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Communist Party of Massachusetts Collection

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A branch of the Communist Party of the United States of America, the Communist Party of Massachusetts enjoyed strong popularity during the 1930s and 1940s, organizing the textile and other manufacturing industries.

This small collection is comprised of a miscellaneous assemblage of fliers, broadsides, and ephemera issued by the Communist Party of Massachusetts and its affiliates from the mid-1930s through the repression of the McCarthy era. Originating mostly from Boston, the items in the collection center on significant themes in Communist thought, including opposition to Fascism and

militarism, labor solidarity against capital, and elections. A small number of items relate to Party-approved cultural productions, including plays and gatherings to celebrate Lenin or the Russian Revolution. Many items are associated with Otis A. Hood, a perpetual candidate for public office on the Communist Party ticket who became a target for McCarthy-era repression in the mid-1950s.

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Background on Communist Party of Massachusetts

The Communist Party of the USA, a Marxist-Leninist political organization, was founded in 1919 by the secession of the left wing of the Socialist Party of America. Despite the intense anti-Communist repression of the post-World War I years, the party spread rapidly across the country, partly as an underground movement, drawing strength within the ranks of organized labor, immigrant communities, and from opponents of racial segregation. Although hampered by internal factional disputes, the party grew into an active presence in Massachusetts by the late 1920s, rooted especially in Boston, Cambridge, and industrialized cities from Fall River and New Bedford to Springfield.

The economic dislocations of the Depression years of the 1930s propelled the party to its peak of influence in Massachusetts. The threat of Fascism in Europe galvanized party members to set aside factional disputes in favor of forming a broad popular front with other left organizations to forge coalitions centered on labor, social justice, and civil rights causes. The success they enjoyed, however, was relatively short-lived, curtailed by widespread rejection of the party's non-interventionist stance after the non-aggression pact between Germany and Soviet Union in August 1939. Although the party recovered somewhat after the German invasion of the Soviet Union and the formation of an American-Soviet alliance, it never again wielded the same influence, particularly after the renewal of severe governmental repression during the Cold War years and the resurgence of internal divisions.

Scope of collection

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Many items in the collection were quickly printed on cheap paper and are in brittle and very fragile condition. They should be handled with great care.

Inventory

17th anniversary celebration of Russian revolution, by Communist Party of USA, New England District

1934

Broadside

Box 1: 1

1954 Massachusetts congressional and state elections: the Communist viewpoint

1954

Box 1: 2

American League Against War and Fascism: Extra. World war looms

1934

Broadside

Box 1: 3

Anti-Soviet conspiracy is treason to America! Communist Party of Massachusetts

1942

Flier

Box 1: 4

Bacon, Gaspar G.: Steady work - real wages. Elect Gaspar G. Bacon governor

ca.1932

Broadside

Box 1: 5

City election, Communist Party of Massachusetts

ca.1954

Flier

Box 1: 6

City Organizational Department (Roxbury, Mass.): **Organizational letter** [re. meeting on Negro liberation class; loyalty oaths]

ca.1949

Box 1: 7

Communist Party, Western Massachusetts Section: **Letter to all AFL unions, independent unions, and unions affiliated with the TUUL, Socialist Party branches, and other working class organizations**

ca.1934

Box 1: 8

Felshin, Joe: **Joe Felshin letter to Frank Collier**

1957 May 10

Box 1: 9

Fifteen minute broadcast, Fall River, Mass. [radio script]

1949 Aug. 21

Box 1: 10

Frankfeld, Phil: **Not America's war! Not worth an American life!**

ca.1939

Box 1: 11

Hear the truth about Spain, battleground of Democracy

ca.1937

Flier

Box 1: 12

Hood, Otis A.: **Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. Otis Archer Hood**

ca.1954

Box 1: 13

Hood, Otis A.: **Facts about the Boston Public Schools, Series 1**. Prepared and issued by Research Department, Otis A. Hood Campaign Committee

ca.1949

Box 1: 14

Hood, Otis A.: **Freedom of speech cancelled!** [transcript of radio broadcast]

ca.1950

Box 1: 15

Hood, Otis A.: **School Committee, Boston, electoral ephemera**

1939

2 items

Box 1: 16

Hood, Otis A.: **School Committee, Boston, electoral ephemera**

1949

2 items

Box 1: 17

Hood, Otis A.: **State legislature election, independent candidate, ephemera**

1952

3 items

Box 1: 18

Hood, Otis A.: **Statement of Otis A. Hood following news of threatened indictment for violation of 1951 anti-Communist law**

ca.1954

Box 1: 19

Hood, Otis A.: **Vote for victory. Otis A. Hood, Communist candidate for governor**

