CHAPTER I

URDU PROGRESSIVE POETRY: VERSIFICATION OF HOMESPUN MARXISM

Section 1: Art and Economics

Art in whatever form it might manifest itself is not created for amusement only. It conforms to a system of belief held by the elites and very often art is employed consciously as means of maintaining that system. Art historians are also of the opinion that even in visual arts like sculpture, painting, ornament making, human imagination that goes into their creation is in a way manifestation of the society of the times and does not solely depend on the genius of individual artist. Marxist theory pervades and permeates all aspects of our life. Every aspect of our life is governed by the economic structure. It is hence inferred from history that art is controlled in the interest of a system and also the taste hints at the index of the status. Even the style and forms in art are to a great extent governed by the social milieu of the times and the dominant classes hegemonise the lower strata of society.

Literature should portray important changes in social order, especially those that indicate movement towards goals of liberty and justice. Sartre despite being an existentialist aligned himself with left politically. He proclaimed a necessary solidarity between writing and revolutionary commitment. He argued that if a writer has to fulfill his duty as a writer, he must become committed:

If literature is not everything, it is worth nothing. This is what I mean by ‘commitment’. It wilts if it is reduced to innocence, or to songs. If a written sentence does not reverberate at every level of man and society, then it makes no sense. (qtd. in Laing 82)

The installation of socialist realism is a prerequisite for art. Therefore, it is highly contested in literature whether poetry is a manufactured social reality or simple mirror of social reality. In earlier literature, be it occidental or oriental literature, the religious tradition and literary tradition support each other. At that point of time, the interplay between religion and aesthetics is very fruitful. But disintegration of the community of belief (characteristic of
modern times) has altered the situation in many ways. Literature no longer is a mechanism to support and foster morals and ethics. This new touchstone of poetry poses many questions like: What is poetry sans Mathew Arnolds ‘Sea of faith’ which ‘was once too full’? Is catharsis only possible with art forms with religious background? David Daiches in his essay “Religion, poetry and dilemma of modern writer” states that “a religious tradition is value to the literary artist as providing a challenge to individual experience out of which it may result” (qtd. in Grebstein 59).

Even in romanticism and the later literary movements the religious scriptures are transcended either in the form of symbolism, impressionism or psychoanalysis. In Freud when the conscious mind feels threatened by the subconscious, it tries to repress it and so develops neurosis. In Marx, the liberal elements in the ascendant class feel threatened by the revolutionary situation and develop a police state. In both cases the effort is to intensify the anti-thesis between the two and when the barriers are broken down, we reach a balanced mind and classless society. Coleridge in his book Biographia Literaria emphasises the artist’s imagination is in his power to verify experience and fuse discrete and seemingly incongruous combination of material into poetry. Literature for him becomes a mode of revelation. Eliot in his work The Sacred Wood says that literary tradition is not final and irrevocable but is continuously rearranged by the appearance of new works. The past culminates in the present and is itself altered by the present. Most of the latter day theorists post-neoclassicists stress historical, sociological, psychological, cultural and emotional lineages of literature.

Luckas, the Hungarian scholar attacks decadence in art guised in form of montage, expressionism and other movements having affiliation with modernism. He regards art as one which provides: “…an image of reality in which oppositions of appearance and essence of individual and general rule of the immediacy of senses and abstract conceptualization etc. are resolved” (qtd. in Laing 49). He sees the role of art as union of various opposing aspects of reality i.e. abstract and concrete into spontaneous whole through which reader absorbs the inner meaning retaining the outer forms. Falling prey to these tendencies, art becomes a victim of contemporary bourgeois society as these methods lead to alienation and reification. These are the conditions of a society thriving under capitalism where social relationships are seen as relationships between things and not people.
Coleridge holds the view that best poetry is not written out of what we call private situations. The best poetry is objective as we say it is aloof. In *Biographia Literaria*, he praises Shakespeare for possessing this quality. But, the general principle of objectivity and aloofness should not be confused with impersonality. Rather the objective correlative is always correlated to subjective state of mind. Maud Bodkins’ archetypal pattern in poetry illustrates how in poetic patterns the emotional tendencies of opposite character (excited by the sane object or situation), produces an inner tension that seeks relief in poetic imagination. This process can also be called process of sublimation. The poet in order to get rid of the perilous conflict in turn creates a symbolic conflict, wherein his hidden-self submits to fate (Azmi), God (Jafri) or truth (Faiz). In each of the three poets examined in the thesis, a marxist view of capitalist society is described, interrogated and imaginatively transformed. Each narrative persona presents a viable means of political resistance to, and transformation of the capitalistic and hegemonic structures. It is a vision as well as revision of the dominant imaginative representations of race, history, space, and justice, exposing both the need for and possibility of alternative and egalitarian societies. But imaginative transformation is only the first step. Through cultural intervention, the select poets interrogate the entire capitalist system and its impact.

S.S Prawer in his book, *Karl Marx and World Literature*, to buttress his argument of political inclination of literature asserts that in the *Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels, the term literature and literary is used in three different ways. In German version, literature denotes the body of technical books and pamphlets. In a section of *Communist Manifesto* entitled “Socialist and Communist Literature”, literature denotes more than just a pamphlet. It includes poems, plays which have some sort of political message. In the section devoted to true socialism, Marx and Engels use the term literary for world of words floating loose, cut off from social and political reality labeling them as rhetorical and sentimental. It aims at making a point that such literature of nineteenth century is simply an item for commercial transaction. Poetry (an integral part of literature) therefore becomes not an escape but an intervention into reality. Aesthetics (predominantly synonymous with beauty) is correlated to poetry and poetry, a higher form of art has its obvious affiliations and associations with refinement and beauty. Raymond Williams in his famous book *Keywords* defines aesthetics as something that “had a reference beyond social valuation” (32). It is here that the polemics of art and aesthetics enter into the troubled terrain of isolation, disabling aesthetics of its
enabling potentialities. The oft disputed territory of aesthetics rests on the ongoing debates between ‘Art for Art’s Sake’ and the utilitarian objectives of art. Faiz in preface to Dast-e-Saba (1952), while talking about his own understanding of the place of literature and the role of the writer writes:

To be aware of the collective struggle of humanity and to participate in this struggle to the best of one’s ability, is a demand that life places upon us, literature too places the same demand upon us... . Art is a constituent of this life and the creative struggle is one aspect of this (wider) struggle (qtd. in Hashmi, “The Poet of Romance and Revolution” 6)

Ali Sardar Jafri essays his views on Progressive Writers Association and brings to fore the significance of meaningful art in contrast to meaningless and decadent art which are symbolic of vulgarization of culture and decline of civilization. He emphasises the role of poet who is a prophet and upholder of virtue. He is voice of today as well as coming tomorrow. His poetic mission has a message, and there is no dichotomy between the message and the word, between the content and the form. Utility and beauty are not divorced from each other. Many poets have been treated as sages, and even tyrants have bowed before them with reverence, and listened to them with awe. Yet there are poets who have been imprisoned, tortured and executed for speaking the truth. Impressed by such versions of human dignity and purpose of life, Ali Sardar Jafri along with several others like Majrooh Sultanpuri, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Majaz, Jazbi, Kaifi Azmi start writing poetry with a new temper, new ecstasy that is born out of the turmoil which exonerates poetry of the burden of traditional metaphors and themes. This exemption is celebrated equally by Faiz and Jafri. Faiz writes:

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\begin{align*}
dast-e-sayyad bhi aajiz hai, \\
kaf-e-gulchin bhi \\
boo-e-gul thehri \\
na bulbul ki zaban thehri hai
\end{align*}
\]

[Powerless is the hand of the hunter, 
helpless the hand of the plunderer of the flowers 
The fragrance of the rose cannot remain imprisoned,
the sweet song of the nightingale cannot be stopped] (qtd. in Jafri, “Progressive Writers Movement and Urdu Poetry” web)

The purpose of progressive writings is beautifully summed up in the above lines by Faiz. The progressive poets declare that the message of justice and equality (hallmark of their poetry) will spread like the fragrance of rose and no amount of tyranny can hijack the democratic sentiments behind their works.

