

National Council of Jewish Women Records

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



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Prepared by Paul D. Ledvina with the assistance of Allyson Jackson and Janice E. Ruth

Collection Summary

Title: National Council of Jewish Women Records

Span Dates: 1893-1989

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1940-1981)

ID No.: MSS61810

Creator: National Council of Jewish Women

Extent: 48,000 items ; 216 containers ; 91.8 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Summary: Organized in 1893 as the Council of Jewish Women with the primary goals of social reform and the promotion of Judaism among women; name changed in 1923 to the National Council of Jewish Women. Correspondence, memoranda, minutes, transcripts of proceedings, reports, reference material, official publications, printed matter, and other records chiefly documenting the organization's activities.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

McCarthy, Joseph, 1908-1957.

Organizations

National Council of Jewish Women.

United Nations.

Subjects

Abortion.

Anti-communist movements--United States.

Child care.

Civil rights.

Commerce.

Consumers.

Economic assistance.

Education.

Emigration and immigration.

Equal rights amendments.

Food.

Housing.

Human rights.

International relations.

Jews--Social life and customs.

Jews--Soviet Union.

Juvenile delinquency.

Labor laws and legislation.

National health insurance.

Nuclear warfare.

Nutrition.

Older people.

Peace.

Sex discrimination.

Social problems.

Social service.

Women's rights.

Women--Employment.
World War, 1939-1945--Refugees.

Places

Israel.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The records of the national office of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) were given to the Library of Congress by the council in 1984. Additions to the collection were received in 1985 through 1989.

Processing History

The records of the National Council of Jewish Women were processed in 1986 and 1995. The finding aid was revised in 2009.

Additional Guides

A description of the NCJW records appears in *Library of Congress Acquisitions: Manuscript Division, 1985*, pp. 34-36. The papers of NCJW founder, Hannah G. Solomon, are described in *Library of Congress Acquisitions: Manuscript Division, 1993*, pp. 18-26.

Transfers

Motion pictures, projection slides, sound recordings, and a videocassette have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division of the Library of Congress where they are identified as part of these records.

Related Material

Related collections in the Manuscript Division include the papers of Hannah G. Solomon and the records of the National Council of Jewish Women, Washington, D.C. Office.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of National Council of Jewish Women in these records and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division for further information.

Access and Restrictions

The records of the National Council of Jewish Women are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, National Council of Jewish Women Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The records of the National Council of Jewish Women span the years 1893-1989, with the bulk dating from 1940 to 1981. The records are divided into two parts of three series each. Part I contains an [Administrative File](#), 1914-1978; [National Conventions File](#), 1893-1963; and [Subject File](#), 1896-1981. Part II is arranged according to the same series, with similar and overlapping material, but spans different dates: [Administrative File](#), 1946-1981; [National Conventions File](#), 1965-1980; and [Subject File](#), circa 1893-1989.

The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) grew out of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. In 1890 the fair's planners decided that a parliament of religions would be one of the international congresses held during the exposition. Chicago clubwoman and reformer Hannah Greenebaum Solomon was appointed head of the Jewish Women's Committee, which sought to use the congress to educate Christians about Judaism and to promote international unity and tolerance. At the close of the congress, Solomon and her committee resolved that they would form a permanent organization, known as the NCJW, with two purposes. First, this new organization would keep Judaism alive by informing women of their religious duties and their role in rearing Jewish children. Secondly, its members would "take part as a large group in all that concerns the welfare of mankind," solving together growing social problems that were impossible for the individual to combat alone.

In three short years, by the time of its first triennial convention in 1896, the NCJW had more than four thousand members and fifty local sections. In the hundred years since its creation, the NCJW has grown to approximately one hundred thousand members and has established itself as one of the preeminent reform organizations of the twentieth century, actively involved in a wide variety of concerns: immigrant aid, opposition to the white slave trade, educational opportunities and vocational training for the blind and visually impaired, maternal and infant health care, establishment of child labor laws, religious education, opposition to anti-Semitism, international relief work, civil rights for blacks and women, and peace initiatives.

