box 2: 1

Science for the People magazine
1975 Jan-May
Box 2: 2

Science for the People magazine
1975 Jul-Nov
Box 2: 3

Science for the People magazine
1976 Jan-May
Box 2: 4

Science for the People magazine
1976 Jul-Dec
Box 2: 5

Science for the People magazine
1977 Jan-Jun
Box 2: 6

Science for the People magazine
1977 Jul-Dec
Box 2: 7

Science for the People magazine
1978 Jan-Jun
Box 2: 8

Science for the People magazine
1978 Jul-Dec
Box 2: 9

Science for the People magazine
1979 Jan-Jun
Box 2: 10

Science for the People magazine
1979 Jul-Dec
Box 2: 11

Science for the People magazine
1980 Jan-Jun
Box 2: 12

Science for the People magazine
1980 Jul-Dec

Box 2: 13
Science for the People magazine
1981 Jan-Jun

Box 2: 14
Science for the People magazine
1981 Jul-Dec

Box 2: 15
Science for the People magazine
1982 Jan-Jun

Box 2: 16
Science for the People magazine
1982 Jul-Dec

Box 2: 17
Science for the People magazine
1983 Jan-Jun

Box 2: 18
Science for the People magazine
1983 Jul-Dec

Box 2: 19
Science for the People magazine
1984 Jan-Jun

Box 2: 20
Science for the People magazine
1984 Jul-Dec

Box 2: 21
Science for the People magazine
1985 March

Box 2: 22
Science for the People magazine
1985 Jun

Box 2: 23
Science for the People magazine
1985 Jul-Dec

Box 2: 24
Science for the People magazine
1986 Jan-Jun

Box 2: 25
Science for the People magazine
1986 Jul-Dec

Box 2: 26
Science for the People magazine
1987 Jan-Jun

Box 2: 27
Science for the People magazine
1987 Jul-Dec

Box 3: 1
Science for the People magazine
1988 Jan-Apr

Box 3: 2
Science for the People magazine
1988 Jul-Dec

Box 3: 3
Science for the People magazine
1989-01/06

Box 3: 4
Science for the People magazine: Index
ca.1977

Box 3: 5
Science for the People magazine: Inside covers

1973-1980

Box 3: 6

The AMRC Paper

1973

Box 3: 7

Beyond Earth Day

1990 May

Box 3: 8

Biology as Destiny: Scientific Fact or Social Bias

1984

Box 3: 9

Biology as a Social Weapon

1977

Box 3: 10

Censored

1971 Dec

Box 3: 11

China: Science Walks on Two Legs

1974

Box 3: 12

Feed, Need, Greed: Food Resources and Population

1980

Box 3: 13

Feed, Need, Greed: Where Will it Lead?

1974 Dec

Box 3: 14

Hard Times: Employment, Unemployment, and Professionalism in the Science

ca.1973

Box 3: 15

Interrupt: Newsletter of Computer People for Peace, nos. 19, 20

1973

Box 3: 15a

I.Q., Scientific or Social Controversy

1976 Feb

Box 3: 16

Los Nuevos Conquistadores

1973 Jun

Box 3: 17

Nuclear Power Pamphlet

1976

Box 3: 18

Science Against the People

1972 Dec

Box 3: 19

Science and Society Series: The Energy Crisis

1973 Nov

Box 3: 20

Science and Society Series: Genetic Engineering

1973 Nov

Box 3: 21

Science and Society Series: Issues of Health Care

1973 Nov

Box 3: 22

Science and Society Series: The Politics of Ecology

ca.1974

Box 3: 23

Science and Society Series: Resources for Teachers

ca.1976

Box 3: 24

Science and Technology in Latin America
1972 Dec
Box 3: 25
Science Teaching toward an Alternative
1972 Apr
Box 3: 26
Scientists and the Military
ca.1981
Box 5: 4
Sociobiology: The New Synthesis
ca.1975
Box 3: 27
The Sociobiology Packet
1979 Jul
Box 3: 28
The 3 Mile Island Disaster
1979 Apr
Box 3: 29
Thistle: Special Science for the People issue
1990 Feb
Box 5: 5
Towards a Science for the People
1972 Dec
Box 3: 30
Woman and Health Care Packet
1977-1980
Box 3: 31
Series 3. Subject Files
ca.1970-2004
3.5 boxes (3.25 linear feet)
American Association for the Advancement of Science Convention
1977-1979
Box 3: 32
Anarchy
1970-1971
Box 3: 33
Anti-War
1969-1972
Box 3: 34
Black Panther Party
1971
Box 3: 35
Biological Determinism Symposium
1975
Box 3: 36
Biology as a Social Weapon: Book Reviews and Press
1976-1979
Box 3: 37
Boston Racism
1974
Box 3: 38
Brazil's Economy
1972
Box 3: 39
China
1975
Box 3: 40
China: audiocassettes
ca.1970-1978

Box 6
Fifteen audiocassette tapes recorded in the early 1970s when Science for the People members travelled to China to learn more about Chinese science. Peking University, Tsinghua University, Fudan University, Okinawa, May Seventh Cadre School. Photographs of a SftP trip to China and other places abroad in 1978 are available online through Credo.

