

## Alice Faiz 1914-2003

*From East London with love*

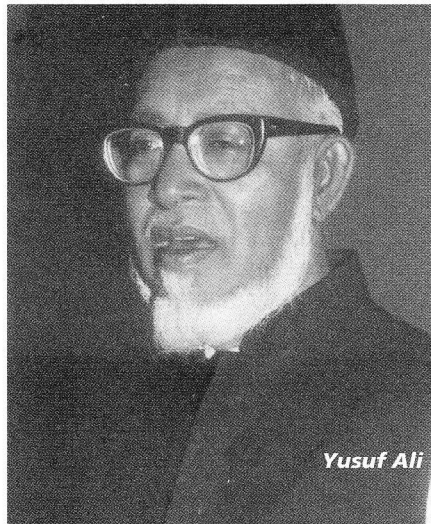
They were two British sisters, born in Leytonstone district of East London, **Christobel** (d.1996) and **Alice**, nee **George**. Christobel met an upcoming academic, **Dr M D Taseer**, became **Bilquis** and married the young college lecturer. Alice was a communist with a soft corner for the colonial people. She also worked as secretary to a fellow traveller, **Krishna Menon** (1896-1974), who was secretary of a London-based body called India League that campaigned for the independence of India. Menon was India's minister of defence in 1962 when the Chinese had rather humiliatingly chased out the Indian army from their northeastern borders. He was, however, almost immediately sacked by Prime Minister **Jawaharlal Nehru** (d.1964) now desperate for US political and military support.

Alice had come to Lahore in 1938 to visit her sister and to see for herself the people and the country that had charmed her Christobel, and maybe to get charmed herself. Months later, the war broke out and Alice had to extend her stay. Meanwhile she had also met her match: a young, romantic lecturer, **Faiz Ahmad Faiz**, who taught at MAO (Muslim Anglo-Oriental) College in Amritsar. Faiz was later to become a world celebrity; Urdu poetry being his main forte, but among many others. (Obituary, *impact*, Vol 14:23 14-27 September 1984)

Faiz too was a progressive, if not a card-carrying communist. In 1941, Alice too took a Muslim name, **Kulsoom**, and the Kashmiri leader **Shaikh Abdullah** (d.1992) performed her marriage (*nikah*) with Faiz. Being a celebrity, Faiz attracted a good number of female fans as well; he was also to spend some years in prison (1951-55), in fame as well as in exile. But Alice remained devoted to him all her life.

Alice Faiz had her own life. She wrote in *Viewpoint*, *Pakistan Times* and the country's first women's magazine, *She*. She also started the first children's theatre in Pakistan: complete with singing and dancing. More recently, she had been active with the non-official Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

On 12 March 2003, Alice Faiz died in Lahore and was buried in the same cemetery as her husband. She leaves behind two daughters, **Salima** and **Muneeza**, and a large following of the 1950s children and their children who have grown up inspired by her writings and her ideas. ■



## Yusuf Ali 1940-2003

*Islamic politics in Bangladesh*

A prominent intellectual, dedicated Academic, author and journalist, Professor Yusuf Ali, 63, was essentially a tireless campaigner for Islamic change in Bangladesh. He played an important role in the Islamic movement of Bangladesh to which he was attached for some 44 years. When he died of heart attack on 26 February 2003, he was assistant secretary general of the Jama'at-e-Islami Bangladesh.

As a journalist he achieved fame early in his career in the first half of the 1960s when he was working for the prestigious English-language weekly *The Young Pakistan*.

Soon after taking a masters degree in economics from the University of Dhaka, Yusuf Ali joined the Maulavi Bazar Degree College as a lecturer of economics. He then moved to Narshingdi Degree College where he taught economics from 1964 to 1971.

He was also a key figure in promoting the concept of Islamic economics to the economic and banking community that was reluctant to embrace such a new discipline. The title of the first of his many books – all in Bengali – was 'Economic Equality and Islam'.

However, Yusuf Ali did not write on economics alone, but on other areas, too; always with an eye on furthering the cause of Islam. His involvement with the Islamic struggle, which extended throughout his entire adult life, began in 1959 when he joined the Islami Chatra Shangha (Islami Jami'at-e-Talaba), moved profoundly by an inspiring speech of the late **Khurram Jah Murad** (1932-96, Obituary, *impact*, February 1997).

Yusuf Ali went on to serve the movement in a number of capacities

pioneering a whole range of successful institutions in Bangladesh, including the famous Tamir-e-Millat Trust. He was also involved with a number of educational institutions.

As his long journey on the path of Islamic dedication began so did it end: he breathed his last on his way back after addressing a convention of party leaders of their zone in Chandina in the district of Comilla.

Professor Yusuf Ali left behind his mother, two brothers, wife, five sons and four daughters as well as many friends and admirers. He was laid to rest at Bargaon in Kaligonj. ■

Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin

## N P Muhammad

*Islamic aesthetics*

Eminent Malayalam novelist, short-story writer, critic and essayist, N P Muhammad, 73, died on 3 January 1973 in Calicut in the South Indian state of Kerala. Son of late freedom fighter **N P Abu Muhammad**, he had carved a literary niche for himself, with Muslim social life as background to his fiction; yet the way he treated his themes had universal appeal. His aim was not to be prolific but to lay emphasis on craft and quality. Starting with the first award for his maiden work at the age of 23, he went on to bag more than 10 literary awards including the coveted federal and state literary academy awards.

His views on certain issues facing the Muslims in India like, for example, personal laws sometimes ran counter to the mainstream views sparking controversy; he also showed a certain disdain for the 'ulama. As for *The Satanic Verses* though, he did not find any artistic merit in the fiction; he did not join those who said noble or filthy, the writer had the right to free writing.

'Islamic aesthetics' seemed to interest him a great deal. He found The Qur'an to be the best example and source of aesthetics, which transcended all human creativity. He, therefore, advocated the use of Qur'anic symbols and imagery in literary creations.

As well as translating into Malayalam **Alija Izetbegovic's** *Islam between East and West*, under the title, *Islam Rajamargam*, N P Muhammad also wrote a novel based on Hindu mythology 'Hiranyakashipu', something rather rare for a Muslim writer.

N P Muhammad had served on the federal Literary Academy, Central Film Censor Board and was president of Kerala Literary Academy at the time of dying. He is survived by his wife and four sons and three daughters. ■