Barbara Metcalf talking about Iqbal in her essay, “Iqbal’s Imagined Geographies: The East, The West, the Nation and Islam” says that for Iqbal, to be truly alive is to be an active and creative shaper of one’s own world. For him, words alone have reality. He feels the poets like “prophets and enlightened saints could penetrate false worlds to see the essence of truth to excavate reality beyond appearances and to defy oppressive structures that held individual lives in Europe and colonial world in thrall” (272). Premchand, one of the founders of the Progressive Writers Association states that: “Literature is not merely for entertainment. Its supremacy is presently gauged by the extent of emotions it produces to stir our imagination” (qtd. in Hansen & Lelyveld 273). He fosters utilitarian ethics of literature. Faiz also in one of his poems “We, The Poets” draws the life of poets on the same principles of truth and social realism. He opens the poem with the following lines:

From time immemorial
From generation to generation
We have drunk poison
We have sung our songs
We bleed on the altar of life…
Truth is our talsiman…
We are the warriors-
The riders of dawn. (Trans. Kamal 74)

Faiz emphasises on the necessity of art and art forms that challenge the hegemonic structures. He adheres to the utilitarian principle of art as he revokes his lover by telling her not to “…ask me for that past love” as:
Now I know
There are afflictions
Which have nothing to do with desire,
Raptures which have nothing to do with love. (Trans. Kamal 92)

Agha Shahid Ali in his article “The True Subject: The Poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz” observes that: “In Faiz's poetry, suffering is seldom, perhaps never, private (in the sense the suffering of confessional poets is). Though deeply personal, it is almost never isolated from a sense of history and injustice” (134). It is for the same reason that Faiz deliberately breaks from Urdu's traditional way of looking at the beloved. Not only does he refuse to despair but, in a radical departure from the conventions and asks the beloved even while acknowledging her immense importance to accept his social commitment as more important than their love.

The influence of Karl Marx and his philosophy enable the select poets of our study to look beyond the conventions and redesign and remodel them to suit social purposes. Kaifi Azmi also fosters his belief in participation of art in the collective struggle of humanity. While writing a poem for Ali Sardar Jafri on his seventieth birthday, Kaifi praises his craft and at the same time throws light on the characteristics of a good literature. For Kaifi Azmi, in the poetry of Ali Sardar Jafri: “Numb sorrows given voice by you” (Trans. Varma 53). This quality of empathy and sympathy is a very important aspect of good poetry. The formation of Progressive Writers Association motivates writers and poets to express themselves in a way which fosters the understanding of woes and sufferings of human beings.

Section II: Progressive Poetry’s Tryst with Marxism

Progressive poets write what comes to be later popularized as ‘poetry of witness’ that resists the traditional division between political and personal. It starts a new style of writing in which the two supposedly contradictory themes (the political and the personal) are wedded, reclaiming the subjectivity in which the poet is able to speak in opposition to the unified voice of the society and imposes voice of those in power. Poet Gregory Orr writes in the introduction to Poetry as Survival thus:

Human culture “invented” or evolved the personal lyric as a means of helping individuals survive the existential crises represented by extremities of
subjectivity and also by such outer circumstances as poverty, suffering, pain, illness, violence, or loss of a loved one. This survival begins when we “translate” our crises into language—where we give it symbolic expression as an unfolding drama of self and the forces that assail it. This same poem also arrays the ordering powers our shaping imagination has brought to bear on these disorderings. Thus the poem we compose (or respond to as readers) still accurately mirrors the life crisis it dramatizes, still displays life’s interplay of disorder and order. (4)

It is through this mechanism that the progressive poets like Faiz, Kaifi Azmi and Ali Sardar Jafri enter into a dialogue with the oppressors and dismantle them and their practices using their own language, culture and praxis. The Progressive Writers Association (PWA) borrows heavily from leftist discourse that is dominant in political and cultural scene in the early twentieth century. Theorists such as Georgi Plekhanov, Maxim Gorky, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Mao Tse-Tsung, Brecht, Walter Benjamin and several others espouse and impress upon their minds through their conception of people-centric art. The 1932 resolution of the Soviet Communist Party creates a union of the Soviet Writers that promotes the doctrine of socialist realism and gives impetus to the exercise of fostering people’s art.

The Lucknow session of PWA (in 1936) is remarkable for the new turn that congress policies take towards the left. The presidential address delivered by Jawaharlal Nehru and the resolutions adopted at the session shows the clear impact of the left movement on the important events in the country. The emergence of an organized left under the central leadership of the Communist Party of India unifies all the scattered communist groups working throughout the country towards establishment of socialism. The formation of the PWA followed by IPTA, shows that the new left trend has started to assert itself, not only in the political and economic but also on the cultural front. The favorable circumstances, national and international, under which the PWA is formed, however, does not last long. The extreme vacillation shown by Nehru and his followers culminates in battles between the communists and the anti-communists, after the launching of the Quit India movement. These are the certain developments on national and international arena that bring about variations within the broader ideological apparatus of marxism.
Faiz, born in 1911, the eldest (and first to die) of the select poets of the study is writing at the time when PWA is in its nascent stages and India and the world at large are under the sweep and spell of Soviet-led marxism. He is a compulsive marxist in contrast to Ali Sardar Jafri (born in 1913) whose literary career flourishes most during 1948 to 1978. He publishes eight poetry collections within this period, which include his famous works like *Nai Duniya Ko Salaam* (Salute to the New World), (1948), *Asia Jaag Utha* (Asia Awakes) (1951), *Patthar Ki Dccwar* (The Stone Door) (1953), *Lahu Pukarta Hai* (The Blood Calls) (1965) and many more.

Jafri writes in times of complete disillusionment with marxist and socialist principles. He witnesses the corpse of his life-long ideology. He belongs to the school of essentialist marxism where he under the veneer of aesthetics, tries to conserve his leftist leanings. Kaifi Azmi, the third poet (1919-2002) is recognised today more as a film lyricist than a progressive poet. But his poetic outpour is at its peak after Independence. He is alive to attest the fall and failure of marxism, socialism and progressivism. At the height of left influence in 1960s and 1970s, he sees Communist Party of India (CPI) become the handmaiden of Indira Gandhi’s campaign of empty populism. Kaifi Azmi, a staunch communist survives not only political and cultural turmoil but also personal turmoil (paraplegia) by making sense of whatever is left of marxism in the dystopia (country) in front of him. For him, his ideology is a matter of survival in the wake of failure of five year plans and disintegration of USSR (the Communist Mecca). Both Ali Sardar Jafri and Kaifi Azmi experience the locking up of CPI into an enclave which limits its scope of political activity. Progressive Writers Association (PWA) in India and worldwide remains a hegemonic force behind the cultural productions in this period of Urdu literature. The structure of this wing of writers is very peculiar and interesting as the apparently marxist forum has a variety of characters as its members who are not always communists like Sajjad Zaheer. The list also includes Gandhians like Premchand and various others who occupy varied ideological positions. The unity in diversity comes from their common goal of supporting people in their war against capitalists and British.

