

Press release for immediate use



Photograph © Paul Trevor, 1978

## Brick Lane heritage project secures National Lottery support

Four Corners and partner Swadhinata Trust are delighted to announce a major new project which has received a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £82,400. Thanks to National Lottery players, **Brick Lane 1978: The Turning Point** will share the stories of the local community of London, Brick Lane, during a pivotal year in race relations. Here the largely Bengali community mobilised in an unprecedented, anti-racist uprising against far-right groups, following the murder of Altab Ali, a 25-year-old Bangladeshi garments worker. Their actions represented a turning point in local and national resistance against racial harassment and discrimination.

The project will explore how and why this watershed moment unfolded. 18 volunteers will work with an extensive collection of archive images by photographer Paul Trevor, using them as a powerful catalyst to research, identify and gather oral history accounts from those involved at the time. The aim is to create a lasting, first-hand record of local peoples' memories, and to make Paul Trevor's historically significant photographs publicly accessible. The project runs over two years from Summer 2019, with the launch of a public programme of exhibition, talks and study days at Four Corners' Gallery in Spring 2021.

Ansar Ullah, Director of Swadhinata Trust said: *"This year is the 41st anniversary of Altab Ali's killing. It is important to capture and document that period before it's too late. It is the most important aspect of the Bengali community's history in the UK. To capture that struggle with those who were there physically and in images is very exciting."*

Paul Trevor said: *"They say a photo is worth a thousand words. But sometimes, as in this case, words are essential. This project is an opportunity to add the voices of those who made history to the images of that story."*

Carla Mitchell, Development Director at Four Corners said: *"This history is hugely relevant today, with an increase of racist attacks making the headlines in 2019. Thanks to National Lottery players we will be able to ensure that this powerful heritage is made publicly accessible for a wide audience of current & future generations."*

Stuart Hopley, Area Director, London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund said: *"The history of community activism and anti-racism of Brick Lane 1978 has played a significant role in shaping the culture and heritage of London. We're delighted that, thanks to National Lottery players, we can support Four Corners to explore and record this crucial part of the local community's heritage, acknowledging its impact on the city and promoting better understanding in the wider community."*

**- Ends-**

## **Notes to editors**

The project will explore the heritage of the Brick Lane community uprising of 1978 through three main elements:

1. 30-40 oral histories recordings, undertaken by volunteers, and the creation of a short film of interviews;
2. Creation of a schools learning pack, to be distributed to local secondary schools;
3. Touring exhibition & booklet, launching in Spring 2021 at Four Corners Gallery and touring to two other local venues, with associated public talks and study days.

All project material will be lodged at the Bishopsgate Institute archives where it will be publicly and freely accessible. Project information and images will also be added to both Swadhinata Trust's and Four Corners' websites. The project will work closely with the Altab Ali Foundation, Tower Hamlets Arts, Parks and Events and the Bishopsgate Institute.

## Contacts

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[admin@swadhinata.org.uk](mailto:admin@swadhinata.org.uk) community- wide participation for over 40 years. Its programme seeks to support projects that engage with social and cultural themes, and open up perspectives for audiences, particularly in East London. This project links with Four Corners' archive of the work of the Half Moon Photography Workshop, a community-photography organisation that promoted socially engaged photography through exhibitions, workshops and *Camerawork* magazine.

Photographer Paul Trevor was a founder member of Half Moon Photography Workshop. Some of his original images taken in Brick Lane were shown in *Camerawork* issue 13. Further information see: <https://www.fourcornersarchive.org/archive/view/0000111>  
<https://www.fourcornersarchive.org/archive/view/0001739>

Four Corners is a creative centre for film and photography, committed to promoting <https://www.fourcornersarchive.org/archive/view/0000014>

### Swadhinata Trust

The Swadhinata Trust is a London based secular Bengali community group that works to promote Bengali history and heritage amongst young people. The organisation has been operating since November 2000, offering seminars, workshops, exhibitions and educational literature to young Bengali people in schools, colleges, youth clubs and community centres in the United Kingdom. [www.swadhinatatrust.org](http://www.swadhinatatrust.org)

### About The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Using money raised by the National Lottery, we Inspire, lead and resource the UK's heritage to create positive and lasting change for people and communities, now and in the future. [www.heritagefund.org.uk](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk).

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