



Prince Fahd bin Salman

Deputy Saudi Minister of Interior and an enthusiastic member of the British turf fraternity, Prince Fahd Bin Salman Bin AbdulAziz, 46, died of

heart attack in Riyadh, 24 July 2001. His father, **Prince Salman Bin AbdulAziz**, was governor of the Riyadh province.

Prince Fahd had been introduced to horse racing in the early 1980s by his father-in-law, **Prince Khalid Bin Abdullah**, and he bought the famous Whatcombe stable near Lambourn in 1984. Starting with winning a minor event in Leicester in 1982, he had gone to win the Epsom, the Irish Oaks (1990 and 1999), Irish Lager (1990), Derby Italiano (1994) and the French Derby, Prix du Jockey Club. He owned a stud in Dorset and another at Lexington, Kentucky, USA, and had, of late, begun to cut down on owning and racing to devote himself to breeding horses. The London newspaper *Independent* (28 July 2001) described the prince as 'a committed anglophile'. His younger brother **Ahmad** is also a keen racing enthusiast.

Maulana Muhammad Idris

Shaikh al-Hadith Maulana Muhammad Idris, a distinguished scholar who had devoted his life to imparting religious education in the subcontinent, especially East Pakistan and Bangladesh, passed away on 5 August 2001 in his home town, Sirajganj, Bangladesh. After completing his early education in Bihar Sharif and Patna, the Maulana joined the prestigious Islamic university, the Darul 'Uloom at Deoband, and soon made his mark as a bright student of **Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani** (d.1957). His other notable mentor was **Maulana Ahmad Ali Lahori** (d.1962), a renowned scholar of *tafsir*.

Inspired by his able teachers, Maulana Idris taught courses on Islam, especially Hadith in Bihar and moved later after independence to East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. Initially, he set up a Madrassa at Barisal and then spent the rest of his life at Haji Ahmad Ali Alia Madrassa in Sirajganj where he helped supervise and produce hundreds of '*ulama*. His well known students included the late **Professor Habibul Haq Nadvi** (d.1998), who set up the Department of Islamic Studies at

the University of Durban in South Africa and former Bangladesh parliamentarians, **Barrister Qurban Ali** and **Maulana Abdus Subhan**. Maulana Idris transcended narrow scholastic differences. A great admirer of **Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi's** (d.1979) clear and cogent presentation of Islam as a complete way of life, he encouraged his students to acquire knowledge from all legitimate Islamic sources. Maulana Idris was also instrumental in setting up a network of mosques and madrassas in then East Pakistan.

He is survived by three sons and three daughters. His eldest son, **Dr Muhammad Manazir Ahsan**, heads The Islamic Foundation, Leicester as director general.

Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin

Zainab Khusro

Mrs Zainab Khusro, 63, editor and TV programme producer, died on 16 July 2001. Zainab was wife of the leading Indian economist and a former vice chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, **Professor A M Khusro**.

Patriarch Maximos V

Patriarch Maximos V Hakim, 93, who headed the Greek Catholic or Melkite church for more than 30 years died in Beirut on 29 June 2001. He had been elected on 22 November 1967 as the 20th patriarch of Antioch and all the East and Alexandria and Jerusalem; he retired last year on grounds of health.

Born to Syrian parents in the Egyptian town of Tanta, Georges Hakim, as he was christened, went to school in Cairo, trained at Saint Hanna seminary in Jerusalem and was ordained priest in 1930. He was consecrated Archbishop of St John of Acre, Haifa, Nazareth and Galilee. Hakim was not only a leader of his own Arab Catholic community but he was also involved in the wider Arab and Palestinian causes. He rejected the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem and refused to visit his patriarchal seat in Jerusalem as long as the Holy City remained under 'Israeli occupation.'

The Patriarch stoutly defended **Archbishop Hilarion Capucci**, the Greek Catholic church's vicar in Jerusalem, when he was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment on the charge of gun-running for the PLO. 'If we go back in history,' he said, 'we find other bishops who smuggled weapons, gave their lives and committed other illegal actions to save Jews from Nazi occupation.' So he

did 'not see why a man who is ready to save Arabs should be condemned' and asked: 'Is this Bishop reprehensible if he thought it was his duty to bear arms?'