Progressive poet’s heart feelingly deals with tragic tales of expropriation of Indian peasantry through the machinations of capitalists. The complex religious and cultural traditions that frustrate India’s emancipation form the central theme of their works. The 1900s see an upheaval and onslaught of socialist realism on literary scene all over the globe. It is accepted
that literature and art should be subordinate to politics. This art is based on vulgarism of Stalinist post. But the select poets of the study comprise of that section of artists whose loyalties belong to the art and truth and not to party. Faiz Ahmad Faiz counsels his colleagues that it is important that the progressive writers understand the problems of the workers. In the absence of physical contact with the workers, Faiz thinks that the “power of imagination, literary expression, and the writers natural sensitivity adequately substituted the vacuum”. Faiz is of the view that the message of the progressive writers should reach the middle class if not the uneducated workers. For him “The war between the capitalist and the proletariat is not the exclusive war of the proletariat; it is a battle challenging all of us” (qtd in Malik, “The Marxist Lyrical Movement in India and Pakistan” 653).

India and Indians immediately after Independence come under the sway of Soviet led marxism as the social and political milieu propels the need for a socialist state. It is dominant because it appears that it might provide an alternative model for development. The most appalling outcome of the philosophy motivated by human liberation is the subtle transformation of all liberating ideology into a propaganda justifying authoritarian regime which is later to be replaced by bureaucratic absolutism. The three poets writing in three different phases of marxist history of India, develop their own variant of marxism depending on the conceptualisation of the premises in testing times of their beliefs. Faiz writes when marxism is not only a fashion but a dominant way of looking at life. Ali Sardar Jafri renders to put back the broken pieces of the ideology to let it emerge not only on the poetic but also on the political scene whereas Kaifi Azmi attaches himself to the praxis rather than the theory to rejuvenate and rekindle a spark in otherwise extinguished embers of the decadent marxism. Kaifi Azmi has been criticised along with Sahir Ludhianvi for being an ideologue and pamphleteer. Kaifi Azmi, the most committed of progressive writers, at the age of twenty-four starts activities in the textile mill areas of Kanpur. As a full time worker, he leaves his life of comfort. Though, he is the son of a zamindar, he shifts his base to Bombay to work amongst the workers and start the party work with a lot of zeal and enthusiasm. Faiz in his early poetry gives primacy to ishq of his mashooqa quite contrary to his marxist stance of “Don’t Ask me for that Love”. In the poem, “Poetry’s Theme”, romantic love emerges as his supreme concern. In this poem, he recognizes the cogency of such themes like hunger and starvation but the desire of the poet will be fulfilled only “when these thirsting hands will touch those hands” (Trans. Kiernan 91).
The syncretic assembly of marxist doctrine and rich cultural, spiritual and literary continuum is the hallmark of the progressive poetry. Kaifi Azmi, who is alive to witness the dawn of the new millennium, finds existence impossible and futile amongst the new generation. Faiz also in his oft quoted nazm “Nisar main teri galiyon main ae watan” envisages a dead town where its dwellers are mere zombies. Wherefore he says: “I sacrifice myself to your lanes, my country/ Where it has been decreed that none should walk with head held high” (Trans. Mir & Mir. “From Home to the World” web). The word sacrifice is generally associated with religion but Faiz uses it for his beloved country which he regards higher than religion. It is here that he develops his trademark poetic metaphors, where the qafas (cage) encloses the prisoner, who then depends on the breeze (saba) to get news of the homeland. After flip flopping between the beloved and country in the various stanzas of the poem, Faiz concludes the poem with the following lines bringing out the tyrannical and military totalitarianism in Pakistan:

If today our enemies ride high, playing God, so what?
their reign of four days is nothing to us.
Only those who hold to their vows under such scrutiny
are safe from night-and-day’s endless mutiny. (Trans. Genoways 116)

The sacrifice of the freedom is what they have to do for survival. They are a victim of barbaric savagery where material prosperity, mathematical happiness and mental freedom cannot go hand in hand. The soul searching and the heart clenching call for freedom and liberation from the manacles have become atavistic and remote and the new mantra is to envisage and paint a picture of revolutionary and free India.

Section III: Marxism in Urdu Progressive Poetry
The philosophy of marxism has a huge impact on Faiz. Initially he expresses his dilemma as he is unable to reconcile with his new found love (for the country) as the love for his beloved means the world to him. The commitment demanded by both, watan and mehbooba is equally solemn as the devotion to both expect sacrifice of life. In the poem, “We Who Were Killed in Obscure Pathways”, (which was inspired by the letters of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg who were sentenced to death by electric chair for their political views), the dead martyrs speak to the one who has inspired them. Faiz gives them stock description of the beloved of Persian
and Urdu poetry. The path of their love also leads to their death and annihilation. But beloved here is liberty that is loved for its beauty. The martyrs who die for her sake have made her beauty eternal, and love universal.

In later poem, “Be with Me”, written during the turbulent times in Pakistan (under martial law), Faiz addresses the beloved (political faith) to be with him as the times are not ripe: “...nothing can be put right or made/ no word allowed, no part be played”. It is the love for his ideology “who both life and death bestows” in times of “diamond daggers” and “anklet bells of pain” (Trans. Rahman 109). The juxtaposition of adornments of beloved with the dark reality is noteworthy. The contrast crystalizes his thought process as he is shown to give primacy to pain which he finds more significant than empty embellishments of the beloved. His famous nazm, “We Who Were Killed in Obscure Pathways” has become the anthem in Urdu poetry as it brings to light the thorny path of struggle for human dignity and feelings. Sarvat Rahman in the article “Poet of love and rage” argues that while reading poetry of Faiz, thus: “…comes the awareness that his earlier quest for the Beloved and his later one for social justice for all humanity, are of the same nature. Both demand of him his utter devotion and ultimately, the sacrifice of his life” (108).

Faiz questions the complacency of the rich capitalists who are:

Befikray dhan daulat wale apas main kyun khush rehte hain
Unka sukh aapas main bantein aakhir yeh bhi hum jaise hain. (Faiz, SSH 148)

[These rich men are so indifferent, they remain happy amongst themselves. They should share their happiness, after all we are also like them only.] (Translation mine).

Out of the pessimism and despondency arising out of the indifference, comes out hope for better days as promised by revolution. Faiz begins one of his nazms by saying that “A few days more- my love- only a few days” as the “Epoch of cruelty is coming to an end” (Trans. Kamal 66). He avers to his beloved to bear this agony for a few more days as the days of capitalism and enslavement are soon going to be over as the much awaited revolution is at hand. His poetry is soul stirring as he prompts the people to speak and not passively accept
the situation. Faiz has always been known for reversing the imagery and then taking it to new heights. River, (which in most of the Indian protest poetry is a symbol of flow of life, some kind of positive liberation) is reversed in one of his nazms titled “The Hurricane of Remorse” as he makes the river “restless river of life” which though will “Cease to flow, sometime, somewhere” (Trans. Kamal 68). In the nazm, the wine metaphor emerges in front of us in an entirely different light as the poet who is also the narrator of the poem solicits the people not to “ unfurl the sails of the ship of wine” and “let the hurricane of remorse subside”(Trans. Kamal 68). In poem, the imagery is related to sea and river as the very usage of words like “caravan”, “blood tide”, “sails” and “ship” emanates very paradoxical imagery to show that the struggle to achieve the caravan of freedom comes with blood, pain and remorse.

Progressive poets all around the globe are devastated in their belief in revolution and this pain of awareness of the lost ideal reverberates through their works. The relinquished relics of the rebirth of the peasant’s paradise and hatred for the new luxury loving communist elite is the new and dominant theme in the works of these poets post-Partition. These poems become the swan song of the revolution. The comfort loving and complacent new generation makes the poets retrospective as they compare the golden heydays of communism with the declining stage of art and culture where the survivors are only a gang of self-seeking poets and rogues. Faiz, functioning on the principles of marxism of Leninist party attempts firstly to educate the proletariat in order to remove the false consciousness that the bourgeois has instilled in them. This interpellation is done to make them more docile and easier to exploit. The poem “Speak” by Faiz is written soon after the outbreak of the Second World War. It reflects the widespread indignation of Indians at Britain's high-handed declaration of war on India's behalf and at the restrictions of political liberties imposed in the name of wartime needs. The poem tells its audience to speak, but doesn’t tell what to speak. So the poem becomes timeless as it is a spirited call to all free men, in any country and any age, to speak out boldly. Faiz in many of his poems mocks at the inhabitants of his country who have learnt to keep silent in the face of rising atrocities of capitalists. In the above discussed poem, “Speak” he says:

Speak- your lips are free.
Speak- your lips are free.
Speak- your tongue is still yours...
The above lines by Faiz echo the message of freedom of speech which is an important aspect of establishment of forces of resistance.

