



**Record Group:** Commission to Investigate Communistic and Un-American Teachings and Activities in Public Schools  
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### Institutional History

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 11 was passed by the New Jersey Senate on 31 March 1947, instructing Gov. Alfred E. Driscoll to "appoint a commission to investigate communistic and un-American teachings and activities." The governor appointed a five-member commission, chaired by Nichol H. Memory, Executive Secretary of Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken. Other commissioners were Charles J. McDermott of Madison (commission secretary), Margaret F. Brogley of New Brunswick, Mattie S. Doremus of Paterson, and Joseph G. Carty of Plainfield.

The commission was created in response to nationwide public concern about communist influence in public institutions during the late-1940s and early-1950s. The commission's specific purpose was to examine all educational institutions in New Jersey that received public funding, to determine whether any teachers or textbooks sympathetic to communism were present.

The commission organized on 7 May 1948 and concluded its work on 2 April 1953. Its findings were published in a report to Governor Driscoll on 26 May 1953. At its 35 sessions the commission met with a variety of New Jersey educators and officials, most of whom requested to meet with the commission to discuss evidence of communist influence in the public educational system. The commission also mailed questionnaires on the subject to all supervising principals (superintendents) and presidents of boards of education, and to all New Jersey Parent-Teacher Association presidents.

The commission's report concluded that New Jersey schools were "generally manned by loyal and patriotic American citizens," that teaching in tax-supported schools should emphasize more strongly "the advantages of living under the American system," and that any public school and university teacher "who refuse[d] to testify or answer questions before any legally authorized board of inquiry on the grounds of self-incrimination should be dismissed from his post." Still, the commission's findings and recommendations seem, by comparison with those of some contemporary boards of inquiry in other states and the federal government, fairly innocuous. Public response to the final report was registered in the correspondence of Gov. Alfred E. Driscoll.

Two important New Jersey investigations focused on, but not conducted by the commission, involved Rutgers University (the much-publicized dismissal of Professors Simon Heimlich and Moses Finley) and teachers in the City of Englewood school system.

### Bibliography

New Jersey, Legislature, [Report of the Commission to Investigate Communistic and Un-American Teachings](#)

and Activities in the Public Schools and Tax-Supported Colleges and Universities in the State of New Jersey to Gov.

Alfred E. Driscoll. Trenton, 1953.

Rossiter, Clinton, Bibliography on the Communist Problem in the United States. The Fund for the Republic, Inc., New York, 1955.

Records of Gov. Alfred E. Driscoll, vol. 1035, "Commission on Communistic and Un-American Teachings," New Jersey Division of Archives and Records Management.

Records of Gov. Alfred E. Driscoll, vol. 1037, "Communism," New Jersey Division of Archives and Records Management.

Records of Gov. Alfred E. Driscoll, unnumbered box of subject files in alphabetical order (Rutgers - Sal), "Rutgers - Communist Activities," New Jersey Division of Archives and Records Management.

### **Content Note**

The archives' holdings were deposited unarranged in the New Jersey State Library in Trenton upon the dissolution of the commission in 1953. The series consists of minutes of commission meetings, correspondence, subject files, questionnaires, stenotyped reports of interviews, copies of newspaper clippings, and miscellaneous printed documents collected and used by the commission for reference.

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