



*New York State Archives*

**New York State Joint Legislative Committee to Investigate  
Seditious Activities Investigation Files L0038**

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New York State Archives  
222 Madison Avenue  
Albany, NY 12230  
[archref@nysed.gov](mailto:archref@nysed.gov)  
URL: <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/>

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## Overview of the Records

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<b>Repository:</b>	New York State Archives
<b>Summary:</b>	This series contains correspondence, memorandums, and reports on individuals and organizations investigated by the Joint Legislative Committee to Investigate Seditious Activities, known as the "Lusk Committee" for its chairman Clayton R. Lusk. The records pertain to meetings, organizational activities, and educational programs of the Russian Soviet Bureau, the Socialist Party, the Bolsheviks, the Niagara Frontier Defense League, and other groups and organizations.
<b>Creator:</b>	New York (State). Legislature. Joint Legislative Committee to Investigate Seditious Activities
<b>Title:</b>	Joint Legislative Committee to Investigate Seditious Activities investigation files
<b>Quantity:</b>	5.5 cubic feet
<b>Inclusive Date:</b>	1918-1920
<b>Series:</b>	L0038

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## Arrangement

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Organized into 2 subseries: Subseries 1, New York City Investigation File, 1918-1920, 3 cubic feet, is arranged alphabetically by topic. Subseries 2, Upstate New York Investigation File, 1919, 2.5 cubic feet, is alphabetical by city.

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## Scope and Content Note

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This series contains records relating to the committee's investigation of organizations suspected of spreading radical revolutionary propaganda in violation of the state's criminal anarchy statutes. To assist prosecutors in preparing criminal anarchy cases, the committee produced investigative reports, seized and examined organization records, and subpoenaed witnesses for testimony.

The records in this series were produced as part of these investigations. They include correspondence, investigative reports, minutes of meetings, summaries of documents seized from organizations, lists of individuals and organizations suspected of radical activity, transcripts of speeches and testimony, and newspaper articles, pamphlets, and other printed items. The records are divided into two subseries, the first relating to New York City investigations and the second relating to investigations in upstate New York.

Subseries 1, New York City Investigations File, 1918-1920, 3 cubic feet. This subseries relates to investigation of individuals and organizations active in the New York City area. The records include material relating to the Russian Soviet Bureau (reports on bureau activity, interviews with staff, and summaries of seized documents); the Rand School of Social Science (mostly content of curriculum and background of faculty); and the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) (correspondence, articles for labor newspapers, and investigation reports on activities of a number of local labor unions and organizations).

Reports from private investigators hired by the committee detail activities at radical meetings, various speeches, and the methods of distribution of radical literature. Also included is testimony given before the committee, including the non-testimony of John Reed who declined to be sworn in or testify on the grounds that the committee's subpoena was unconstitutional. Small amounts of information pertaining to Emma Goldman and Leon Trotsky are also found in this series.

The records include information on particular groups being investigated (particularly Jews and African-Americans); on labor groups active in the Socialist movement; and on special topics such as pacifism and cost of living. The latter was examined as a possible root cause of radical activity. The records include testimony from approximately sixty suspected radicals including over 200 pages of testimony from Ludwig C.A.K. Martens, the Bolshevik government representative to the United States. Miscellaneous seized records include financial records of Michael Mislig, a leader of the Russian Socialist Federation; notes and clippings from suspected radical Nathan Chabrow; six I.W.W. posters used to organize transportation workers; two dozen printing blocks from several organizations; ink stamps from the Finnish Information Bureau; and a plan for a machine gun (apparently seized from the Russian Soviet Bureau).

Subseries 2, Upstate New York Investigations File, 1919, 2.5 cubic feet. This subseries contains primarily reports from committee special agents relating to meetings, speeches, radical literature, individuals attending radical meetings, and the amount of radical activity in general. There are individual files on the activities of the Niagara Frontier Defense League, the Order of the Golden Seal, and local Communist Party organizations. There is also a special list with name, address, and organizational affiliation of approximately 200 individuals active in upstate New York found in the Evidence Material Index file.

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## Other Finding Aids

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### Available at Repository

Folder list and roll list are available at the repository.

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## Use of Records

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### Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding access to or use of this material.

### Alternate Formats AvailableAlternate Formats Available

Boxes 1-5 available on microfilm at the New York State Archives or through inter-library loan.

Microfilm: 9 reels; 35 mm.

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## Administrative Information

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### Custodial History

This series was originally accessioned as boxes 3, 4, 6, 14, and 47 of old collection #281, accessions -236 and -237.

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## Access Terms

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- Anti-communist movements--New York (State)
- Socialist parties--United States
- New York (State)
- Labor unions--United States
- Communist parties--United States

- African Americans
- Labor unions and communism--United States
- Investigating socialism
- Jewish radicals--United States
- New York (State)--Politics and government
- Communism--United States
- Investigating communism
- Socialism--United States
- Posters
- Investigating radicalism
- Radicalism--United States
- Pacifism
- Goldman, Emma, 1869-1940.
- Industrial Workers of the World
- Niagara Frontier Defense League
- American Civil Liberties Union
- Trotsky, Leon, 1879-1940.
- National Civil Liberties Bureau (U.S.)
- Communist Labor Party of America
- Communist Party of America
- Soviet Union. Russian Soviet Government Bureau (New York, N.Y.)
- Mislig, Michael.
- Rand School of Social Science
- Reed, John, 1887-1920.
- Chabrow, Nathan.
- Order of the Golden Seal