Faiz has used visual imagery here. One notices a shift from “bol” to “dekh”. The description of the leaping flames and hot iron in blacksmith’s shop: “tund hain sholay, surkh hain ahan” (Faiz, SSH 155) reminds of the fiery, violent yet vivid imagery of Ted Hughes. The reference of colour red for iron seems intentional on the part of Faiz as he is hinting at the awakening of the masses so as to reach the desired red dawn of their hopes and aspirations. Red colour here can be interpreted as color of blood and Faiz is suggesting that blood will have to be shed to realize their ideal of egalitarian society. The images in the poem are descriptive of how leaping flames give way to chains, how the mouths of locks start opening up and chains spread their folds. The poet links this with a promise of freedom and also urges people to speak again. The last stanza of the poem again reverts to Bol as the wheel comes to a full circle. The significance and need of a violent revolution and inability of non-violence is hinted at in this famous couplet in which he says:

*Ab kooch- e- dilbar ka rahro rehjan bhi bane to baat bane
Pehre se adu talte hi nahi aur raat barabar jaati hai.* (qtd in Kantimohan 105)

[If the alley of beloved becomes alley of robbers
The enemy doesn’t leave its guard and night passes like this] (Translation mine)

In the above-mentioned couplet, Faiz describes the political turmoil of Pakistan and also hints that; in order to improve the condition of the beloved country, a violent and red revolution is needed. The lover has reached the door of the beloved but it is highly guarded and the lover to catch sight of the beloved will have to trespass and force his entry into the lane of the beloved. The phrase “raat barabar jaati rahi” (“The night passes like this”) as per critic Kanti Mohan is pointer towards the fact that in every country, revolutionary elements and their activities are commonplace but what is more important is to bring them together and
bring about a red revolution else the adversaries of democracy and revolution will keep on ravaging the lanes of *mehmood-e-watan* for their own vested interest. Faiz’s disavowal of non-violence comes stronger in the following couplet: “*Bedaadgaron ki basti hai yaan daad kahan khairat kahan / Sar phodti phirti hain nadaan dariyaad jo dar dar jati hai*” (qtd. in Kantimohan 105). [The place is inhabited by cruel men, don’t expect praise or mercy / All the innocent requests die after being crushed from one door to another (Translation mine)]. The poet asks a rhetorical question as to what will you get by begging in front of these cruel tyrannical rulers? These oppressors do not know meaning of giving. Anyone who asks for help from them is foolish enough not to realize the futility of the act. That is why the need of the hour is revolution and not simply pleading for change through non-violent means.

The disillusionment with the revolution is also an important aspect of progressive poetry. Faiz in one of his ghazals laments the fading of the crimson colour of revolution as:

The evening of parting, don’t ask me now,
It came and somehow went its way,
My heart somehow consoled itself,
My soul curbed its disarray (Trans. Rahman 245)

He in the dawn of the anarchy prevalent post-idealism, questions as to where be our comrades and their idealism that “came with us till nights end”. Faiz’s poem “*Subh-e Aazadi*” (The dawn of freedom) is an anthem for the defeat of progressive politics at the moment of decolonisation. “*Ye dagh dagh ajaala, ye shab-gazeeda sahar*” (the stain covered daybreak, this night bitten dawn), carried the voice of all progressive writers regarding the catastrophe of Partition. The poem ended with the call to continue the unfinished journey. He says: “In the heaviness of heart there has still come no lessening / The hour of deliverance of eye and heart has not arrived/ Come, come on, for that goal has still not arrived (Trans. Kieman 127).

The forces of feudalism are seen no less despicable than the colonists as these brown sahibs (as Gauri Vishwanathan would put it) continue to afflict atrocities on their own people. Amidst such circumstances, he commits himself to the cause of revolution more ardently. In a very famous quatrain written by him, he utters a rather clamorous cry to the autocrats who have snatched pen and paper from him. He insists that he will still continue to vociferously

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spread the message of revolution as “I have dipped my fingers in the blood of my heart” and “I have threaded with the tongue every link of my chains” (Trans. Kamal 34).

One of Faiz’s longer poems, “Dedication” carries the essence of his lifelong ideological pinning’s. In this poem, he adjoins his gam (sorrow) with the grief and pain of humanity at large and brings the postmen, tonga drivers, railway men, prisoners and several other ailing multitudes in his poetic cosmos. His poetry becomes a microcosm of:

The farmer;
Whose cattle has been abducted by the dacoits,
...Whose turban is trampled into tatters by ruffians.
And
To sorrow-laden mothers
Whose infants moan and cry through the night
In dumb inconsolable agony
In the tired arms of their wakeful mother. (Trans. Kamal xix)

He expresses his unease on several other such incidences which have made his homeland, “zard paton ka ban’ (a forest of yellowing leaves) and “dard ka anjuman” (A society of anguish) (Trans. Kamal xix). Faiz therefore champions the cause of humanism. The yellow color is a very important trope in this poem as it serves a foil to the resplendent gulistaan (garden) of life. Blood is a recurring theme in Faiz’s poetry that has been used as a symbol of pain, defiance, patriotism and exploitation. His poem “Lahoo ka Suragh” (“The Bloods Trace”) written as a lament of the cover-up of political murders is particularly relevant today when the killers remain faceless and unpunished leaving behind a trail of pain and helplessness adding to a nation’s angst.

Gopichand Narang in his essay, “How not to Read Faiz” while translating “Dast-e Teh-e Sang Amada” (A Hand Trapped Under a Rock) (1965) from his collection with the same title, traces how ideology is enclosed in the otherwise simple verse of Faiz. Every figure of speech revolves around a socio-political axis. For example, ‘displeased atmosphere’ becomes the tyrannical environment, the ‘breeze that hurts’ becomes the unjust order and its oppression. “fellow drinkers” are fellows with social consciousness, and the “old friends” are
either those not in sync with the revolutionary creed or those who are content to become part of the anti-people regime. Since madness and humiliation are something to be proud of when one is in love (as per the Indo-Persian poetic convention), “the rainstorm of accusations” and “the clouds of reproach everywhere” are quite in keeping with the patriotic expectations. Further, the cup and the flask are evoking the passion for freedom.

Kaifi Azmi and Ali Sardar Jafri on the other hand romanticise the whole notion of freedom in philosophical terms. This is not to say that they lack realism but it brings to fore the difference of their orientation. Anger, bitterness in the poetry of Faiz reminds us of the naxalite poetry of Punjab who never relents. Faiz Ahmed Faiz also writing from prison spurns all offers of reproach: “If your reproaches seemed out of place, it was our fault, surely/ It’s bitterness of life that’s on our lip’s, Faiz/ For we were not at all inclined towards acrimony” (Trans. Akshaya Kumar 230).

