

Faiz Ahmed Faiz Birth Centenary – 1911-2011

A statement by Progressive Writers Association (PWA)



فایز احمد فیض
(۱۹۱۱ — ۱۹۸۴)

Faiz Ahmad Faiz was one of the most prominent poets of the Indian sub-continent who won unparalleled global acclaim. He symbolised all that is humane, dignified, refined, brave and challenging in Pakistani society. His poetry written in Urdu and Punjabi reflects his intellectual resentment and resistance against an unjust and archaic social order which he rejects on rational grounds as anti human; yet it has no bitterness. He remains loving and loveable, respected and respectful.

Faiz's poetry articulates the aspirations, anguish, pain and suffering of not only the people of Pakistan but that of the whole world, as well as their unremitting resolve to create a better and just society. His was the voice of sanity, for he sought peace in a troubled world.

Faiz lived in the times of literary giants like Josh Malihabadi, Sardar Jafri, Kaifi Azmi, Majaz Lakhnawi, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Pablo Neruda, Nazim Hikmet and many others. Faiz was their equal, and can rightfully claim a place in this galaxy of world-renowned poets.

Faiz is recognised and respected by the literati of the world. His works have been translated in many languages including translations in almost all the languages of the erstwhile Soviet Union.

The year 2011 will be the 100th birth anniversary of Faiz. This will be celebrated throughout the world by admirers of this great poet of the twentieth century.

Mission

The mission of the Progressive Writers Association (PWA) of Pakistan is to hold Faiz centenary celebrations throughout the year 2011, both in the country and abroad.

The PWA Pakistan invites all institutions, organisations, groups and individuals from Pakistan and around the world to come forward and join hands in an endeavour to celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of this most prominent son of the nation in a befitting manner that will aptly project his ideals and the central concerns of his poetical work.

In Pakistan, at least one event will be organised every fortnight in one of the cities of the country.

Efforts will be made to celebrate the event in as many foreign countries as possible, especially in those places where there is a significant presence of the Pakistani and South Asian Diaspora. We aim to enlist the participation of the indigenous intelligentsia, literati, artists, media persons and other segments of the civil society.

We are aiming to focus on the following foreign cities/countries where events to celebrate the Faiz Centenary will be organised:

India (Amritsar, Chandigarh, Delhi, Aligarh, Lucknow, Allahbad, Bhopal, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Kolkata and any other cities where this might be possible); Bangladesh (Dhaka); Nepal (Kathmandu); U.K. (London, Oxford, Cambridge, Bradford/ Leeds, Birmingham and Manchester); U.S.A. (New York, Chicago, Washington D.C., Houston, Los Angeles and San Francisco); Canada (Toronto, Calgary and Montreal); Germany (Berlin); Holland (Amsterdam); Sweden (Stockholm); France (Paris); Italy (Rome); Russia (Moscow); Gulf (Dubai/Abu Dhabi and Muscat).

If found practicable, events will also be organised in Cuba (Havana), Japan (Tokyo/Osaka), Australia (Sydney), Turkey (Istanbul), China (Beijing), Iran (Tehran), and South Africa .

Main Objective

In Pakistan: To promote peace and harmony amongst people of all races and nationalities, transcending religious, ethnic and linguistic differences.

Globally: To present Faiz as the ambassador of the soul and feelings of the people of Pakistan by projecting his poetry and other literary works, as well as his struggle for world peace and prosperity.

Central Theme of the Faiz Centenary

Aaiyey hath uthaein hum bhi
Baraey amn-e-alam aur insani khushhali
Come, we too should raise our hands (in supplication)
For world peace, and for the prosperity of its people

Process

The aim is to spark peoples' interest in his person as a poet of the people and in his poetry as an inspiration to work for a better world and to gather all sections of society in the collective celebration of Faiz's Centenary—an amorphous yet synchronous event that

would be democratic, inclusive and universal in its approach.

We would be working to create an umbrella association of individuals, informal groups and organizations that have an interest in Faiz and can act as 'nodes' in their part of the world. While the central theme of the celebrations — *Aaiye haath uthaaen hum bhi* for world peace and for the prosperity of its people (appropriately representative of Faiz's oeuvre) — would remain the defining sentiment, organisers would be free to opt for any idea or expression inspired by Faiz's life and work.

The celebrations will be a combination of online and on-ground activities. Online, because we can and will use our existing network and overcome the physical limitations of geographical boundaries. On-ground activities will include academic conferences, seminars and lectures in addition to music and dance performances, theatre, films, *mushaeras*, and exhibitions of paintings, books and photographs where possible. All this, and what ever else can possibly be done. If Faiz has been re-imagined or his work has been rendered in song, on canvas or in a theatrical performance, and if Faiz has been translated, then our effort must be to make that piece of work widely accessible.



E: viewpoint@viewpointonline.net