

Sources at the National Archives

The Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers

Contents

Collection reference number 98/14

Collection name The Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers

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98/14/ The Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers

Introduction

The first committee meeting of this organisation was held in March 1935, at Ely Place in central Dublin. Notable attendees at the initial meeting were Mrs Kettle, Mrs Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Louie Bennett, Jennie Wise Power and Madeleine French-Mullen. The Joint Committee was made up of representatives from a number of women's organisations, which met initially to discuss a response to the rejection of proposed amendments to the Criminal Law Amendment Act.

The Joint Committee was disbanded in 1993, after fifty-eight years in existence. Throughout this time, the number of organisations on the committee fluctuated, but initially comprised nine societies and later rose to fourteen. It dealt with many issues relating to women and children, through a time of immense change in Irish society and, from its records, could clearly be seen to have influenced the changes that occurred in Irish society at this time.

This collection is organised into seven distinct series, comprising mainly files, but also bound volumes and some financial information. Within each series, the material is organised mainly in date order, where possible. The minutes of the committee, which are recorded in bound volume, are by far the most valuable source, dating as they do from the formation of the organisation in 1935. There are good runs of reports for the 1980s and 1990s and information relating to specific areas in which the committee was involved in and the organisation's fiftieth year celebrations.

The collection number is 98/14 and the series are the following:

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When requesting a document one must put the following on the docket:

98/14/series number/number of document, eg, 98/15/5/2

98/14/1/ Attendance Books

- 1 Sept. 1979–March 1992
Attendance book for committee meetings, outlining attendees.
1 item

- 2 April 1992–Feb. 1994
Attendance book for committee meetings.
1 item

98/14/2 Committee correspondence

- 1 1973, 1977
Letters relating to committee activities
2 items

- 2 [1983]
Letters concerning the unavailability of a location for meetings and the issue of nutrition.
2 items

- 3 1983–1984
Correspondence relating to committee meetings.
8 items

- 4 1984–1986
Correspondence relating to committee matters.
6 items

- 5 September, November 1985
Correspondence between committee members concerning the Chairmanship of the organisation and alleged pornography in 'Woman's Way' magazine.
2 items

- 6 1987
Correspondence relating to the co-option of Veronica Crumplin to the joint committee.
2 items

- 7 [Jan. 1987]
Letter relating to the scheduling of a committee meeting.
1 item

98/14/2 Committee correspondence

- 8 Oct. 1989
 Notifications of meetings.
 2 items

- 9 1990
 Documentation relating to meeting times. File includes agendas and attendance lists.
 7 items

- 10 1991
 Correspondence relating to committee meeting times.
 3 items

- 11 1992
 Letters relating committee activities, including a letter to the Trinity Women's
 Graduate Association, from the secretary of the committee, thanking them for the use
 of their rooms.
 7 items

- 12 1993
 Correspondence relating to committee matters, including the withdrawal of women's
 societies representatives from the Committee.
 9 items

98/14/3 Financial

- 1 1950–1959
Cash book. Includes statement of accounts, indicating receipts and payments, bank accounts, petty cash, interest and subscribers to the society.
1 item

- 2 April 1959–June 1962
Cash book. Includes details of payments for items such as notices, letters, reports, subscriptions and petty cash.
1 item

- 3 1967
Financial accounts for the year ending June 1967.
1 item

- 4 1976–1993
Cash book containing details of expenses and receipts, income and expenditure, subscriptions and rental expenses.
1 item

- 5 1981–1983, 1987
Financial statements, showing income and expenditure.
8 items

- 6 June 1990–Nov. 1993
Bank statements.
12 items

98/14/4/ General Correspondence

- 1 1964
Letter to the Minister for Justice, relating to the Succession Bill, suggesting amendments and a letter concerning a questionnaire on adoption.
2 items

- 2 1980–1982
Correspondence and related documentation, concerning health and environmental issues. File includes papers relating to the JCWSSW’s attendance at an Alliance for Health and Safety seminar in Cork.
14 items

- 3 Sept. 1981–Jan. 1982
Correspondence file, with related news cuttings and leaflets, concerning nutrition and the free EEC milk scheme.
19 items

- 4 Oct. 1981–July 1982
Correspondence and related papers concerning the Committee’s campaign against lead in petrol.
14 items

- 5 1982–1991
Correspondence and related papers concerning “video nasties”.
File includes copies of the Video Recordings Bill.
26 items

- 6 1983–1984
Correspondence and related papers from the US-based organisation Women Against Pornography.
9 items

