

Poet, Mahadai Das dies in Barbados

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Guyanese poet, Mahadai Das, died in Barbados on Thursday. She had a history of illnesses, including heart disease and was in her early forties.

Das' last book of poetry, 'Bones', was published in 1988. She was a member of the Working People's Alliance and had been active in trying to find solutions to Guyana's social and political problems. Das was influenced by the late Guyanese scholar and author, Walter Rodney. She was educated at the University of Guyana and the University of the West Indies. She also earned a BA in Philosophy from Columbia University in New York and an MA in Philosophy from the University of Chicago.

An acquaintance of the former Guyana beauty queen, remarked that her poetry gave voice to the voiceless women of the South East Asian diaspora, long before that movement was in vogue.

University of Guyana Lecturer in English, Alim Hosein, expressed grief at learning of the demise of Mahadai Das. He said Das had been one of Guyana's better poets and that her work became progressively better in the later days of her career. Her poetry, which was influenced by a number of things in her life including her illness, was very emotional and captured East Indian history and culture, Hosein said.

Women's activist Vanda Radzik told this newspaper that she was shocked and saddened at the news of the passing. She called Das' work completely unique in vision and craftsmanship and said that she would always be remembered for the brilliance of her craft.

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