Echoes of Protest

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This paper looks at the research methodology and findings of the collaborative project 'Echoes of Protest' by Sheffield Hallam University academics, Esther Johnson, Professor of Film and Media Arts, and Debbie Ballin, Senior Lecturer in Film and Media.

'Echoes of Protest' aims to understand the role protest can play in the politicisation of children and the long-term impact of its aftermath on their lives. The initial phase of this research draws on oral testimony and photography to highlight a seldom-explored perspective of the 1984-1985 UK Miners' Strike. The stories collected are from adults remembering what it was like to grow up during the strike.

The paper will discuss the following:

the collection and retrieval of stories that may otherwise be lost

the understanding of how formative experiences of being involved in protest movements can shape, define and affect political views in adulthood;

the way in which oral testimonies can tell nuanced stories from the perspective of an adult looking back on their experiences as a child

the testing of creative methodologies and approaches to create an extended understanding of the emotional experience of history;

how exhibiting archive materials alongside new audio-visual work prompts fresh and extended readings of 'official accounts' within historical discourse.

Our research findings have been presented in two UK exhibitions to date: People's History Museum, Manchester (2015), and National Coal Mining Museum for England, Wakefield, (2016-17). Publications include, a journal article in the Spring 2017 issue of Oral History (UK), and a chapter in Justice Denied, Friends, Foes and the Miners' Strike (Merlin Press, 2017). Johnson and Ballin are currently expanding this research to look at children's experiences of other protest movements.

Keywords: Children's experience, 84-85 UK Miners' Strike, documentary, Memory, Protest

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