Kaifi Azmi seems to be closer to functional poetry of structural marxism. Kaifi puts into practice his philosophy of what is called Marxist libertarianism. He is most committed to his ideology and leads a slew of charitable activities. Though Kaifi Azmi has been accused of writing propagandist poetry by some people but his poetry to me never seemed to defend a particular ideology. He strives for his ideological principles throughout his life and believes strongly in the potential of human being sans any party control. Despite the fact that he remains party card holder throughout his life, he brings life and progress to his own village Mijwan solely on his own. In 1979, when Kaifi reaches his native village on the shoulders of palanquin bearers, he has no idea of plight of the inhabitants of his village. On witnessing the same, the rebel comes out of his hibernation and there starts crusade against inequality, gender bias and injustice. He leaves no stone unturned to take Mijwan on the path to progress. The village, which is without electricity and primary school, even after 32 years of Indian Independence is, illuminated by his untiring efforts.

Kaifi instead of being a party vanguard speaks for human dignity and freedom in general. In Jafri, we see tussle between a communist and a gandhian. The poetic experience of Jafri though stemming from chain of cause and effect in our practical life reaches a level of subjectivity which is process of discovery and of self-realization. Subsequently, his poetic experience enters the metaphysical realm of infinity and eternity. Kaifi Azmi’s much
celebrated poem “House” is symbolic of house of Kaifi’s ideology. The poem is known and remembered for its pictorial quality. The poem paints a picture of some mason, (laying the foundations of a new building) at work. Kaifi re-creates (with the character of the mason), whole process of building up of his nation that he and his comrades tirelessly want to give strength “untold”. The irony of the country is projected through paradox which everyman faces in this country. His dream of socialist India is woven in this poem where the real picture is contrary to its ideals as: “When the palace was built, someone else sat on guard/ In squalor we slept with cacophony our bed” (Trans. Varma 3).

The opening of the poem is in form of a call to the citizens of the country to: “Come let us rise, you and I, and you too, and you” (Trans. Varma 3). Kaifi is still optimistic of some improvement in the situation of the country even after watching that: “The fatigue of relentless labour in every vein/ Images of palace in our eyes still remain” (Trans. Varma 3). The poem is about a construction worker who builds the mansion but is still homeless. The image here is of the egalitarian and socialist utopia of the dreams of Kaifi and many others like him. He is a true advocate of democratic socialism who favors changes at grassroots-level. The first stanza is repeated in the conclusion of the poem to draw attention towards the fact that amongst this sordidness and squalor, there is still hope as: “A window in this wall will surely find an opening” (Trans. Varma 5). Kaifi has unswerving faith in the potentialities of human being who can and will find an opening somewhere. Window is a very potent symbol here as it is representation of hope and faith of multitudes of countrymen who have envisioned bright future for them and their country. The house becomes microcosm of the country whose makers like masons struggled hard indefatigably to build the nation of their dreams by making: “…wall strong, stronger and stronger still” and “embellished the roof, gave doorways a strength untold”. The use of “strong, stronger and stronger still” evokes the passion and the hard work with which “our hands could not tire, they had become the mould” (Trans. Varma 3). Kaifi Azmi often used to say that he was born in an enslaved India and was living in independent India but that he would die in a socialist India. Unfortunately, what he had dreamt for himself remains unfulfilled.

IPTA (Indian Peoples’ Theatre Association) launched by the Progressive Writers’ Association (PWA) in 1943 is one of the most significant mass cultural movements in twentieth century India. Its effects are felt not only in the fields of literature and theatre, but
also in the Bombay cinema of the time. Kaifi Azmi (president of IPTA till his last days) works as film lyricists in Bombay primarily to tend to his family. He along with Sahir Ludhianvi and Jan Nisar Akhtar revolutionises the lyrical stature of the film industry by writing power packed verses addressing the major concerns of nationalism, anti-fascism and class struggle. Rashmi Doraiswami in her article “The Left in Cinema” while describing Kaifi Azmi’s song: *Tu hi sagar hai tu hi kinara, Dhundhta hai tu kiska sahara* points that Kaifi “…uses the paradoxical contraries that traditionally describe God (sagar, kinara) to describe man. The first line of the song seems to be address to God, but the second posits an opposite point of view, for the addressee is man” (124). This is not to imply that lyricists who have been under the impact of the Progressive Movement do not write songs of the self in the context of alienation. Kaifi Azmi’s “*Waqt ne kiya kya hasseen sitam*” (Kaagaz Ke Phool) also endorses his skill at tracing the anguish and helplessness of a man divorced from his roots and humanity at large.

In the Ghazal “The World I Seek. I cannot Find” Kaifi begins with a predominant search motif where he is seeking “A new earth, a new sky” which he cannot find. The search is for a better and new world based on principles of socialism. The imagery of the ghazal (in this particular case) is novel as it is simplistic yet evocative. The traditional ghazalic tropes are absent here yet Kaifi sticks to the metric sincerity (*radiff*) in this case. The second couplet introduces another problem in the search as “No trace of a new man can I find”. The reference is to the brown sahibs who are ruling the country after independence and sucking the blood and starving their own countrymen. The freedom fighters fancied a country of not only new earth and new sky but also “*naya bashr*” who unlike the coloniser masters will be more just and self-giving. The next couplet is a typical ghazalic tradition in which the poet says that he has found the dagger that was used to slay him but “no one’s fingerprints on it can I find” (Trans. Varma 15). The dagger here can refer both to the beloved and the lost ideals on which Kaifi and his comrades are planning to lay the foundation of new earth and new sky. The fingerprints of the assassin cannot be found because in both the cases the assassins are very close confidante, beloved if it was *Ishq-e Majazi* and our own countrymen in case of the country.

The poem “Afternoon” is an observation on the contemporary state and state of affairs. Kaifi seems to be at a loss as to whether the prevalent conditions are victory or defeat
of the journey undertaken by him and his comrades. The poem is something similar to Charles Dickens’ opening lines of his novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, as it is both the best and worst of times. This poem continually takes us back to Faiz’s famous nazm, “Nisar Main Teri Galiyon Main E Watan” in which he says “na inki jeet nayi, na apni haar nayi” (Faiz, SSH 183) [neither is their victory new, nor is our defeat (Translation mine)]. Kaifi also strikes a similar note when he says: “This journey which is neither punishment nor reward/...your victory is insignificant, my defeat inconsequential” (Trans. Varma 21). In Kaifi’s poem, journey is an important motif as this journey is taken by the entire country and the winners and the losers both belong to the same country. That is why victory and defeat become undistinguishable. The last stanza of the poem creates the edifice of a dead city which is enveloped by stillness, silence, ambiguity and ambivalence as in this caravan: “None is pleased with another, nor is angry/ None pauses to ask if the other is unhappy” (Trans. Varma 21). It is a society characterised by smugness, a society preoccupied with its own concerns and a society where news of a calamity leaves everyone undisturbed. This is a modern dystopia where: “A few were believers but nobody believed / A few rose from the ground but remained unredeemed” (Trans. Varma 21).

The existential anguish arising out of marxist concern of a classless society is a historical phenomenon. Kaifi Azmi tripping on the tight rope of his ideology eventually stumbles in to the abyss of experiential anguish and distress. In the poem, “Circle”, Kaifi Azmi begins in a matter of fact and conversational tone bringing out the helplessness and powerlessness of man. The same impotency and defeat of ideals is expressed by both Faiz and Ali Sardar Jafri. The piongacy reaches its zenith as Kaifi in his poem, (written on the occasion of the Republic Day celebrations) also lits “Ek diva naam ki azadi ke naam” (A lamp in name of freedom which is namesake). The freedom in question is further illustrated by Kaifi as follows: “Ask wheat from any country that you please/ You are free to beg” (qtd. in Gour. “Kaifi Azmi: A Heart Which“ 28).

