



Anarchists, Hippies and Other Undesirables: Alternative Living, Politics and Optimism 1972- 1985

Mikaya Heart, David White

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The book covers a thirteen-year period in the lives of eighteen people from across Britain. Influenced by ideas of alternative living, the "counter-culture" and socialist/anarchist politics, they put their beliefs into everyday practice through a social experiment in communal, egalitarian living. Although cannabis and hippy trappings of dress and cultural tastes were part of their identity, drug-addled, aimless self-indulgence was not. Determined to be part of wider society, to earn a living, and, most of all, to contribute tangibly to making the world a better place, these pragmatic idealists renovated a run-down terraced street, then created a housing co-operative, a workers' co-operative fruit-and-veg business, a café, a bookshop and a radical county-wide newspaper. To prevent the demolition of the street where they lived, they took on and defeated the reactionary local Labour council. Some became involved in trade union work and education, others in women's groups, journalism and film-making. Containing contributions from most of those who lived in the Community over that period, the styles vary widely, ranging from political analysis to emotional recollections, moving from the drawbacks of outdoor toilets to the entrapment of a Special Branch snooper. The major events of the community's history are explored: the development of income-sharing, the problems of communal child-rearing, relations with village neighbours, brushes with the law and so forth. Additionally there were major happenings in the wider world impacting upon the community, none more so than the 1984-85 Miners' Strike since their home, Langley Park, was a pit village.

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