98/14/4/ General Correspondence

- 7 1984
Letter and related papers, concerning opposition to the Criminal Justice Bill.
7 items
- 8 1984
Letter from researcher Mary Pipe, requesting information for her forthcoming book on
abortion.
1 item
- 9 1985–1989
Correspondence and related papers concerning the production of toxic soap in
Ireland for distribution in Africa.
16 items
- 10 1985
Correspondence with the Ministers for Justice and Health, concerning adoption and
the Status of Children Bill.
7 items
- 11 Oct. 1986
Letter to the Minister for Health concerning surrogate motherhood and in-vitro
fertilisation.
1 item
- 12 1987
Correspondence with the Council for the Status of Women and the Taoiseach,
Charles Haughey, concerning a venue for meetings.
2 items

98/14/4/ General Correspondence

- 13 1988
Correspondence with the Minister for Health, Irish Rail, Superquinn and RTE.
5 items
- 14 1989
Correspondence with RTE, Dunnes Stores, the Eastern Health Board, RGDATA
(trade association) and Mary Banotti (MEP).
6 items
- 15 1990
Correspondence with the Minister for Justice, concerning the sentencing in rape
cases and also with RTE, regarding programming.
3 items
- 16 1992
Letters to the Minister for Education, Transport, Tourism, Transport and
Communication and An Post.
13 items
- 17 1993
Correspondence between the committee and the Minister for Justice, a research
student and Senator Fergal Quinn.
6 items

98/14/5/ Minutes

- 1 1935–1939
Committee minute book. Includes details of the first and subsequent meetings.
1 item

- 2 June 1939–Nov. 1947
Committee minute book. Issues addressed include a female police force, female probation officers, female unemployment and prostitution.
1 item

- 3 May 1948–Nov. 1955
Committee minute book. Issues addressed include adoption, school meals and correspondence with Archbishop McQuaid.
1 item

- 4 1956–1964
Committee minute book. Issues addressed include the Children Amendment Bill and women in Mountjoy jail. Book also includes minutes of the National Council of Women of Ireland and membership details (1939–1941).
1 item

- 5 Oct. 1964–March 1973
Committee minute book, referring to issues such as the Succession Bill, illiteracy and unmarried mothers.
1 item

- 6 April 1973–Sept. 1980
Committee minute book. Issues addressed include prostitution, alcoholism, the Kennedy report relating to children, marriage annulment and the care of the aged.
1 item

98/14/5/ Minutes

- 7 Oct. 1980–June 1989
Committee minute book, referring to issues such as glue-sniffing, adoption, the Warnock Report on surrogate motherhood and anniversary celebrations.
1 item
- 8 1963–1967
Minutes of the Joint Committee, referring to issues such as the Adoption Bill, itinerant halting sites and employment agencies.
4 items
- 9 Jan.–Feb. 1981
Annotated minutes of the Joint Committee meetings, referring to issues such as marriage age and the price of bread.
3 items
- 10 Feb. 1981–Oct. 1983
Notebook, containing rough minutes of Joint Committee meetings.
1 item
- 11 May 1982–May 1988
Notebook, containing notes from the Joint Committee meetings, referring to issues such as “video nasties”, the Criminal Justice Bill and surrogate motherhood.
1 item
- 12 1982
Minutes of Joint Committee meetings. Issues addressed include glue-sniffing, care of the aged and membership of the Federation of Jewish Women’s Societies.
15 items

98/14/5/ Minutes

- 13 1983
Annotated minutes. Issues addressed include illegitimacy, nutrition and membership of the Council for the Status of Women.
10 items
- 14 Feb.–June 1983
Annotated minutes. Issues addressed include the penal system, nursing homes and “video nasties”.
5 items
- 15 1985
Committee minutes, referring to issues such as the Status of Children Bill.
3 items
- 16 1986
Committee minutes, referring to issues such as the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the organisation and youth unemployment.
11 items
- 17 1987
Copies of Committee minutes. Issues addressed include the lack of a venue for meetings, AIDS and clingfilm wrapping.
9 items
- 18 1988
Committee minutes, referring to issues such as irradiation in food, private nursing homes and financial information.
7 items

98/14/5/ Minutes

- 19 1988–1990
Notebook, containing rough notes of meetings.
1 item
- 20 1989
Committee minutes, referring to issues such as mercury in soap and food hygiene.
9 items
- 21 1990
Annotated minutes and copies of Committee meetings. Among the issues addressed are the election of President Mary Robinson, conditions for women in Mountjoy jail and the Romanian humanitarian crisis.
19 items
- 22 Sept. 1990–Dec. 1991
Annotated copies of Committee minutes. Includes report from the International Congress on Prostitution.
11 items
- 23 1992
Annotated Committee minutes. Among the issues addressed are the Maastricht referendum, Romania and a report on homelessness by Fr. Peter McVerry.
13 items.
- 24 1993
Annotated Committee minutes from a meeting held at Trinity College, referring to issues such as bullying, the future of the committee and its records.
10 items.