1942

Brochure

Box 1: 20

Industrial Insurance Agents Union, CIO: **Insurance agents' election ordered!**

ca.1938

Broadside

Box 1: 21

International Labor Defense: **Defend your right to strike!! Police attacks on marine strikers! Mass meeting**

ca.1934

Flier

Box 1: 22

International Labor Defense: **Demand their release! Attend the trial!** [on trial of workers demonstrating against the Nazi warship

Karlsruhe]

1934

Broadside

Box 1: 23

Lenin memorial service, Symphony Hall, Boston, Mass.

ca.1936

Program

Box 1: 24

Luscomb, Florence H.: **Blacklisting the Constitution**

1955

Box 1: 25

Massachusetts Committee for the Bill of Rights: **This is McCarthyism in action** [re. persecution of Otis A. Hood]

ca.1954

Box 1: 26

National Student League: **No help wanted**

ca.1938

Broadside

Box 1: 27

New Culture League: **New Culture League presents Mother: Bloody days of Czarism**

1935

Playbill

Box 1: 28

New England Mutual Hall and the Charter Room: **Lease to Fanny Hartman** [for meeting]

1947 Aug. 15

Box 1: 29

New England Organizing Committee: **New England opponents of war...**

1933

Broadside

Box 1: 30

New Theatre Players: **Waiting for Lefty**

1935

Playbill

Box 1: 31

Peace is not subversive, Communist Party of Boston

ca.1952

Flier

Box 1: 32

Petititon: Houses up, rents down

ca.1948

Box 1: 33

Saltonstall attacks free elections, by Communist Party of Massachusetts

ca.1940

Broadside

Box 1: 34

Speak out for victory on March 17th!, Communist Party of Boston [opposing pro-Nazi Hamilton Fish]

ca.1942

Box 1: 35

United May Day Committee: **All out May Day. Against War! Against Fascism!**

1938

Broadside

Box 1: 36

United Shoe and Leather Workers Union: **To all members of the United Shoe and Leather Workers Union! Make our union an organization that will fight for the interests of all shoe and leather workers!**

ca.1935

Broadside

Box 1: 37

U.S. Senator Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota speaks on munition makers and war preparation , Committee for U.S. Senator Nye
Mass Meeting

1934

Flier

Box 1: 38

What's happening in the Comintern?... What does it mean for America? [Flier for talk by Jay Lovestone]

ca.1934

Flier

Box 1: 39

Who fights Hitler? Communist Party of Massachusetts

ca.1941

Flier

Box 1: 40

WMEX Radio Station: Broadcast agreements with Communist Party

1948

Box 1: 41

Workers of Boston! Demonstrate against war all out [20th anniversary of First World War]

1934

Broadside

Box 1: 42

Workers School of Boston and the John Reed Club of Boston present a series of lectures: Marxism and Culture

1934

Broadside

Box 1: 43

Workmen's Education Institute: Good News! Official opening of the reading room and library of the Workmen's Education
Institute

1935

Flier

Box 1: 44

WPA workers and unemployed: what will you do? Private industry won't hire you, WPA fires you!... Protest meeting

1938

Flier

Box 1: 45

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Eugene Povirk, Feb. 2008 (2008-040).

Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, May 2017.

Digitized content

Much of the Communist Party of Massachusetts Collection has been digitized and is available online in [Credo](#).

Language:

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Search terms

Subjects

Boston (Mass.)--History

Communism--Massachusetts

Communist Party of the United States of America (Mass.)
Depressions--1929
Hood, Otis A. (Otis Archer)
Labor movement--Massachusetts
Peace movements--Massachusetts
World War, 1939-1945

Contributors

Communist Party of the United States of America (Mass.) [[main entry](#)]

Genres and formats

Broadsides (Notices)
Fliers (Printed matter)
Printed ephemera

Link to similar SCUA collections

Communism & Socialism
Labor
Massachusetts (East)
Peace
Political activism
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