

# CALL FOR PAPERS



## non-governmental organisations and politics in contemporary Britain

5-6 July 2007  
University of Birmingham

Since 1945, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and new social movements have proliferated in Britain. Over 5,000 are today affiliated to the National Council of Voluntary Organisations. Historians are only just beginning to be aware of their importance, as new archives are being discovered. As commentators recognise the tremendous significance of NGOs in redefining notions of political engagement, scholars are realising that political history cannot be understood simply in reference to established political parties and that social history in the contemporary period cannot be examined solely with reference to the classic institutions of, typically, the labour movement. NGOs have raised new political agendas, transformed and revived associational life, re-politicised generations seemingly disillusioned with the politics of the ballot box, and inspired numerous pieces of legislation and regulatory initiatives. Clearly, the history of NGOs is seen as an emerging and extremely important means of examining contemporary history. This conference aims to open up the subject and to contribute to an initial 'mapping' of the scope and extent of NGO-based activism in Britain since the Second World War.

Contributions will be welcomed that make sectoral evaluations of NGOs (e.g. human rights, environmentalism, age-based organisations etc.), as will papers that explore one or more of the following themes:

- the democratic role of NGOs
- the professionalisation of the third sector
- State-NGO relations
- the 'decline' of voluntarism
- religion and social activism
- the size and influence of the NGO sector
- private sector influences
- new social movements
- rights-based activism
- class and social activism
- civil society

These areas and themes are not an exhaustive list, and proposals are welcomed on any area relevant to the conference.

The conference is being organised by Nicholas Crowson and Matthew Hilton and hosted by the DANGO project ([www.dango.bham.ac.uk](http://www.dango.bham.ac.uk)), based in the Centre for Contemporary Governance and Citizenship in the UK (CenConUK) at the University of Birmingham ([www.cenconuk.bham.ac.uk](http://www.cenconuk.bham.ac.uk)).

Proposals for the conference should come in the form of a 200 word abstract, to be submitted by 23 December 2006. Please send to the DANGO Project Officer, James McKay ([j.r.mckay@bham.ac.uk](mailto:j.r.mckay@bham.ac.uk)).