The other lamp is in the name of well-being where the hungry and penniless people are in abundance. Another lamp, he lights is in the name of unity which he sees being slaughtered everywhere as the nation is engulfed in fighting on the issues of religion, caste, creed and sex. In Kaifi’s *nazms*, the unverting humanism - its rages, its losses, its defeats - is more immediate and compelling. In the poem “Circle”, helplessness seems almost
unmediated by poetry: “From body to the soul an endless desert/ No sun, No mirage, No shade” (Trans. Varma 25). But “Circle” is a fine instance of Kaifi's use of spoken rhythms, of the conversational mode, of the intimate sense of a man speaking to men and of the ability to reflect on universal loneliness and angst. The title is very apt in this case as the opening lines emphasise on the vicious circle of vacuity, purposelessness and meaninglessness that is enveloping all and sundry. Kaifi says:

Everyday from where I go ahead
I come back to the same spot again,
The walls I have broken so many time
Are the walls I strike all over again, (Trans. Varma 25)

Kaifi in this particular poem seems to be an astute observer taking a bird's eye view of modern town, which has come out in its complete nakedness and barbarity. Kafi has used all the dull and sordid colours to describe the town. Brown (earthquake, wall and desert) and other shady colours are applied to delineate the real character of the town. The sombreness and stodginess is accentuated as Kaifi depicts the multihued rainbow as “a bouquet of but one colour” (Trans. Varma 25). The word-play is at its best in the poem as Kaifi here juxtaposes seemingly incompatible concepts of 

khairiyat

and

khatra

to evince his defying and defiling stance of the revolution. The amalgamation of pessimism and hope cannot be better when he concludes the nazm with the following lines: “When Rama will return I cannot say/ If only some Ravana would come and stay” (Trans. Varma 26). Faith in the revolution and better future is evident in his poem “Courage” in which he addresses the denizens of his country to live naturally in these testing times as: “Love has not yet admitted defeat / Continue to test it, as much as you like” (Trans. Varma 31).

In the poem “Civil War”, he is conscious of the efforts of workers and peasants that are still prominent as sparks and are about to burst out. It is just that someone has to blow air and then see. He iterates his belief in human efforts which are required in order to take forward the wind of change. The change in situation is inevitable with the passage of time. This is the feeling one gets on reading Aakhiri Shab (1947) and most of the poems of Awaara Sajde (1995). In the poem “Invitation”, Kaifi says:
Sometime forward, sometime backward, what is this
We shall have to change the style of walk
Life is not going to prepare the mould for the mind
The mind shall have to shape itself according to every mould. (qtd. in Gour, “Kaifi Azmi: A Heart Which” 28)

It is apparent that he is severely perturbed by the bitter reality of traversing forward-backward on zigzag paths. And he sees that the same communist movement, which was once vanguard of communism and rebellion, has now become a victim of disunity and disintegration. But Kaifi’s hope for better future never dies as he has faith in the ability of human efforts and mind that can change. The agony that he has felt is somewhat represented by his poem “Awara Sajde” in which he says:

You are my beloved and you my adored
And yet, known to me is neither of you.
You are the reviver of the dead, you are the cure
And yet my pain’s healer, is neither of you.
It is not easy to lift one’s own corpse
My arms falter, they begin to fail me. (Trans. Varma 97)

But Kaifi had not lost hope of a revolution and a bright future; and this is the point from which his poetic compositions take off. In the poem “Pehra”, Kaifi expresses his hopefulness when he says:

*Hum woh rahi hain jo manzil ki khabar rakhte hain
Panv katon pe, shagoofon pe nazar rakhte hain
Kitni raton se nichoda hai ujala hum ne
Raat ki qabr pe buniyad-e sehar rakhte hain
O’ andhere ke khuda shama bhujane wale*

[We are those travelers who are aware about the destination
With our feet on the thorns, we keep our sights on the flowers
For how many nights we have kept awake

58
We laid the foundations of the morning on the grave of the night
O, god of darkness, extinguisher of candles.] (qtd. in Gour, “Kaifi Azmi: A Heart Which” 28)

The poems “Ibn e Mariyam” (Kaifi Azmi) and “Dogs” (Faiz), draw on the same analogy of dogs to bring about the conditions of ‘accustomed-to-suffer-poor’ who, “Far from biting, they don’t even bark” (Trans. Varma 121). The beauty of the above mentioned nazm is that it fits into the three ideological moulds of Ishq-e-haqiqi, Ishq-e-majazi and Ishq-e-watan. The testing times can be of a lover, a devotee or a patriot.

The modification that takes place in writing of ghazal in the able hands of Kaifi Azmi is remarkable. Ghazal undergoes many stylistic and subjective alterations in his poetic oeuvre. Ghazal writing enters not only the social and political domain but also takes shape of personal trope which carries within itself feelings of nostalgia not of a golden past but of a more autobiographical nature. Kaifi recollects and re-creates his village Mijwan that he leaves for greener pastures, in the following lines: “Often like the sun and sometimes the shade/ My village for me has hundred shapes” (Trans. Varma 33). Ghazal here becomes a source of emotional compassion yet at the same time it touches on the social concerns of rich and poor divide which he finds very conspicuous in his dwelling city Bombay. Kaifi Azmi is best known for the passion and simplicity of his poetry. Pawan Verma in the note to his book of translated poems of Kaifi Azmi writes that: “He is a human being first, a writer later. Thus there cannot but be a directness and spontaneity in the language and idiom of his poetry.” (Varma xv). Abandoning the elitists and swishy vocabulary of the ghazal, Kaifi Azmi recourses to much simplified terminology, while giving expression to his thoughts. The matla of one of his better known ghazals bears testimony to the simplicity and lucidity in his poetic expression. The mehtciab of oriental lineage is altered to chand of common man in the matla where Kaifi talks about the idyllic world after revolution that was shattered and shaken. Kaifi says: “Even there, the gods were of stone/ The moon from where we returned today” (Trans. Varma 35).

We cannot oversimplify and reduce Kaifi’s poetic enterprise to this observation. In another ghazal, Kaifi employs ghazillic stylistics and semiotics and opens the poem invoking traditional symbols of maikhana (Tavern), masjid(Mosque), deewana(Madman) and
mehboob ki gali (Alley of the beloved). But the shehar (city) of beloved of the ghazal has a story to tell. In the last sher, Kaifi brings forth the ‘naked shingles’ of the city. The beloved oblivious to the barrenness of the street, devouring herself in the belles lettres is shown the veridical view of her own town where: “When, on a naked street, the night breathes its last/ Then watch how desolation crawls about in your town” (Trans. Varma 41).

‘I’ in Kaifi’s poetry is hardly used as a personal pronoun instead it is an expression of humanism that flutters everywhere like a proud and bloodied crowd. When Kaifi is not romanticising, most of imagery in his poetry is of a universally dark time, an apocalyptic anxiety and a search for human dignity. “Advice” is a highly conversational poem in which a dialogue between age and youth is established to question the inactivity and sloth of the people inhabiting the country who in fear of “this wind, this storm, this furious flow” (Trans. Varma 37) are reluctant to march on. The youth reckoning their fear in the absence of a “torch to guide, or star aglow” encourages them to “…fight the flood without awaiting the oar” with their strong resolve and determination to weed out the evils from the country.

Sea and shore are important symbols here as amidst the frightening show of the dark, sombre night of restlessness and anxiety, it is kinetic energy of the flow of water that gives force and vitality to the poet to foster belief in struggle as “how long can you walk clinging to the shore?” (Trans. Varma 37). Kaifi is no ideologue who is simply exhorting the confused masses to come out of their comfort zones, instead he is addressing here as a man who himself has quit his cushioned life (being son of a landlord) to stay in a commune living truly by the ideals he strove for throughout his life. Shabana Azmi, his daughter in her article “To Abba, with love…” points out how her father put his own words into action. She quotes famous lines from her father in which he says: “Koi to sood chukaye, koi to zimma le/ Us insquilab ka jo aaj tak udhaar sa hai”. [If only someone would repay the loan, assume responsibility/ for the revolution that until now appears like a debt (Trans. web)]. The above mentioned lines constantly remind us of Kaifi’s unswerving faith in human effort and the goodness that lies within.

