Ebrahim Sulaiman Sait

Ebrahim Sulaiman Sait was a key Muslim politician from South India. Born in Bangalore to a wealthy Cutchi Memon business family, he graduated with a degree in economics and history. In 1941, at the age of nineteen, he participated in a Muslim League conference in Madras, where he shared the stage with the prominent Muslim leaders of that time (Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Liaqat Ali Khan, among others). He then joined politics and remained Member of Parliament for thirty-five years, representing various constituencies in North Kerala for the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) and speaking out relentlessly on behalf of the Muslim community’s rights. Regularly depicted as a fundamentalist by the media, he, in fact, had an open mind, although he, of course, remained close to his community—particularly during the difficult years of the Emergency. He was a founding member of the Majlis-e-Mushawarat and of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board; he was active also in the All India Milli Council, but most of all, he was a prominent member of the Babri Masjid Action Committee (BMAC). The Babri Masjid demolition proved a shock to him. He was highly disillusioned with the Indian national leadership and severed his links with the Congress. His IUML partners, however, were not on the same wavelength. He left in disgust in 1994 and formed a new party, the Indian National League, an organization he tried to lead with much effort but little success.