



Public Record Office
of Northern Ireland

INTRODUCTION

ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL PAPERS

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Ulster Unionist Council Papers (D1327)

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Summary

The Ulster Unionist Council (UUC) archive comprises 200 volumes and c.60,000 files and documents, 1886-1986.



Access

The Ulster Unionist Council (UUC) archive is closed for a period of 50 years from the terminal date of each document. Readers must sign an Undertaking Form before accessing the collection. For further information contact Records Management, Cataloguing and Access section.



Background

The Ulster Unionist Council (UUC) was set up in 1905, under the Presidency of the 2nd Duke of Abercorn, '... to form a union of all local Unionist Associations in Ulster, to keep the latter in touch with their parliamentary representatives and to be the medium of expressing Ulster Unionist opinion ...'. The pre-1905 archive material derives therefore from predecessor and/or associated bodies, some of it running on well beyond 1905. These UUC-related papers include: minutes and accounts, etc, of the Unionist Clubs' Council, 1893-1919; minutes, etc, of the Unionist Association of Ireland, 1907-1915, with a register of speakers and canvassers, c.1908; accounts for the Unionist Association of Ireland Guarantee Fund, 1908-1913; and minutes, etc, of the Junior Imperial League, 1925-1945, together with minutes of various Belfast branches of the Junior Imperial League, 1925-1944, and correspondence about the formation of a new junior organisation to recruit young people into the Unionist Party, 1944.



UVF material

Records within the archive relating to the Ulster Volunteer Force are also fairly abundant. These include: minutes of the Co. Down Committee of the UVF, 1912-1915; minutes of the Headquarters' Council of the UVF, 1914-1920, with enclosures such as a letter of 6 April 1914 in which the British League 'for the support of Ulster' complains to Richard Dawson Bates, secretary to the UUC, of Frank Hall's harsh criticism of the League; and a file of reports, instructions, details of signals, etc, relating to the gun-running at Larne, Bangor and Donaghadee in April 1914. There are also photographs of a number of UVF reviews and other gatherings, c.1912-1914.



UUC minute books

The UUC archive proper (insofar as this can ever be defined) includes the following minutes and series of minute books: minutes of the Ulster Day Committee, 1911-1912; minutes of the Unionist Defence Fund Committee, 1912-1914; minutes of the Business Men's Executive Committee which was established to advise on commercial problems arising out of the formation of the Provisional Government, 1913-1914; minutes of the Ulster Unionist delegates to the Irish Convention, 1917-1918; agenda for, and minutes of, meetings of the UUC Executive Committee, 1949-1982, and of the Standing Committee, 1919-1974; minutes of the Officers' Committee, 1968-1981, and of the Finance Committee, 1941-1974, with gaps; minutes, correspondence, briefing documents, etc, relating to various special committees and sub-committees, 1917-1981, such as the Propaganda Sub-Committee formed in 1938 to consider ways and means of countering adverse propaganda about Northern Ireland, and which later became the Publicity Sub-Committee and then the Political Education and Publicity Sub-Committee, 1938-1973, of the Refugee Committee set up to help loyalists forced to flee from the Irish Free State, 1922, the Employment Sub-Committee, 1923, the Business Committee formed to administer the affairs of the UUC, 1943-1947, the Housing Sub-Committee, 1950-1951, and the committee set up to consider areas of civil unrest, 1968; minutes and notices of annual general meetings and special meetings of the UUC, 1913 and 1930-1974, with agenda, details of motions, etc, for their annual conferences, 1909 and 1943-1981; and minutes of committees set up at different times between c.1940 and c.1980 to review the strength of unionism and make recommendations for improving party efficiency.



