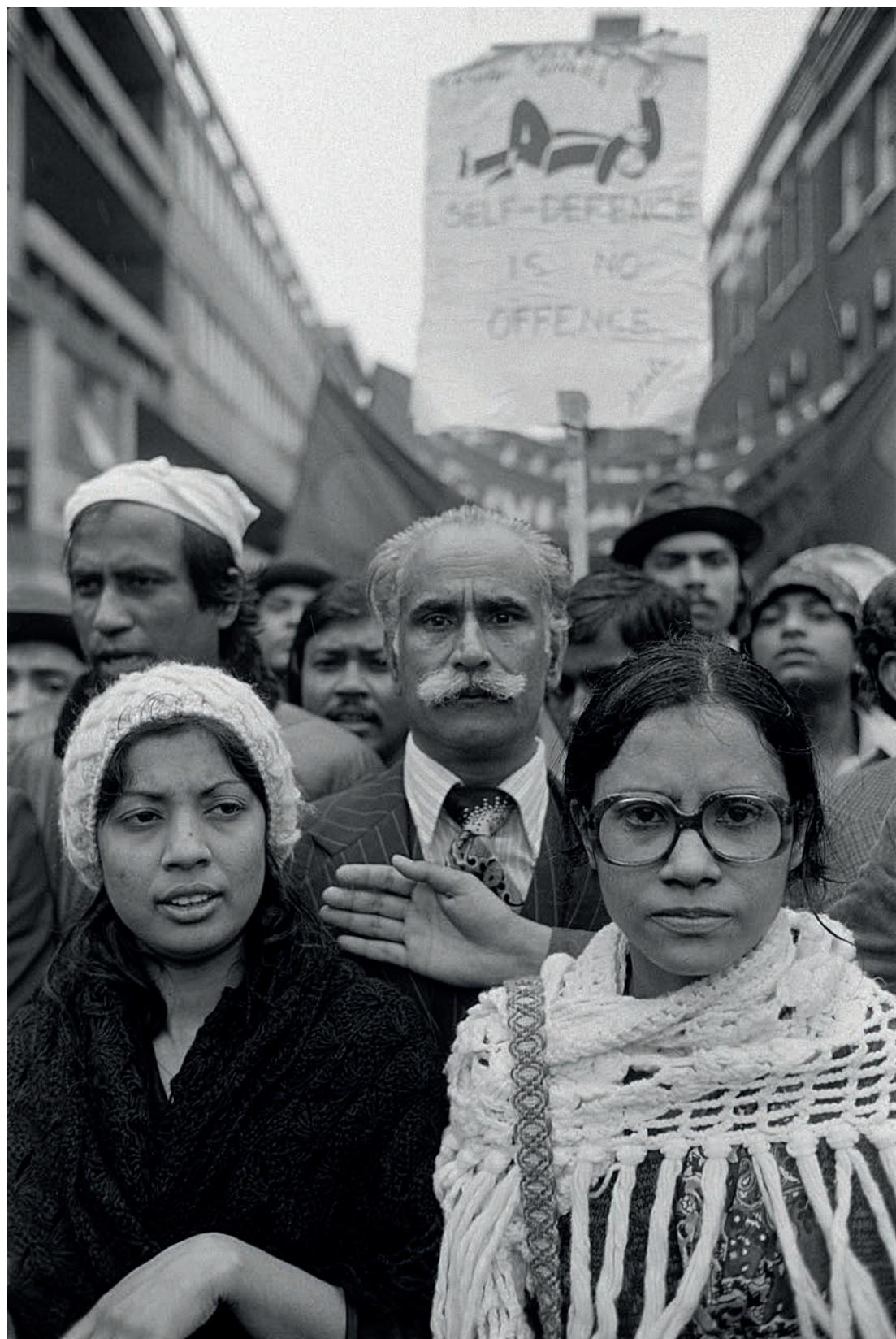


GALLERY

*Photograph by***PAUL TREVOR**

Adler Street, London E1, on a march behind Altab Ali's coffin from Whitechapel to Hyde Park, May 14 1978

On May 4 1978, a 24-year-old Bangladeshi garment worker named Altab Ali was found stabbed to death in an east London park after a racially motivated attack. For years, the city's East End had been a focal point for British fascists, from Oswald Mosley's blackshirts to the National Front, the far-right political party headquartered in nearby Shoreditch. Ali's murder galvanised the Bengali community, who had suffered years of attacks. They took to the streets to protest in what became known as the Battle of Brick Lane.

"Having parents who grew up in the East End, and a father who took part in the anti-fascist Battle of Cable Street in 1936, I saw the anti-racist protests in the 1970s as a repeat performance," says the photographer Paul Trevor. "Once again opposing ignorance and hatred rooted in social inequalities."

Jalal Rajonuddin, who took part in the protests and is now an adviser to the anti-racist organisation the Altab Ali Foundation, describes how the protests "gave voice to the younger generation of Bengali youth who, unlike their predecessors, decided that the UK was their home and wanted to live here with dignity and respect. They did not accept their status as second-class citizens. They wanted to create a multicultural Britain free from injustice. The Battle of Brick Lane in 1978 led to a turning point for the Bengali community, not only in London, but throughout the UK."

A London exhibition brings together 75 of Trevor's photographs of the protest for the first time, alongside accounts from the original activists. 

Words by Josh Lustig. "Brick Lane 1978: The Turning Point" is at Four Corners Gallery, London until September 10