“Dispersion” is a highly charged poem in which Kaifi builds up a plague like situation where world is waiting for its own destruction in absence of revolution. The tragedy of the country is that nobody is ready to “pay the price” and to “bear the blame” for the failures of
the communist ideal. The title of the poem is very interesting as dispersion as a noun is generally associated with light and its dispersion into VIBGYOR but in the present context, the dispersion is leading to dissipation of life without colours which is evoked by usage of words like *intshar, bedaar* and *khahdhar*. Dispersion, a so called positive trait in terms of reflection and refraction takes shape of dissipation which as per the dictionary means leading a life of pleasure and acting unwisely. Sea, water, oceans are predominant images in the poetry of Kaifi Azmi. Ocean, sea, water take different manifestations in his poetry as sea sometimes is shown as sign of power and strength dominating all other forms of water. All life is believed to be ocean born. Life still exists in ocean and so ocean can be interpreted as sign of life. The ocean is also known for its uncontrollable and unpredictable nature but at the same time it can be beautifully calm. In Kaifi Azmi’s poetic body of work, sea is captured in all its multidimensional forms. There is a picture of a defeated sea also in the poem “Tranquil Ocean” which doesn’t “seethe and rage”. It is a sea which has “no waves, no crest, no fury” (Trans. Varma 47). Sea in the poem “Circle” is used as a symbol of sea of faith and belief, which (though) now doesn’t have even a drop of conviction in it, yet it inherits the qualities of change and revolution. In the dialogic poem “Advice”, sea is not only characterised by the “furious flow” and “oceans heaves” but is actually shown weak in terms of the danger and challenge that resolute oar poses to the uncontrollable and furious sea. The sea of the “Ibn e Mariyam” is a victimised sea where boats carrying “bhang, hashish, smack, alcohol and opium” (Trans. Varma 121) are unloaded on its shore.

Ali Sardar Jafri upholds in his poems the cause of human freedom and dignity against exploitation. When the country and its citizens are being stifled under the weight of subjugation from within and outside both, Ali Sardar Jafri jumps in to the literary arena with his weapons of marxist ideology. He considers revolution as his God and the very reason for his existence. Red colour is a very important symbol used in the poetry of Ali Sardar Jafri. *Lai Salaam* (Red Salute) and *Lal Jhanda* (Red Flag) are recurring motifs of his poetry. Red is a colour associated with communism, a theoretical paradigm to which Jafri dedicates his life. He gives a red salute to the struggling masses. Jafri is a visionary but he never sacrifices his revolutionary commitment to his poetic spontaneity. His ghazals are also a good example of his commitment and imaginative flight. He asks his beloved and countrymen to come and “fly with my imagination” to “The garden of my fancy…” where his words act “like a sword” and “arrow” which enable him to see “…beauty of belief” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 176).
Jafri has presented realistic interpretation of individual freedom, which is the basis for the collectivists' freedom of social groupings. It is a reflection of marxist thought that he trumpeted the necessity of individual freedom in social set up for creating new social order. The disappointment with the old social order is also important as far as Jafri is concerned. In the poem “The Current Times”, Jafri reverberates the helplessness and incapability of current times in the very likelihood of Faiz’s immortal nazm, “Teri Umeed Tera Intezar Jabse Hai” in which he says “Agar sharer hai to bhakde, jo phool hai to khile/ tarah tarah ki talab tere rang-e-lab se hai” (Faiz, SSH 71) [If it is a spark, then it should ignite, various kinds of expectations we have from you (Translation mine)]. Jafri just like Faiz questions the lack of zealouleness in the youth and the tempo that is incompatible with the historical evolution of the country as for him this “red rose” of modernity “…can smile in secret, but cannot perfume the air” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 22). Red colour is very potent in his poetic works. The juxtaposition of red rose with inability to perfume the air can be a hint at the failure of the communist principles of the red brigade. Faiz questions if it is embers, then it should flare up in his nazm but Jafri answers the question by saying: “An ember is hidden/ In the ashes of life/ It burns under ashes/ But cannot flare up” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 22). The pessimism of Jafri is shared by Faiz as in Pakistan and other parts of the world as communists are looked at with suspicion. Faiz was not a party card holder yet he was refused entry in United States of America under the notorious McCarran- Walter act of 1952 barring all communists and their sympathisers from entering their country.

**Section IV: Varied Dimensions of Marxism in Urdu Progressive Poetry**

The poetry of the select poets of the study provides an insight into the working of the creative mind at the most turbulent times faced by the subcontinent. What is worth noticing is how the mind of all the poets actually addresses the same question yet gives the same thought an understanding based on their own style, form and point of view. Jafri has his own style and charisma of locating the mythological references for ideological pinning. Unlike Kaifi Azmi, he does not name the mythological figures but very subtly intersperses them to hint at the use of myth. In the poem, “Oppression”, describing a homeless girl, a poor farmer’s daughter uncertain of where to go at night, he says; she faces a Sita like agnipariksha in these unsafe times when cobras in guise of men are waiting to plunder and ravage. In order to escape that dishonour, the helpless girl presses the God to open the earth and swallow her. But in modern times, the earth doesn’t listen, and instead of earth opening up, a man made
Ali Sardar Jafri is involved in several social, political and literary movements after Independence and his faith in ideals of communism and socialism is at its zenith. On 20 January 1949, he is arrested at Bhiwandi, for holding of a (now banned) Progressive Urdu writers' conference. Despite warnings from Morarji Desai, the Chief Minister of Bombay State; three months later, he is rearrested. His ideals are based on marxist teachings and his earlier poems are full of anger and revolutionary propaganda. The poem “Deceit” (written before 1950 belongs to the fervid and fanatical period in his writing) penetrates deeply into the state of affairs of the country after Independence of the country. The country is laid in all its bareness, nakedness and desolation. Jafri creates the heinous and stark picture of his motherland which is still mourning as “old hags in dark shops” are freely picking everyman’s pocket. It is a country where unemployment prevails as “factories abound with hordes of live corpses” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 48). Jafri has beautifully blended realism with fancy as the imagery of the poem is worth noticing. The rice and wheat swaying in the fields are given a fresh image of golden spikes (golden color and metal represent richness and affluence). And further these golden spikes are personified as slaves in ancient Egypt and Greece who stand for being sold in alien land. The remorse at the fate of the luckless farmer, the homeless girl and lifeless youth is not beyond his faith to escape this prison of bondage. He has already envisioned a new future for the country where: “A light is about to shine/ From the brow of the worker/ Red flags fly on the horizon/ Of the morning” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 48).

The most noteworthy revelation of Jafri’s works is that instead of abounding in the red imagery of the naxalites, his poems are least violent and fierce. Red colour and its subsequent images are simply seen as a colour of revolution, of change which is not always violent. This transition can be noticed in later and mature works of Jafri where he is not imprisoned within the ideals of marxism. Instead he encompasses the great humanistic traditions in his writings and blend intellectual insight and genuine emotions. Jafri lays emphasis on the Fanon’s notion of intellectual violence. Jafri believes in Gandhian Socialism and the idea of universal uplift based upon an optimistic interpretation of human nature. He asserts the same premise in his poem” Deceit” as he says “Today, wounds grow tongues of their own” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 48) and it is from here that he introduces us
towards inception of communist utopia modeled on Gandhian principles of truth, honesty and non-violence. Jafri believes that appeal to the hearts of the people to respect their obligations towards the weaker and less fortunate, is the most effective way of bringing about a change in society.