Although there are few records extant for the council's early years, the NCJW records richly document the organization's activities from the 1920s onward, particularly since World War II. Throughout this period, the NCJW maintained an active interest in the aged, child care, consumer issues, education, employment, food and nutrition, foreign assistance, housing, immigration, Israel, Jewish life and culture, juvenile delinquency, national health insurance, social welfare, trade, the United Nations, women's rights, and other issues. Special concerns emerged in each decade: atomic warfare, European refugees, postwar price controls, and the establishment of the United Nations during the 1940s; the council's Freedom Campaign against McCarthyism in the 1950s; civil rights and sex discrimination during the 1960s; and abortion rights, human rights, and Soviet Jewry during the 1970s.

A board of directors and an executive committee govern the NCJW and maintain national headquarters in New York City. National committees assist in the administration of council programs and receive technical support and expertise from professionally staffed departments based at council headquarters in New York. Members vote on council policies and resolutions at national conventions, which have been held every two years since 1953 and every three years before then.

The two Administrative File series contain minutes of meetings of the organization's national board of directors and executive board (later executive committee). The National Convention Files include transcripts of proceedings, memoranda, and reports for most of the council's national conferences. These records reveal the aims of the council and its efforts to sponsor programs in education, social action, and community service for youth, the elderly, and women. Information on regional conferences and district conventions may be found in the Subject File series under the heading "National Council of Jewish Women."

Both series of subject files document the council's advocacy of legislative initiatives affecting social welfare, constitutional rights, civil liberties, and equality for women. Significant files include those on labor, international relations and peace, assistance to war refugees, and the United Nations. The two Subject File series also include the official statements and policies of the council, press releases, and various national council publications, including newsletters, program monographs, catalogs, brochures, training manuals, and handbooks.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in six series:

- [Part I: Administrative File, 1914-1978](#)
- [Part I: National Conventions File, 1893-1963](#)
- [Part I: Subject File, 1896-1981](#)
- [Part II: Administrative File, 1946-1981](#)
- [Part II: National Conventions File, 1965-1980](#)
- [Part II: Subject File, circa 1893-1989](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX I:1-33	<u>Part I: Administrative File, 1914-1978</u> Minutes of meetings of the national and executive boards of directors with related notes, memoranda, and reports. Arranged chronologically by year and separated therein by executive and national boards.
BOX I:34-71	<u>Part I: National Conventions File, 1893-1963</u> Correspondence, notes, memoranda, transcripts of proceedings, reports, and other material related to the council's national conferences. Arranged chronologically by year in two groups: National Council of Jewish Women and National Council of Jewish Juniors. Information on regional conferences may be found in the Subject File under the heading "National Council of Jewish Women."
BOX I:72-162	<u>Part I: Subject File, 1896-1981</u> Correspondence, notes, memoranda, reports, general reference materials, clippings, printed matter, official publications, and press releases related to the council's activities. Arranged alphabetically by topic, committee, program, or organization.
BOX II:1-5	<u>Part II: Administrative File, 1946-1981</u> Minutes of meetings of the national and executive boards of directors with related notes, memoranda, and reports. Arranged chronologically by year and separated therein by executive and national boards.
BOX II:5-15	<u>Part II: National Conventions File, 1965-1980</u> Correspondence, notes, memoranda, transcripts of proceedings, reports, and other material related to the council's national conferences. Arranged chronologically in two groups: National Council of Jewish Women and National Council of Jewish Councilettes. Information on district conventions and regional conferences may be found in the Subject File under the heading "National Council of Jewish Women."
BOX II:16-54	<u>Part II: Subject File, circa 1893-1989</u> Correspondence, notes, memoranda, reports, general reference materials, clippings, printed matter, official publications, and press releases related to the council's activities. Arranged alphabetically by topic, committee, program, or organization.

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