Hubert Albertz Papers
(1938-2011)

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Summary

Title: Hubert Albertz Papers

Dates: 1938-1985

Extent: 3 boxes

Creators: Hubert Albertz (1902-1985) and George Albertz

Language: English

Abstract: The Hubert Albertz collection contains documentation of political activism of Hubert Albertz, a New York City custodian and member of the Building Service Employees International Union (BSEIU) Local 32E. Albertz was fired from his job and expelled from his Local in the Bronx for protesting dues increases at a union meeting. He spent over 30 years documenting and exposing corruption in the BSEIU.

Source: Donated by his children George and Elizabeth in 2003.

Access: Collection is open for research. Staff may restrict access at its discretion on the basis of physical condition.

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Preferred Citation: Item, date (if known), box, folder, Hubert Albertz Papers, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Queens College, City University of New York.

Special Formats: Newspaper clippings, microfilm reels, published books.
Related Collections:  
George Albertz Papers, Queens College, NY

Controlled Access Terms

Organizations:  
Building Service Employees' International Union, Local 32E

People:  
Scalise, George A.

Subjects:  
Labor Unions-- New York (State)--New York
Organized Crime--New York (State)--New York
Racketeering--New York (State)--New York
Biographical Note

Hubert Albertz was born on July 2, 1902, in Antwerp, Belgium. During World War I Albertz was separated from his family and was forced into labor by the Germans. He worked on German railroad yards connected to coal mines. After the war France imposed a harsh occupation on the Rhineland and Germany, resulting in chaos and famine. Albertz experienced the effects of post-war occupation, witnessing fights in the streets between Fascists and Marxists, each trying to gain control of Germany after the 1917 Marxist revolution in Russia. Forced into poverty by extreme inflation that devalued the German currency, Albertz and his friends would break into railroad cars to steal coal for heating and break into bakery shops for bread.

Albertz worked in railroad yards until the end of WWI in 1918. Poor, he stayed in Germany for a while, but eventually immigrated to the United States. His father and older brothers, who had already emigrated from Germany to New York City, managed to find Hubert and invite him over. When he finally arrived in New York City in 1926, he learned that his father had passed away.

In 1927, Albertz married his German-born wife Krescenz. They had a son, George, and a daughter, Elizabeth. Despite the economic turmoil of New York City in the 1930s, Albertz was continually employed. He took a job as a superintendent in Brooklyn, and his wife also worked tirelessly under poor conditions to keep a roof over their heads. Due to these experiences and hardships, Albertz hated to see “ordinary men” cheated. His strong principles precluded him from engaging in illegal activity when he became a union official in Building Services Employees Union (BSEIU) Local 32K in Brooklyn. Joining the union resulted in losing his job, since his employer refused to work with unions. Albertz then moved to the Bronx, where he found another job as a superintendent and joined the BSEIU Local 32-E.

In 1947 Albertz fell out of favor with the bosses of AFL-CIO Services Employees’ Union Local 32-E when he inquired about his dues and union treasury funds distribution following an arbitrary dues increase. Fired from his job as a building supervisor and expelled from the union, Albertz moved again to seek new employment. Despite his relocation he continued to endure harassment and attacks, presumably orchestrated by Thomas Lewis, head of Local 32-E. Hubert Albertz continued his fight for justice for almost 30 years. He became a life-long labor activist, dedicating his life to exposing organized crime within unions.

In 1936, Hubert Albertz became a U.S. citizen. From about 1948 to 1963, he was an active part of the New York City chapter of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, who helped him fight to clean up the Local 32E. For the last 25 years of his life he was the superintendent of an apartment building in Jackson Heights, Queens. The National Right to Work Committee awarded Albertz its highest honor - the John Seeley Memorial Award.
Scope & Content Note

The Hubert Albertz Papers (1902-1985) document Albertz’s activity as a union member who spent his life fighting corruption within the Building Services Employees Union (BSEIU). The collection consists of a binder with bibliographic and biographical content on Hubert Albertz put together by his son George, copies of articles about Hubert’s plight, a timeline of organized crime in NYC in the 1940’s, 50’s and 60’s, books on labor racketeers and government corruption, FBI files on George Scalise (the president of BSEIU), and a hearing report from the BSEIU Headquarters in Washington, DC. Also included is original correspondence from Andrew J. Maloney, District Attorney Robert Morgenthau, and George Albertz.

Arrangement Note

The collection is comprised of five series:

Series I: Publications from George Albertz’ personal library

Series II: Media (Microfilm Records)

Series III: Binder

Series IV: Printed Materials

Series V: Correspondence
Series Description & Container List

Series I: Publications from George Albertz’s personal library
This series consists of three books published by various authors on subjects of labor racketeering, union corruption and Hubert Albertz’s activism. Relevant information is listed in the table of contents page of each publication. The prevalent text is underlined and accompanied by George Albertz’s notations.

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>The Washington Pay-Off</em> by Robert N. Winter-Berger</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td><em>Rebels, Reformers, and Racketeers</em> by Herman Benson</td>
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<td><em>Dreadful Conversions: The Making of a Catholic Socialist</em> by John Cort</td>
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Series II: Media (Microfilm Records) (1938-1985) Box 1
This series is comprised of two microfilm reels containing records from 1938 through 1985, including the 1964 Federal indictment of 32E officials as well as the FBI Top New York Hoodlum files of racketeer George Scalise.

Series III: Binder Box 2
This binder was assembled by George Albertz, son of Hubert Albertz. It includes a list of contents, personal notes and research conducted by George Albertz, entitled *32E: History of Corruption: 1934 to 1964*. It also includes the 1966 Report of meeting at BSEIU headquarters, a copy of a letter from Robert Morgenthau, an article by Hubert Albertz, and a letter to all members of Congress requesting help to clean up 32E. Also enclosed is a copy of a memorandum from Jack Balaban to Mr. Robert F. Kennedy regarding Joseph Pizzo. Some additional letters are from Bob Fitch, labor historian Joshua Freeman, and a letter from Robert Morgenthau calling Albertz “very courageous.”
**Series IV: Printed Materials**
This series is split into two subseries. Subseries A consists of copies of articles from various publications and book excerpts. Subseries B is a copy of the FBI file on George Scalise. The FBI file is accompanied by related correspondence, including a letter from Hubert Albertz to Hoover explaining the situation in 32E, and a letter dated September 2, 2010 from David Hardy (FBI) to George Albertz.

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<td>3</td>
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<td>Articles &amp; Book Excerpts</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Copy of FBI File on George Scalise 1953</td>
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**Series V: Correspondence (2007)**
This series is comprised of original letters to George Albertz about his father from Robert Morgenthau and Andrew J. Maloney. A majority of the correspondence is located in the Binder, but some is found in the FBI File folder located in the Series IV: Printed Materials

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