Financial, electoral and constitutional papers

These include: a list of guarantors in connection with the '£1m Indemnity Guarantee Fund', c.1914; correspondence, accounts, etc, relating to the fund-raising activities of the UUC, 1922-1982; correspondence, etc, about membership dues, 1941-1982, with lists of each local Unionist Association with the amount due, 1949, 1951 and 1958-1960; account books recording subscriptions and donations, 1948-1950 and 1955-1963; annual statements of accounts of the UUC, 1912-1981, and of special funds, 1914-1964, including the UVF Fund, 1914-1921, the Loyalist Relief Fund, 1934, 1936 and 1948-1964, and the Lord Carson Presentation Fund, 1923-1933; correspondence, submissions, etc, relating to various boundary commissions, 1921-1982; election literature, correspondence, etc, relating mainly, but not exclusively, to unionist candidates in local government elections, 1920-1981, in Westminster elections, 1918-1979, in Stormont elections, 1921-1970, in Northern Ireland Assembly and Convention elections, 1973-1982, and in the European Assembly election, 1978-1979, together with nomination and voting papers, notices of poll, etc, for the election of Senators to the Northern Ireland Parliament, 1933-1969; correspondence, etc, concerning Ulster Unionist-Conservative links which is mostly about visits to Northern Ireland by members of the Conservative Party, 1922-1982; annual returns submitted by local unionist associations of officials and of delegates elected to the UUC, 1943-1982; correspondence relating to various reorganisations and to the constitution of the UUC, 1941-1980; and minutes, reports, correspondence, etc, relating to the constitutional policy of the Ulster Unionist Party, 1972-1982.



Printed matter

Newspaper cuttings, political cartoons, printed publications, etc, 1886-1982, cannot always be attributed to any one Unionist organisation. Such printed matter includes: Press statements issued by the UUC, 1954-1982; year books, 1923-1980, annual reports, 1914-1982, and other printed publications, 1912-1979, of the UUC; miscellaneous printed publications, for example, of the Liberal Unionist Council (from 1886), of the Irish Unionist Alliance, 1893 and 1915-1939, and of the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations, later the National Unionist Association of Conservative and Liberal Unionist Organisations, 1906-1937; and volumes and files of newspaper cuttings about Unionist activities and contemporary events, 1902-1939.



Correspondence of Secretaries to the UUC

The bulk of the archive consists of correspondence to and from Sir Richard Dawson Bates, Sir Wilson Hungerford, William Douglas, James Bailie and Norman Hutton, successive secretaries to the UUC, 1906-1982, relating to the organisation, administration and policies of the Council and to various contemporary issues such as the Home Rule Bill, the first election to the Northern Ireland Parliament, the death of Lord Craigavon, the Second World War, the anti-partition campaign of 1947-1948, the emergence of the civil rights movement of the late 1960s, the terrorist campaign, and the Unionist leadership crisis and the resulting fragmentation of the Unionist Party. Some of the correspondence is arranged by topic and contains details of, for example, the opening of the Ulster Office in London in 1947, nominations for awards, 1953-1964, the appointment of officers to the UUC, 1946-1974, the divisions in the Unionist Party, 1969-1971, and the Two Way Discussion Forum set up to bring together the principal officers of the various unionist associations and members of the government, 1965-1968. Included, by accident, are papers of the Secretary to the UUC in his separate capacity as clerk to Her Majesty's Lieutenant for the City of Belfast, 1952-1975.



Records of the UULA

The archive also contains the records of the Ulster Unionist Labour Association (UULA) which was formed in 1917 by Sir Edward Carson to counteract socialism amongst working class unionists. They include: minutes, 1917-1941 and 1962-1968; membership registers, 1935-1959; correspondence, detailing the work and activities of the Association on a political, social and educational level, 1924-1974; annual reports, 1931-1936 and 1942-1943; annual statements of accounts, 1929-1948 and 1954-1964; minutes of the South Belfast Club, 1944-1950, with a membership register, 1944-1948; correspondence of the North Belfast Club, 1923-1941, with accounts, 1954-1955; and correspondence of the East Belfast Club, 1922-1941, with annual statements of accounts, 1921-1932, and accounts, 1954-1955. There are also minutes, 1960, and correspondence, 1959-1964, of the Trade Union Advisory Committee of the UUC, which existed alongside the UULA and which had a similar aim, having been formed by disillusioned members of the UULA.



Parliamentary Party and constituency papers

There are also: minutes of meetings of the Official Ulster Unionist Parliamentary Party, 1921-1976, together with agenda and related correspondence, 1945-1972; and records of local unionist associations which include minutes, 1958-1971, and accounts, 1965-1971, of Ormeau Unionist Association, minutes, correspondence, etc, 1954-1961, of North Belfast Imperial Unionist Association, minutes of Mid-Armagh Women's Association, 1929-1955, and of Mid-Armagh Men's Association, 1929-1944 and 1951-1969, and minutes, 1968-1984, and correspondence, etc, 1968-1986, of North Down Divisional Association.