98/14/6/ Other

- 1 1935–1965
Background material, mainly handwritten, relating to the history of the society.
8 items

- 2 1960s–1980s
File containing copies of the Committee constitution, with annotations and amendments.
9 items

- 3 1966
'Homes for Incapacitated Persons Regulations.'
1 item

- 4 1982–1987
Material from the Irish Housewives Association, the Council for the Status of Women, the La Leche League of Ireland and the Coeliac Society of Ireland.
6 items

- 5 1983
Papers relating to illegitimacy. File includes the Law Commission's report and Nuala Fennell's (Minister for State) opening address to the Department of Justice's seminar on illegitimacy.
4 items

- 6 1984–1988
Notes and newspapers cuttings concerning standards in Irish nursing homes for the elderly.
7 items

98/14/6/ Other

- 7 March 1984
Speech by Nuala Fennell (Minister of State for Women's Affairs) at the International Women's Day reception.
1 item
- 8 1984, 1989–1990
Reports on work of the Joint Committee to the Irish Matrons Association, one of the organisations represented on the Committee.
3 items
- 9 1985–1987
Papers relating to the UN International Year of Shelter. File includes newspaper cuttings on homelessness in Ireland and an EEC report on homelessness in the European Community.
28 items
- 10 1986
Questionnaires relating to the issue of adoption in relation to the Review Committee on Adoption Services and amendments to the Adoption Act.
5 items
- 11 1986
Information relating to the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Joint Committee. File includes historical information on the Committee.
26 items

98/14/6/ Other

- 12 c. 1980s
Background information relating to areas of research carried out by the Joint Committee, including documentation on irradiation of food, legal reform, nutrition, the Warnock Report on fertilisation and lead in petrol. File includes an appreciation of JCWSSW member, Mona Macauley.
c. 30 items
- 13 [n.d.]
Undated material. Includes notices of meetings.
6 items
- 14 [n.d.]
John M.B. Kremer and Carol A. Curry, 'Attitudes towards Women in Northern Ireland.'
1 items

98/14/7/ Reports

- 1 1935–1967
Report of Committee activities and a history of the Society, outlining objectives , member societies and previous successes.
3 items

- 2 1961–1969
Annual reports of the Joint Committee, referring to women sitting on juries, juvenile drinking, itinerants, children in care and civil servants' widows.
8 items

- 3 1970–1979
Reports, including annual reports relating to Committee activities. Among the issues addressed are free school books, female prisons, adoption, alcoholism, registration of nursing homes, prostitution, nullity of marriage, child institutions, a report on work to date (1975) and a report on meetings (1970).
25 items

- 4 1979–Nov. 1980
File containing Committee reports, including a report to Dublin University [women's group] by Nora Browne, referring to issues such as drinking water, hospital clinic waiting times, hygiene in hotels and shops and the National Prices Commission.
5 items

- 5 1980–1981
File containing Committee reports for the working year. Among the issues referred to are dyslexia, alcoholism, jury service, the price of bread and the Year of the Disabled. Also included is a financial statement.
4 items

98/14/7/ Reports

- 6 July–Dec. 1982
File containing Committee reports on issues such as pollution at the White Gate Oil Refinery, cyclists on the footpath and the bad telephone service.
8 items
- 7 1982–1983
File containing Committee reports for the Soroptimists. Issues referred to include glue -sniffing and pollution. File also includes financial information.
8 items
- 8 1983–1984
File containing an annual report of the Joint Committee. Also includes are report on adoption, nutrition, single women, nursing homes and child minders. File also includes financial information.
10 items
- 9 1984–1985
Reports relating to the work of the Committee.
2 items
- 10 1985–1986
Reports relating to the work of the Committee, including those on the Soroptimists conference, comments on the Warnock Report and a reference to the anniversary of the organisation.
8 items
- 11 1986–1987
Reports relating to Committee activities, including minutes of the Annual General Meeting and references to issues such as surrogate motherhood.
8 items

98/14/7/ Reports

- 12 1987–1988
Chairman's report on the Committee's activities.
9 items
- 13 1988–1989
Report on the Committee meetings, referring to issues such as hygiene and mercury in soap.
4 items
- 14 1989–1990
Report on Committee activities from Kitty Shannon and financial details from 1989–1990.
2 items
- 15 1990–1991
Reports relating to Committee activities, including the Annual General Meeting and issues such as the down-grading and closing of sub-post offices and child begging.
5 items
- 16 1991–1992
Reports on Committee activities, includes references to bullying in schools, child care and the Sligo to Dublin Railway.
6 items
- 17 1992–1993
Chairman's annual report and a report to the Irish Countrywomen's Association on 'The end of an era', including references to the winding-up of the JCWSSW.
3 items