

NOTE

Faiz Ahmed Faiz

Sisir K Majumdar writes :

FAIZ AHMED FAIZ (1911-1984) was one of the foremost poets in the Urdu-speaking world (mainly South Asia-India and Pakistan).

Faiz was born in Sialkot, Punjab (now West Punjab in Pakistan) on February 13, 1911 and died on November 20, 1984 at the age of 73. He was educated in Lahore. The poet-philosopher Mohammed Iqbal (1877-1938) was also born in Sialkot a few decades earlier. They both studied in the same college—Murray college in Sialkot. Faiz had a varied career as teacher, army officer, journalist, trade union leader, broadcaster and script writer.

Faiz was one of the few poets of modern times who had been prominent in public affairs. The events of his life were interwoven with those of the last decades of British rule in India, the partition of British India on religious ground into India and Pakistan and the subsequent troubled history of Pakistan's efforts to build a new national identity. Faiz wrote some of his best poems while a political prisoner. He was always on the side of progress and against repression, and this helped to make his work popular in other countries, for instance in the former Soviet Union where all his poems appeared in translation.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), on the recommendation of the Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO included his work in the Pakistan series of the UNESCO Collection of Representative Works.

“POEMS BY FAIZ” was translated into English by V G Kiernan of the University of Edinburgh in 1971. Kiernan met Faiz in Lahore. Faiz himself chose the poems for the volume. Poems included in the volume are the following :

1. NAQSH-F-FARADI (1943)—Poems from Remonstrance (16 poems).
2. DAST-E-SABA (1952)—Poems from Fingers of the Wind (18 poems).
3. ZINDAN-NAMA (1956)—Poems from Prison Thoughts (4 poems).
4. DAST-E-TAH-ESANG (1965)—Poems from Duress (12 poems).
5. UNCOLLECTED POEMS (4 poems).

Faiz became one of the best-selling modern poets in India and Pakistan. In his birth centenary it is appropriate to pay tribute to Faiz in the immortal words of William Shakespeare (1564-1616):

“Goodnight, sweet Prince. And flights of

angels sing thee to thy rest.”

(Hamlet, Sc II, Act V)