



Economic Research and Action Project (New Haven, Conn.) Records

1965 Apr-Aug

1 box (.05 linear foot)

Call no.: MS 949

Collection overview

The Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP) was a community organizing project sponsored by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Begun in 1963, SDS activists began working in low-income urban neighborhoods to help residents come together to identify and agitate for shared needs. While practical goals included education and advocacy for welfare rights, youth programming such as free school lunches, and increasing minority participation in local politics, the program as a whole had grand aspirations of abolishing poverty and ending racial inequality through an interracial and community organized movement of the poor in America. The largest and longest lasting projects were located in Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, and Newark, but multiple cities had ERAP groups. While none achieved an ongoing interracial movement of the poor, all had lasting effects in teaching the skills, obstacles, and possibilities of community organizing, and in encouraging individuals, both from SDS and local neighborhoods, to participate and engage with diverse people in seeking social change.

The New Haven ERAP Records are a small but rich collection, mainly consisting of three summer of 1965 issues of the ERAP Newsletter from the New Haven Project. Additional materials include a clipping from the April 30, 1965 *Life* issue featuring photographs of New Haven ERAP members working in a "slum called The Hill;" two printed photographs from *Life* not used in the article; and a written report and supporting research interview on the failure of a New Haven corporation, Community Progress, Inc. to provide good services and comply with the requirements of the Economic Opportunity Act and the Community Action Program Guide.

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Background on Economic Research and Action Project

The Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP) was a community organizing project sponsored by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Begun in 1963, SDS activists began working in low-income urban

neighborhoods to help residents come together to identify and agitate for shared needs. While practical goals included education and advocacy for welfare rights, youth programming such as free school lunches, and increasing minority participation in local politics, the program as a whole had grand aspirations of abolishing poverty and ending racial inequality through an interracial and community organized movement of the poor in America. While SDS is often associated with the predominately white New Left, through ERAP its activists got into the cities to work with residents and local leaders. The largest and longest lasting projects were located in Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, and Newark, but multiple cities had ERAP groups. While none achieved an ongoing interracial movement of the poor, all had lasting effects in bringing minority and urban resident voices to the SDS platform, in teaching the skills, obstacles, and possibilities of community organizing, and in encouraging individuals, both from SDS and local neighborhoods, to participate and engage with diverse people in seeking social change.



War on Poverty cartoon from New Haven ERAP Newsletter, July 23, 1965

Scope of collection

The New Haven ERAP Records are a small but rich collection, mainly consisting of three summer of 1965 issues of the ERAP Newsletter from the New Haven Project, with reports from other city's ERAP and community organizations, and with comments on such issues as SDS and ERAP organization, the war on poverty, welfare, rent strikes, the police, freedom schools, the Vietnam War, and racial inequality. Additional materials include a clipping from the April 30, 1965 *Life* issue featuring photographs of New Haven ERAP members working in a "slum called The Hill;" two printed photographs from *Life* not used in the article; and a written report and supporting research interview on the failure of a New Haven corporation, Community Progress, Inc. to provide good services and comply with the requirements of the Economic Opportunity Act and the Community Action Program Guide.

Inventory

Community Progress, Inc. - complaint report	1965 Jul	Box 1: 1
Community Progress, Inc. - interview transcript	1965 Jul	Box 1: 2
➤ ERAP Newsletter	1965 Jul 29	Box 1: 3
➤ ERAP Newsletter	1965 Aug 14	Box 1: 4
➤ ERAP Newsletter	1965 Aug 21	Box 1: 5
<i>Life</i> clipping - New Haven ERAP	1965 Apr	Box 1: 6
<i>Life</i> photographs - New Haven ERAP	1965 Apr	Box 1: 7

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Liz Blum, November 2016.

Related Material

There are additional ERAP materials in the University of Massachusetts Amherst **Radical Student Union (RSU) Records** (RG 045/80 R1).

Multiple collections in SCUA have material from Students for a Democratic Society, including:

- **Thomas Barton Papers** (MS 539)
- **Gloria Xifaras Clark Papers** (MS 865)
- **Robert Winston Papers** (MS 452)
- **Social Change Collection** (MS 457)

Digitized content

Selected material from the Economic Research and Action Project (New Haven, Conn.) Records has been digitized and is available online through **Credo**.

Processing Information

Processed by Blake Spitz, December 2016.

Language:

English

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Search terms

Subjects

- Activists--United States
- Community development, Urban--United States
- New Haven (Conn.)
- Social service--United States
- Student movements--United States

- Students for a Democratic Society (U.S.)

Genres and formats

- Newsletters
- Photographs

Link to similar SCUA collections

African American

Antiracism

Connecticut

Political activism

Social change

Social justice