

IN MEMORIAM: SÁLIM ALI, 1896–1987

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The death of Sálím A. Ali on 20 June 1987 at the age of 90, marked the end of an era in the history of environmental awareness on the subcontinent of India. Ali was born in Bombay on 12 November 1896. Beginning in the 1930s, Sálím Ali's books constituted the first effort by an Indian citizen to educate the population of the soon-to-be independent republics of Britain's Indian Empire to their responsibilities as guardians of nature. His insights into the dangers to which nature would be increasingly subjected surmounted politics. The depth of his concern represented a universal language and transcended national responsibilities. He was, indeed, the father of Asian ecological understanding.

It was my pleasure to work with him in ornithology for 45 years, especially in the preparation of the 10-volume *Handbook of the Birds*

of India and Pakistan (1968–1974). During his long career, Dr. Ali was the recipient of three D.Sc. degrees in recognition of his service to Indian Natural History. He joined the A.O.U. in 1944, was elected Corresponding Fellow in 1948, and Honorary Fellow in 1973. He published six other books and undertook fieldwork in nearly every corner of the vast subcontinent. He accepted the Gold Medal of the British Ornithologists' Union in 1967, and the Getty International Prize for Wildlife Conservation in 1976. In 1976 he also received the Padma Vibhushan, one of India's highest civilian Orders, and in 1986 he was appointed Commander in the Netherlands Order of the Golden Ark. His autobiography, "The Fall of a Sparrow," was published in 1985, and has just been reprinted in paperback. A longer memorial by C. M. Perrins appeared in *Ibis* (1988, 130: 305).