Unlike some Maronites in Lebanon, he also refused 'the protection of Israel and its claims to defend Christianity in this part of the world, where for centuries Christians and Muslims have lived side by side'.

Patriarch Maximos V had resigned from his patriarchal duties in October 2001 and the Holy Synod, held at Raboueh in Lebanon the following month, elected **Archbishop Lutfi Laham** to succeed him as the Greek Catholic patriarch. Greek Catholics are mostly Arabic-speaking, some 600,000 in Syria, Egypt and Lebanon and 400,000 outside the Middle East in the US, Canada, Argentina and Brazil.

Katherine Graham

McGeorge Bundy (d.1996) told her she was 'the most powerful woman since **Queen Victoria**' (d.1901); there is little doubt that the former publisher of *The Washington Post* (1963-91), Katherine Meyer Graham, 84, was Washington's most powerful woman. She died at a Medical Centre in Boise, Idaho, 17 June 2001. Her funeral service at Washington National Cathedral included among others Vice President **Dick Cheney**; the former secretary of defence, **Robert McNamara**, was among the pall-bearers; and **Henry Kissinger**, among the star speakers. His voice quivering with both age and emotion, Kissinger described her as 'both a friend and, at times, an adversary'.

Kay Graham had inherited the newspaper from her financier father, **Eugene Meyer**, who later became first president of the World Bank. He came from a German family of rabbis. Her mother, **Agnes**, was a Lutheran Protestant but Kay identified more with the faith of her father than her mother's.

Eugene Meyer had bought the *Post* at a bankruptcy auction in 1933 and Kay Graham had taken over in 1963 after her husband and the newspaper's publisher, **Phil Graham**, had reportedly shot himself dead. He was having an affair with a young woman. In the following three decades, she had transformed the modest newspaper into a multi-billion dollar media empire, with its annual revenue rising from 84 million dollars in 1963 to 1.4bn in 1993. She acquired the *Newsweek* and co-owned the *International Herald Tribune*.

Her greatest moment was said to be

when she decided in June 1971 to go ahead with publishing the so-called secret 'Pentagon Papers' exposing US involvement in Vietnam while *The New York Times* had decided to obey a judge's order not to. It was the *Post* journalists, editor **Ben Bradlee** and reporters **Bob Woodward** and **Carl Bernstein**, who exposed the Watergate scandal break-in that forced the resignation of **Richard Nixon** (d.1994).

Katherine Graham is survived by her journalist daughter, **Elizabeth 'Lally' Weymouth**, and three sons, **Donald**, **Steve** and **Bill**. She had made Donald chief executive officer of the company in 1991.

Earl of Longford

Hereditary lord and Labour politician, **Francis Aungier Pakenham** and the 7th Earl of Longford, died aged 95 on 3 August 2001 in a London hospital. He was famous for his overzealous campaign to obtain parole for Britain's most notorious murderer, **Myra Hindley**, and mocked by the media as 'Lord Porn' for his report on pornography. There is little doubt that he relished the publicity that he attracted for his campaigning efforts, but Frank Longford deserves to be remembered as a prolific author.

His books included biographical works on *De Valera* (1970), *Abraham Lincoln* (1974), *Kennedy* (1975), *St Francis of Assisi* (1978), *Nixon* (1980), and *Pope John Paul II* (1982). He did not forget to write about himself. There were five autobiographical volumes that he published between 1953-61. He also helped **Sir (later Lord) William Beveridge** (d.1963) prepare the two important reports that were to form the basis for the British welfare state. And not to omit his well-researched *Pornography* Report which refuted the prevailing liberal wisdom that pornography was not damaging. Yet for some reason he seemed not to pursue his campaign against pornography.

Longford was not so lucky in politics. He had held cabinet office under **Harold Wilson** (d.1995) as Lord Privy Seal and leader of the House of Lords and even acting colonial secretary. Finding himself 'ineffective' in 1968, he resigned before he could be sacked. Born a Protestant, he had converted to Roman Catholicism. From his new faith he seemed to draw his moral inspiration, curiously though, that led him to describe Myra Hindley as 'a good Christian woman'.



