INTERVIEW


Q. Sir, what do you understand by radicalism in Urdu literature?
Ans. The stirring literature is called Radical literature, which stirred the society in many ways.

Q. Sir, in your view which factors were responsible for the origin and organization of Progressive Writers' Movement?
Ans. When the British Imperialism accelerated its policy of exploitation of Indians, some intellectuals started thinking and writing against the avarice and exploitation of the imperialism. Side by side they also started thinking and writing about the evils that prevailed in Indian society at that time. The extent of exploitation of peasantry, position of women and village life was pitiable. The Intellectuals who were extremists regarding social reforms were called Radical or Progressive Writers.

It started with the inception of British exploitation but it took organized shape in 1930s. Many writers started writing against the British policy of oppression and exploitation and also about the social evils prevailing in Indian society from the beginning of twentieth century. After 1930 it grew very fast. Some intellectuals and writers oriented themselves towards socialism and social evils.

Q. Were they Influenced by the communism or influenced by foreign education.
Ans. Yes, there was tremendous effect of western education on them. Munshi Premchand translated some literature of English Writer, Elliot into Urdu during his last days of illness, Munshi Premchand said that he wanted to write a last book regarding the Independence or freedom of India but he passed away in 1936. There were tremendous effects of English education and culture on intellectuals. The World Wars also influenced the ideology of these radical writers. The Ancient Indian Culture for which they had high esteem also influenced them.
Q. What was the basic ideology of Progressive Writers’ Association about our system or culture?

Ans. When the Eastern and Western cultures collided and the spark, which arose, gave impetus to social radicalism. First of all, these writers wanted to liberate the country from foreign yoke. Secondly, they dreamt about Independent India, which will be free of political, social and economic and cultural exploitation and social evils. The independent society will be free from casteism and communalism in which there will be no child marriage. Women will get a better status and esteem in the society. The Indian society will be free from every kind of slavery. After getting freedom, the Indian society will be free from social and economic evils.

Most of the writers attached to Progressive Writers’ Association were from the middle class families. Naturally they were influenced by national and international environment and events.
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Q. Sir, The PWA was the outcome of Angare. Do you agree with this?
Ans. Yes, Angare was the foundation stone of PWM, because the stories in Angare challenged the continuing trend in literature. Though I consider Ghalib and Hali as Progressives in their own times but they could not start an organized movement. Rashid Jahan, one of the co-writers of Angare challenged the prevalent taboos in Muslim society.

Q. Sir, the PWA emerged as a forceful movement like storm and ended silently, why?
Ans. The Progressive Writers started this movement with some objectives such as to liberate the country from foreign rule; to abolish zamindari system, provide equality and justice to all by narrowing the gap between rich and poor and removing poverty etc. These objectives influenced the common man. Though the movement was started by staunch communists and they were official member of Communist Party but due to its strong and deep appeal, the people from all walks of life supported it and the movement gained momentum. But after 1947, India got freedom and new constitution came into existence; major objectives got fulfilled. The new constitution promised to give equal rights to all men and women, rich and poor. Then, there remained no slogan to lead the movement. The movement thus started weakening. But one thing I want to stress upon is that though PWM was weakened after in 1947 yet but the trend of progressivism was there. The progressive philosophy and progressive thought has always been inspiring the creative writers. Progressivism is never dead.

Q. Rajinder Singh Bedi portrayed social issues in a mild tone, what you say about it?
Ans. Rajinder Singh Bedi was an employee in post office. He closely realized each social aspect of society. But his tone was mild, though his craftsmanship was perfect. He did not openly favour communism. Some times the official members of the party e.g. the Progressive Writers at initial level hesitated to call R.S. Bedi, Manto, K. L. Zakir, Upendra Nath Ashk as Progressive because
they had not become the members of that party by paying required subscription.

**Q.** How do you see social aspects in Krishan Chander’s writings?

**Ans.** Krishan Chander was most prolific writer, most widely read and was admired due to his specific romantic flair but it was his bad luck that he had got no significant official recognition and great awards.

**Q.** How far the Progressive Writers succeeded in their goal?

**Ans.** The Progressive Writers awakened the masses to a great extent. These writers made people aware of their rights, injustice towards them and provoked them to think over the causes of backwardness. They disfavoured the useless customs like *purdah* and dowry. They were against the foreign rule which was responsible for the pitiable condition of the masses and wanted to liberate the country. Ultimately India got freedom and their dream came true and new constitution of India guaranteed to safe guard the rights of the people.

**Q.** Why the PWA was criticized?

**Ans.** Actually the chief critics were anti leftist because this movement was much under the influence of communism. The critics called them mere propagandists, and declared their literature as forged and propaganda but there was no organized move of these critics. They themselves were confused.

**Q.** Sir, why you wrote your novel *Karmanwali* after more than two decades of partition?

**Ans.** Wordsworth said that there was two stages of creative process the first immediately after an event, and second long after the event. The first process has an emotional outburst while in second the various thoughts, impressions, effects of particular event get accumulated in mind. It is deeply probed in tranquility. When you sit to write, a more balanced and realistic picture comes to the mind. This is what happened in the case of *Karmanwali*. It depicts some uncovered and untouched aspects of partition. I was myself a victim of Partition. I wrote some stories like *Teen Chithde, Yeh Khander Mere Hain* in 1948. I wrote *Ek Dari Hui Ladki* after several years of partition. It
was about a girl who had the cruel psychological impact of the sexual violence faced by her mother in refugee camp. The impact went on from one generation to the other.

I agree with the second creative process as mentioned by Wordsworth. This process imparts a more universal and human appeal to a creative piece. The literature so created is more lasting.