

## **What the reviewers said about *NGOs in Contemporary Britain: Non-state Actors in Society and Politics Since 1945* :**

Wyn Grant, *Contemporary British History*, 2009

This book seeks to rectify a relative neglect of socio-political action by historians. It does so through a series of appropriately selected and well executed case studies of particular organisations or movements (...) This book raises as many questions as it answers, but that is a sign of strength rather than weakness and hopefully it will encourage further research in this area.

Holger Nehring, *Twentieth-Century British History*, 2009

The volume brings together fourteen excellent chapters by younger and more senior scholars, and this short review cannot do justice to the conceptual sophistication and empirical diversity of all its individual contributions. (...) This book is one of the very few edited collections in which the whole is more than its constituent parts. And it is an indication of the high quality and coherence of the volume's contributions that it provokes a series of questions that might lead to a more general debate about the key themes of contemporary British history. . . . These sceptical remarks notwithstanding, this fine volume is an extremely important contribution to contemporary British history. It will hopefully serve as the starting point for a debate about how we might incorporate non-state actors into the history of contemporary Britain. Not least, it might encourage historians of post-1945 Britain follow the editors and authors of this volume and begin a more thorough conversation with neighbouring disciplines, such as political science and sociology. It might also encourage post-1945 historians to engage much more thoroughly with some of the innovative research of their colleagues whose main specialisation is centred on earlier periods of British history, such as Jon Lawrence, James Thompson and James Vernon. In short, this book offers an extremely valuable compendium to a much neglected, yet extremely important part of contemporary British history and deserves a large readership.

Jim Tomlinson, *British Scholar*, 2:2, 2010, pp. 358-359.

This is the first book-length analysis of one of the key features of post-1945 Britain: the proliferation of NGOs. (...) As the cover illustration suggests, the idea that the British are apathetic about how the world is run is difficult to reconcile with the scale and diversity of this activity. Neither the current political claims about 'broken Britain', nor historical narratives about the welfare state largely ending the role of the voluntary sector should survive a reading of this book. (...) Overall, this is an innovative and informative collection, which lays the basis for much more work on the significance of these bodies for our understanding of democracy and its workings in modern Britain.

Lucy Robinson, *Economic History Review*, 63:2, 2010, pp. 548-549.

*NGOs in Contemporary Britain* brings together a fascinating collection of case studies through which to contextualize changing understanding of what constitutes political activism. (...) As a collection *NGOs in contemporary Britain* contains contributions that encompass the formal and informal, local and global, structured and voluntary, secular and religious, the everyday and the spectacular, reformist and more radicalized that together encompass the diversity of the term NGO, while managing not to lose all sense of the meaning of the term. It is a weight that the term appears largely able to bear.

Peter Dorey, *Parliamentary History*, 29:2, 2010, pp. 238-274.

This is an ambitious and eclectic study which skilfully and successfully enshrines several discrete objectives. Extending the term non-governmental organisation (NGO) beyond policy actors such as the international development agencies to which it has often been primarily applied, this rich and valuable collection of case-studies applies it to the plethora of social movements which have burgeoned in Britain since 1945, most notably with regard to campaigns and issues pertaining to anti-apartheid, environmentalism, fair trade, gender politics, human rights, nuclear disarmament and poverty (...) This is an intellectually-stimulating study whose breadth of coverage, and the issues it raises, should readily appeal both to political scientists and to social/cultural historians while also proving of great interest and utility to those who are themselves directly or professionally involved in NGOs. In other words, this is a book which deserves to be read by academics and activists alike.