Phoolan Devi

She had recently complained a few times in parliament about threats to her life. On 26 July 2001 masked assassins, who had lain in wait,

shot and killed her as she returned from parliament to her official New Delhi home. Part myth, part legend, Phoolan Devi had a lowly start in life, but had been luckier than the great majority of her 'backward' caste, though in the end she too could not escape the wrath that is the common fate of India's low castes.

Two days later an upper caste Indian in his mid-30s, **Sher Singh Rana**, held a press conference in Dehradun, 125 km north of Delhi, to announce that he had done it to avenge the 1981 murder of 22 upper caste *thakurs*. Phoolan Devi had denied the charges of murder and the Indian authorities had failed to press the charges. Rana's confession, however, failed to solve the crime. There were other suspects and other motives too. Devi's followers had little doubt though that the upper caste Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is responsible for her murder by scaling down her security.

Phoolan Devi was born in 1963 into the second lowest *mallah* (oarsmen) caste in the underdeveloped district of Mirzapur in North India. Her troubles are said to have begun at the age of 11 when her father married her off to a widower, 20 years older. She ran away to escape his beatings but was unwelcome to her own family; she remained rootless until a gang of lower caste robbers abducted her to their hideout in the ravines of Chambal, in neighbouring Madhya Pradesh. She became mistress to their leader who was killed later by another gang when she was gang-raped. She escaped to form her own gang and carried out raids, robbing the property of wealthy, mostly upper caste landowners. During one such raid in 1981 she is said to have come across the group of 22 *thakur* villagers among whom were those who had gang-raped her. It is alleged that she had them gunned down.

Meanwhile Devi had earned quite a 'name' as 'The Bandit Queen', somewhat like Sultana Daku, some half a century earlier who would rob the rich and help the poor. However, a frustrated Madhya Pradesh chief minister, **Arjun Singh**, in need of victory against crime, and a tired female robber, who wanted

to get it all over with, cut a deal. She gave herself up on the understanding that she would spend only eight years behind bars; instead she spent 11, but without any trial. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister **Mulayam Singh Yadav** reprieved her in 1994. She was elected to parliament in 1996 as a candidate of Yadav's Socialist party, Samajwadi Dal. She lost the seat in 1998 but won it again in 1999.

On a conservative estimate, some 20% of Indian MPs have a criminal record and Phoolan Devi was one of them. But being at the low rung of the caste ladder, she was not as privileged as the other lot. A simple and illiterate village girl from the second lowest Hindu caste, she converted to Buddhism.

However, she said, she had 'never intended to be this'. She 'was just so angry', and fought her way into parliament by telling the crowds, 'I looted those who looted me. I am with you. I am one of you.'

According to former **Prime Minister V P Singh**, 'whatever her past life, she was working for the people.' Himself from a 'low' caste, **President K R Narayanan** said Devi's 'life was a story of rebellion and successful defiance against oppression and exploitation'. A former British Labour MP, **Mildred Gordon**, nominated her for the Nobel Prize in 1997.

Hemlata Rajshekhar

Mrs Hemlata Rajshekhar, 64, brave and devoted wife of a brave and devoted editor, **V T Rajshekhar**, died on 16 July 2001. Besides her full time work as managing editor of *Dalit Voice*, Hemlata had also been active in various women's organisations working for the rights of the deprived *Dalit* women in India.

Qualified as a lawyer, she had also briefly practised as an advocate at the Karnataka High Court and worked as an auditor in the Accountant General's Office. For the past 20 years she had been almost entirely dedicated to her husband's as well as her own campaigning fortnightly newspaper *Dalit Voice*. Described as 'the voice of the persecuted nationalities', *Dalit Voice* has indeed been able to give an articulate and forceful voice to this constituency, specially the deprived and dehumanised, so-called, low castes. **Mahatma Gandhi** (d.1948) had tried to put a spin on their situation calling them *Harijan*, children of god. In the Hindu pantheon, the gods too can sire children, but the *Harijans*, it seems, were illegitimate children - that is why 'outcastes'!