China: compact disc

ca.1980

Box 6

De Paul University

1972

Box 5: 6

Energy

1974-1978

Box 3: 41

Ephemera

ca.1970-1982

Box 3: 42

Feed, Need, and Greed

1974-1977

Box 3: 43

Flyers

ca.1975-1987

Box 3: 44

Food, Nutrition, and Agriculture

1974-1976

Box 3: 45

Food and Nutrition Group

1975-1976

Box 3: 46

Food and Nutrition Group

1976-1978

Box 3: 47

Genetics and Social Policy

1973-1976

Box 3: 48

Genewatch

1985

Box 3: 49

How AMRC Helps the Army

ca.1973

Box 3: 50

Hospitals

ca.1975

Box 3: 51

Imperialism

1975

Box 3: 52

International Nutrition and Global Food Resources

1974-1976

Box 3: 53

IQ and Race

1970-1976

Box 3: 54

Jensenism

1975

Box 3: 55

Marine Science Unite: Esenada

1975-1978

Box 4: 1

Mathematics Action Group

1970-1977

Box 4: 2

May Magazine Articles

1975

Box 4: 3

Miscellaneous - advertisements, clippings, poems

ca.1970-1975

Box 4: 4

Miscellaneous - labor, occupational health

ca.1975

Box 5: 7

Miscellaneous Publications

1974-1975

Box 4: 5

New Patriotism

1976

Box 4: 6

Newsclippings

1968

Box 4: 7

Newsclippings-Chicago

1976-1980

Box 4: 8

Newsletter: What's Happening

1972

Box 5: 8

Newsletter: What's Happening-Notes

ca.1972-1976

Box 5: 9

Notes-Bob Ogden

undated

Box 4: 9

Nuclear

1978

Box 5: 10

Nuclear Power

1979-1983

Box 4: 10

Occupational and Environmental Health

1974-1976

Box 4: 11

The Outlaw: St. Louis Underground Newspaper

1970

Box 4: 12

People's Health

ca.1970

Box 4: 13

Photograph: Large Computer Machine

ca.1970-1979

Box 4: 41

Photographs-Bob Ogden

ca.1975-1980

Box 4: 14

Photographs-Terri Goldberg

ca.1980

Box 4: 15

Recombinant DNA

1975-1976

Box 4: 16

Recombinant DNA
1976-1977
Box 4: 17
Recombinant DNA
1981
Box 4: 18
Ruth Hubbard
1990
Box 4: 19
SANE: A Citizens Organization for a Sane World
1978
Box 4: 20
Science
1974-1979
Box 4: 21
Science and Society Study: Materials from a Manifest Perspective
1969
Box 4: 22
Science for Viet Nam
1971-1972
Box 4: 23
Situationalist Suralists
1976
Box 4: 24
Sociobiology
1976-1979
Box 4: 25
Sociobiology
1979-1980
Box 4: 26
Sociobiology
1975-1979
Box 5: 11
Sociobiology: Ann Arbor Group
1976-1980
Box 4: 27
Sociobiology Study Group
1978-1980
Box 4: 28
Sociobiology Study Group
1982-1985
Box 4: 29
SPARK: Magazine by the Committee for Social Responsibility in Engineering
1971-1973
Box 4: 30
SPARK: Magazine by the Committee for Social Responsibility in Engineering
1974-1975
Box 4: 31
Students for a Demented Society
1966-1969
Box 4: 32
Subway Steel Dust
1975 Jan
Box 4: 33
Uptown Community Organization
1972
Box 5: 12
War (Vietnam and IndoChina)
1972-1973

Box 4: 34
The War Physicists (manuscript)
1976
Box 4: 35
Women
ca.1970-1980
Box 4: 36
XYY
1974-1976
Box 4: 37

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Science for the People members Terri Goldberg, Scott Schneider, Al Weinrub, and Bob Ogden, 2014.

Related Material

Additional materials related to the 2014 conference on the history and legacy of SftP is available on their [Science for the People conference website](#).

Digitized content

Selected material from the Science for the People Records is available online through [Credo](#).

Processing Information

Processed by Kyle Boyd, 2017.

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English

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Search terms

Subjects

Ann Arbor Science for the People (Organization)
Protest movements
Science for the People (Organization)
Science for the People (Organization). Food and Nutrition Group
Science for the People (Organization). Sociobiology Study Group
Science--Social aspects
Technology--Social aspects
Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Protest movements

Contributors

Science for the People. **[main entry]**

Genres and formats

Magazines (periodicals)
Newsletters

Link to similar SCUA collections

Alternative energy
Antinuclear
Antiracism
Environment
Peace
Political activism
Science and technology
Social justice
Vietnam War

Women and feminism



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