



Mr. William Janssen
Superintendent of Schools
110 Livingston St.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dear Sir:

I heartily approve the decision of Judge Shirick in finding the Feinberg Law unconstitutional.

I urge you use the occasion to assure our teachers, that a sane and wholesome atmosphere of freedom will be restored to our schools once again.

Reassure them, that henceforth their fitness will be judged solely on the basis of their professional qualifications, their competence and conduct in the classroom.

Respectfully yours,

Name Beat

Address 2007

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#16

American mothers don't want their children taught by Jews who think Russia is a better place than the U.S.

Now you have your own country Palestine. Why don't you go there.

COURTESY NEW YORK CITY MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES

Many felt it was unfair that May Quinn, a civics teacher believed to have incorporated racism and anti-Semitism into her lesson plans, was still in the classroom while their friends and relatives lost their jobs.

COURTESY OF MILDRED GROSSMAN PHOTOGRAPHS, THE PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, BALTIMORE COUNTY

the subjects of the first of what would become a series of highly public departmental trials. All eight were union officers or activists, including TU president Abe Lederman, secretary Celia Lewis Zitron, and Isadore Rubin, editor of *Teacher News*, the union paper, and were fired in February 1951.

Seeing Reds wasn't new. The post-war investigations picked up where the 1940–1942 Rapp-Coudert New York state legislative hearings left off. Described in the Winter 2011 issue of *New York Archives*, Rapp-Coudert mostly went after professors in the city's public colleges. The new focus was on K-12 schools and the Board of Education. Going forward, New York State's 1949 Feinberg Law set a path for assessing the loyalty

of public school teachers, and Board of Education measures provided additional tools.

Hundreds Driven Out

Mostly, education officials wanted to run schools, not investigations. But driven by events and the pressures on the national scene, Jansen and others in the school bureaucracy became involved with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Moskoff was assigned as the workload grew and school officials needed help negotiating the legal and public relations tangles they encountered as the Cold War went into high gear.

New York officials investigated over 1,000 teachers, plus a few principals and other school employees. Thirty-three who refused to name others or discuss their own activities

were fired after departmental trials. Another 18 called to testify before the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) or the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (SISS) were fired under Section 903 of the city charter, which required termination of city employees who refused to cooperate with congressional committees. Some 250 to 300, probably more, retired or resigned. Those who were able to retire kept their pensions. Many others sent in their resignations after getting letters from the investigators. Others didn't wait for the letter; they just resigned out of fear as the ambient hysteria took hold in the city and the nation. Also fearing the investigation, or possibly regretting their own Communist Party activities, about 50 teachers became informers.

"Commies" and "pinkos" were making regular appearances in New York papers and on radio. Headlines in the

Letters to the Board of Education revealed an array of opinions on the investigations of teachers.

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