

**PHOTOGRAPHY OF PROTEST AND COMMUNITY:
THE RADICAL COLLECTIVES OF THE 1970S**

BY NONI STACEY | LUND HUMPHRIES, £40

Making the invisible visible

JOHN GREEN recommends a book on the 1970s photography which brought ignored political and social activism sharply into focus

EMERGING from the tectonic reverberations of the so-called permissive society of the 1960s, the earthquake of the 1968 European-wide mass student uprisings and renewed industrial militancy, the 1970s was an exciting decade of protest.

In society at large, there were widespread struggles for equality and campaigns for the reimagining of British cities in the post-war period. People asserted their right to work, to decent wages and decent working conditions, access to housing and affordable childcare and they often culminated in strikes, demonstrations, sit-ins, go-slows and more. Whose voice was heard, and by whom, was key.

This ferment led to a flowering of community activism and artistic creativity, particularly the use of photography in support of a wide range of political and social struggles and community photography was strongly influenced by the Women's Liberation Movement.

During the '70s, London-based photographers joined together to form collectives which engaged with local and international political protest in cities across Britain and this book by Noni Stacey surveys the



radical community photography that these collectives produced.

Often taking inspiration from the counterculture, while finding new ways to produce, publish and exhibit their work, photographers created their own magazines and exhibition networks. And they took their politicised photography into community centres, laundrettes, working men's clubs, polytechnics and nurseries – anywhere that would have them. In the process, they created a "history from below."

Through archival research, interviews and newly discovered photographic and ephemeral



material, this book tells the story of the Hackney Flashers Collective, Exit Photography Group, Half Moon Photography Workshop, the producers of Camerawork magazine and community darkrooms, North Paddington Community Darkroom and Blackfriars Photography Project.

Community photography in the London-based photography collectives was born of the social and political conditions in Britain during the '70s, when the country was experiencing an extensive legislative programme that sought to enshrine the rights and responsibilities of its citizens which included



attempts to hobble the powerful trade union movement and curb workers' rights, epitomised by the 1971 Industrial Relations Act.

Introducing readers to the key movements, exhibitions, institutions and political pressure groups which nourished and funded the photography collectives, this book is a vital and fascinating work of history.



Photography of Protest and Community: The Radical Collectives of the 1970s goes on sale from October 19.

HISTORY FROM BELOW: (Left to right from top) Anti-racism sit-down protest, Bethnal Green, London, 1978, photograph by Paul Trevor; workshop poster for the Hackney Flashers, illustration by Christine Roche; Who's Holding the Baby?, exhibition panel from Hackney Flashers, 1978; workers assembling on an engine line, Luton, photograph by Robert Golden, Paddington by the Sea Community Festival, the Factory, west London, 1978, photograph by Philip Wolmuth and steel furnaceman, British Steel, Bilston, 1976, photograph by Nick Hedges

