I presented the paper, “From Court to Public Sphere: How Urdu Poetry's Language of Romance Shapes the Language of Protest” as part of a panel on "Listening to Texts in Islamicate South Asia" (abstract below). I also attended several other panels whose focus was Urdu poetry and poetics and/or the culture of Urdu composition and recitation as it evolved over several centuries. Following on the insights provided by Nathan Tabor’s work on the cultural instituition of musha’ira (poetic assembly) in 18th-century Mughal India, in this paper I discussed how the adab of listening to classical Urdu poetry can be adapted to public musha’iras in contemporary Pakistan. While the “subject” of the classical ghazal is generally understood to be romantic, modern poets and their audiences have proved adept at re-working its conventions and employing the power of its rhetoric to make the “subject” of poetry political. In this paper I showed how two poems (nazm), by Faiz Ahmed Faiz, create powerful political messages when recited publicly, while ostensibly staying within the rhetorical boundaries of classical poetry.