The Acceptable Face of Feminism: The Women's Institute Movement as a Social Movement (2nd edition)


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Abstract

The British Women's Institute is more often associated with jam and Jerusalem than radical activity, but in this book Maggie Andrews explores the WI's relationship with feminism from the formation of the organisation in 1915 up to the eve of British feminism's renaissance in the late 1960s. The book aims to challenge, not only common sense perceptions about the Women's Institute but also those about feminism, interrogating preoccupations with domestic spaces and skills. This makes it valuable reading for those interested in both historical and contemporary feminism, as well as, more broadly, the history of the twentieth century. Attention is given to the female cultural space and the value system provided by the WI, and the campaigns that articulated the needs of rural women and attempted to meet them. In this 100th anniversary year of the founding of the WI, this celebrated text is re-published in a new and completely revised edition. Maggie Andrews's new afterword considers the resurgence of interest in the WI amongst young women in the twenty-first century, and the relationship between this and the contemporary cultural enthusiasm for the domestic. There is also a new chapter on the formation of the WI in the First World War and substantial additions to existing chapters, including discussions of the WI involvement with radio in the inter-war years, and with evacuation in the Second World War.

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