

arrived. He moved in with his cousin and started working in the rag trade, grateful I sense from the essays, for the sense of dignity and worth that honest work provided. He came to Britain in search of a better life for himself and his family; he worked hard; he tried his best to save his hard-earned money. He could never have imagined the terror that visited him on the fateful evening of the 4th of May 1978. As Altab Ali walked home after his shift at work, just past St Mary's Gardens on the corner of the Whitechapel Road, he was attacked and murdered by threeteenagers. In many ways, this was a senseless act by three young men indoctrinated by a certain section of the British political sphere into believing that immigrants are an enemy. This represented then and represents now, a failure of fascist politics. This murder was an assault on the dignity of life. This was the tragic taking of one young man's life because he was perceived to be different. This murder was an utter waste of three young men's future in favour of a perverted notion of identity.

Therefore, given the wider societal background at that time and the history of the Bangladeshi community in London's East End, this collection of essays are important in terms social commentary. Why, because they document an important if uncompromising, picture of 1970's Britain. Reading these essays I pictured Altab Ali taking the long journey from his home towards a bright new future in Britain. He could never have imagined that he would arrive in a country caught in the grip of racist hatred. It is in this the philosopher Sartre reminds us that *'Fascism & [Racism] is not defined by the number of its victims, but by the way it kills them'*! Thinking about the events surrounding Altab Ali's murder, we do well to think carefully about the association of fascist acts of barbarity on a mass scale, with the violent events happening in this modern age. My sense is that yes, the great philosopher, was talking about the physical act of murder, but was also exposing how political ideas can become transformed into evil realities. However, we must also attempt to understand why and how individuals or the 'collective' (which might be the institutions of the state) on the other, act in such a way that the demonization of 'the other' is allowed the space to exist and fester. This collection of essays challenges us to ask; why? As Edmund Burke (Philosopher & Irish Statesman 1723-1792) stated *'The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing'*. This collection of essays reminds us that we must look out for, and oppose the potential to return to a dysfunctional society where segregation and intolerance prosper. The demonstrations following Altab Ali's murder brought thousands of people onto the streets of London in protest at this type of behaviour. Altab Ali could hopefully, if given the chance lived a fulfilling and prosper life; however, his death resulted in an unintended outcome. Those who carried out his racist murder did not expect his death to contribute towards a society that in Britain is at its core decent. Altab Ali's short life allows us to celebrate our own lives and the fact that we live in a community with a huge diversity of cultures where we can respect and embrace different traditions, beliefs and heritage. We can for the most part enjoy our lives and foster goodwill and understanding rather than suspicion and mistrust. Democracy rather than fascism. Above all, we need to listen to, and learn from, each other and the tragic murder of Altab Ali all those years ago.

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