

FAIZ AND NERUDA : THE EAST MEETS THE WEST

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ABSTRACT: *The paper attempts to study the similarity between the thought and poetry of two greater ever poets, one belonging to the east and other to the west namely Faiz Ahmad Faiz, a Pakistan Urdu poet and Pablo Neruda, a Chilean poet. They not only became famous in their respective motherlands but their works won global recognition. Just as the poetry of Pablo Neruda was massively popular with ordinary Chilean who regarded him as their national poet, so was Faiz Ahmad Faiz loved by millions of Pakistanis. They were pioneers of great struggles and their works were interwoven with the ideas they believed in.*

KEY WORDS: Faiz, Pablo Neruda, Humanist Philosophy

INTRODUCTION

Very rarely in the literacy history of the world have two poets one belonging to the east and other to the west shown as many points of similarity as *Faiz Ahmad Faiz* and *Pablo Neruda*. They were not only contemporary poets and friends but also outstanding humanists as well as anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist. *Faiz* was one of the leading poets of the Indian sub-continent. His poetry articulates the aspirations, anguish, pain, suffering of not only his native homeland but of the whole world. and was one of the most prominent poets who won unparalleled global acclaim. He symbolized all that is humane, dignified and challenging in society. Though he was a revolutionary in his philosophy, he was a teacher by personality. He not only held a humanist philosophy but also a humanist personality. Although he was a poet in Urdu, he was a great scholar of English and Arabic and though he lived in India and Pakistan, he had been interested in the works of the European, Latin, American and African writers. *Faiz* had discovered the secrets of human existence and knew how a minority belonging to the privileged class has been exploiting the majority of deprived people for centuries. In his gentle tone, he wanted to inspire downtrodden people to speak up and fight for their rights. At the hands of an artistic rebel like *Faiz* even surrealism proved to a weapon in the historical advance of the proletariat. *Faiz* was organic in the sense that he was inspired by Sufi traditions of dissent and was progressive in the sense that he was an avowed Marxist and like other artists of the progressive writers movement was committed to anti-imperialism and was driven by aim to bring arts to the masses

PABLO NERUDA

No writer of world renown is perhaps so widely known as Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. Critics have praised Neruda as the greatest poet writing in the Spanish language during his lifetime though many have found it difficult to disassociate Neruda's poetry from his fervent commitment to communism. while in Santiago, Neruda completed one of his most critically acclaimed and original work, the cycle of his love poems, *Veinte poemas de amor y una*

cancion desesperada- published in English translation as ‘*Twenty Love Poems and a song of Despair*’ which quickly marked Neruda as an important Chilean poet. Neruda was the first to win popular acceptance for his presentation as he started mixing memories of his love affairs with memories of wilderness of Southern Chile, he created a poetic sequence that not only describes a physical liaison but also evokes the sense of displacement that Neruda felt in leaving the wilderness for the city. While some critics have felt that Neruda’s devotion to communist dogma was at times extreme, other recognize the important impact his politics had on his poetry. Clayton Eshleman wrote in the introduction to *Caesar Vallejo’s ‘Poemas humanas’* that ‘Neruda found in the third book of *Residencia*, the key to becoming the twentieth-century, South-American poet: “the revolutionary stance which always changes with the tides of time.” He increasingly came to identify with the South Asian masses, who according to him were heirs to ancient cultures but were downtrodden by poverty, colonial rule and political oppression. His personal and collective anguish gives rise to a nightmarish version of disintegration, chaos, decay and death that he recorded in a cryptic difficult style inspired by surrealism. Neruda acknowledged the two fold path of his poetry when he wrote, I have a pact of love with beauty.

“I have a pact of blood with my people, the poet’s deep compassion for humankind, order for history and attention to politics also inspired him to write incisively of tyrants, war and corporate imperials.”

Faiz and Neruda: The east meets the west.

Pablo Neruda (1904-1973) and *Faiz Ahmad Faiz* (1910-1984) were contemporary poets, friends and outstanding humanists, who have left lasting impressions on the world of literature. Their works won them global recognition as *Neruda* was honoured with Nobel Prize for literature in 1971 and *Faiz* won Lenin Peace Prize in 1962. The remarkable thing about *Neruda* and *Faiz* was that in spite of their overwhelming revolutionary ideas; they never allowed ideologically inspired epiphany to burden their poems with shoddy rhetoric. They were essentially anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist and their great struggles against it and their great works were interwoven and inseparable. Both *Pablo Neruda* and *Faiz* were actively involved in freedom movements of their nation and their poetry, which was musical, lyrical and inspiring stems from the main theme of making their homelands and the world at large a better place for the downtrodden – the wretched of the earth. They were masters of art and craft – quality lacking by many revolutionary poets of their time. It is an anomalous fact of history that revolutionary poets and icons often unwittingly usher in a reaction which then becomes their patron of sorts. The same thing happened to *Pablo* and *Faiz* as their poetry reflects the aspirations of masses. From a literary point of view, they were masters of their craft. They were not mere revolutionary slogan-mongers who lacked in their work classical authenticity and modern sensibility. On the contrary, both *Faiz* and *Neruda* are considered even by their critics, great masters of poetic expression and authentic builders of a new tradition of resistance in literature. Just as the poetry of *Pablo Neruda* was massively popular with ordinary Chileans – who regarded him as their national poet, so was *Faiz Ahmad Faiz* loved by millions not only in Pakistan but of the whole sub-continent.

Pablo Neruda and *Faiz Ahmad Faiz* participate in the long drawn struggle for freedom – both in colonial and post-independence eras and their poetry is epitome of message of hope and commitment for creating a true democratic polity in which the forces of exploitation have no role to play. Their dream was common - to see human beings in peace and tranquility.

Pablo Neruda and *Faiz Ahmad Faiz* were intimate friends and tragically, they met the same fate-deposed and eliminated by military dictators of their imperialist masters. *Pablo Neruda* supported *Allende* and served under his government as did *Faiz Ahmad Faiz* under *Bhutto*. Their poetry reflects the aspiration of masters of their craft.

In the post independence period and during the cold war era, both *Neruda* and *Faiz Ahmad Faiz* were struggling oligarchy of the rich and mighty. Both used poetry as a means of resistance against colonial and post-colonial legacy of control, exploitation and denial of rights so the masses. They remained active players in the entire struggle and not mere idealist poets.

Faiz Ahmad Faiz, like *Pablo Neruda* and other has an indelible mark on our consciousness and inspire the fight for socialism. Even in his social imagination, *Faiz* is in the same bracket as *Pablo Neruda* and intersperses within his poetry the south Asian milieu's legacy of throbbing heart's rhythm.

Faiz in his many editorials while paying tributes to *Neruda* aptly calls him a poet of humanity, great voice of the time, true representative of masses and poet of all times to come. The message of *Neruda*, according to *Faiz*, is not only meant for his countrymen but all those who were once subjugated and then struggle for freedom and soon realized their liberation was myth and their poetry is real.

Thus, it can be inferred that though *Neruda* and *Faiz* were poets of two distant lands, yet were messengers of peace, quality and justice, whose commitment to the causes they believed in was infallible. *Neruda – Faiz* legacy is universal and everlasting as both unhittable articulated the suffering of their people, the agony of dispossession and exile.

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