Faiz, on the contrary has been a poet of very fierce, violent and vehement emotions. His poetry has often been associated with naxalites despite not being overtly in league with the red brigade. His famous Qawwali “We Shall See” is an anthem for naxalites. In the above mentioned poem, Faiz talks of dismantling and doing away with all kinds of discrimination on the basis of wealth and ushers in an egalitarian society. He is of the view that once the proletariat has gained class consciousness, they will overthrow the existing government and thus the proletariat will seize all political and economic power. Lastly the proletariat will implement a dictatorship of the proletariat which will bring upon them socialism, the lower phase of communism. Faiz’s poem “We Shall See” issues the same strength against determinism of multitude others as Faiz is positive that he with other revolutionaries shall see the good times. Faiz strongly adheres to the core ideological features of Marxism-Leninism that is belief in the necessity of a violent overthrow of capitalism through communist revolution. Kaifi of all is the most committed poet to his cause who adheres to his ideological principle in simplest of terms yet rendering it beauty which is beyond comparison and this heightens his popularity and reach among the masses.

The influence of marxism on Ali Sardar Jafri’s poetry is thus profound and everlasting. As a result his early poems are heavily ideological and political and hence somewhat propagandist in nature. Themes rule over form, style and aesthetics. As a committed marxist, he views society in perennial conflict: the conflict between exploiter and the exploited. Indeed the poems written in early phase of his literary career sound like a war cry against the capitalists and feudal lords. The binary approach, so dominant in his poetry of the forties and fifties, leaves little space for articulating other forms of conflict and human nuances. However, it will be unfair to categorize all of Jafri’s works, even of the early phase, as mere sloganeering. Some of the poems really enthral the hearts and minds of all and sundry and transcend the dry logic of political economy. In the poem. “Yeh Lahu”, he says:

This blood, the fragrance of lips;
this blood, the light of eyes;
this blood, the color of the cheek;
this blood, the peace of the heart;
sun of Mount Faran and Light of Sina and Tur;
flame of the word of truth, pain of a restless soul;
the light of the word of God, the expression of Light Divine
This blood, my blood, thy blood, everybody’s blood. (Jafri qtd. in Irfan, “In Memorium” 406)

In poems like “Walls of Stone”, Jafri makes full use of blank verse to paint a picture of a country victimized by industrialization. The poem “The Pretty Land of Awadh”, traces the transformation in the style of writing of Ali Sardar Jafri who starts the poem in strain of romantics recreating the past beauty of the Awadh region amidst all its glories of rains, butterflies, the sandal branches, cuckoos, meghdoot, peacocks, chaste Ganges, rainbow, Himalayas etc. The tenor and tone of the poem changes when, Jafri highlights his inability to think about cups, flasks and saki, in this environment. Instead his imagination is “…surrounded by the mundane life of small, ordinary homes” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 108). He animates the land of his childhood and stages the farmer of his village as “gods of labour” and “heralds of creation” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 114) who are heralding a revolution. This glorification of the farming community is quintessentially a progressive writer’s trademark. Kaifi Azmi also eulogizes the working community by bringing to fore the hardships they face with the advent of machines.

With the publication of Pairahan-e Sharar (1966), one can see a noticeable shift in Jafri’s poetry, both in terms of its grammar as well as form. In its preface, the uncompromising radical who has written poems like “Walls of Stone” declares that his poems are no longer “political documents”. Rather they are a “cry of the heart and voice of the soul” (qtd. in Irfan, “In Memorium” 407). This shift finds its finest expression in his book on criticism, Paigahbarn-e Sukhan (406). This work of extraordinary significance makes a comparative study of Kabir, Mir and Ghalib, and underlines the richness and relevance of bhakti-sufi traditions for the proletarian revolution. Given the disdain of dogmatic marxism to the culture and civilizational heritage of India, this undeniably is a bold, even heretical, endeavor. In his later works, Ali Sardar Jafri not only pursues this idea further but turns it
into a focal theme of his inquiry in prose and verse alike.

The poetry of the progressive poets instilled in the masses desire to act. The following immortal lines of the poem of Jafri, not only shed light on the syncretistic imagery of Jafri but also raise the fundamental and pressing concerns that haunt the times immemorial. He says:

How long will the home of Sita
Be ruled by Ravans of the world?
How long will Dropadi’s honour
Remain on stake?
How long will poor Shakuntala
Remain trapped in the whirlpool of fate? (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 116)

The questions raised in the above lines stand equally relevant today as the entire country is facing demonic threats like neo-colonialism, corruption, poverty, hunger, unemployment, communalism and regionalism. The questions are rightly asked as to how long we can suffer under this spate of inconveniences, problems and wretchedness. The beauty and diversity in terms of symbols is worth studying in the poetry of progressives. Ravan (in context of the usage by Kaifi Azmi and Ali Sardar Jafri) not only enters a secular domain but also becomes a highly laden word. It carries difference in terms of its treatment as used by the two poets. The variety in its semiotics is clear as for Kaifi, Ravan signifies any flux of change that might hold the potential of arousing the masses from the slumber whereas Jafri uses it as evil and monstrosity signified. The canvas of the masterpiece of Jafri is very large as it motleys and plays with not only different colors but also different episodes of history arousing in the workers a spirit of revolution shaking the very foundations of tyranny. Jafri very elusively conjoins historical upheavals of mutiny of Bengal and Chori Chora to fight against the capitalists who have shut her lips. “with cold seals of stone and steel” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 126). The hope is still rife in his words as he equates the insurrection of the masses with the eruption of a volcano that cannot be stopped.

Ali Sardar Jafri does not confront injustice with hostility and anger. His protest is not direct, loud, thunderous, or deafening. He faces up to his tormentor with his moral strength, power of endurance and persistence. He believes in soft and gradual revolution. He
challenges the conscience of all human beings by showing his resolve and defiance. Even in moments of extreme anguish he avoids confrontation and invokes heavenly justice as he fuses God and revolution. This shift from a rabid revolutionary to a mature humanitarian can be noticed in his poems of the later period like the “Three Drunkards”, “Remarks Made in Passing” and many more. In the poem, “A Morsel”, Jafri actually gives us a bite of the life of a worker who is working to “feed the insatiable hunger of capital” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 200). The poem is a usual plea of the workers to be rescued from the gnawing steel jaws of the capitalistic machinery. But the treatment of the subject is not as simplistic as it might seem because a closer examination of this small poem leaves threadbare the complexity in terms of its imagery. The journey of a child of the industrial age from the “darkness of womb” to the darkness of not only mills but also the darkness of the small hovel in which “the weaving mother” and the “spinning father” reside is traced. The mention of the words “weaving” and “spinning” is a deliberate attempt of Jafri to bring forth two very contradictory aspects of the reality (of these times) which India was experiencing during the tussle between the gandhian swaraj and capitalistic industrialisation. In the small poem, Jafri has used multifarious hues while bringing the situation alive to us. The hovel is black, the sweat of the body is silver, and labor that he is serving to the bourgeois is squandering the gold flowers of not only sweat but also his ideology. It is the red colour of his blood that is fuelling the bright lamps in the houses of the rich traders.

The spirit of revolt is very important to the progressives. Jafri in his poem “The Pleasing Blood” addresses the pleasant blood of the proletariats which is drawn by the capitalists turning their lips pale and cheeks blanched. But he says that the same blood of have-nots that intoxicates them (like wine) will rise from under the feet of capitalist and crush them. The speechless and tongueless blood is the blood of rebellion which will respond and explode the comfort loving people as it has become fearless, powerful and resourceful now. The blood imagery is used in another poem, “The Blood Calls”, where the blood of rebellion is already life giving as well as immortal. The blood is calling now “as Israel’s prophet used to call in arid wilderness”. In his poetry, we find Premchand, Gandhi, Rumi and Marx with their philosophies existing together. Jafri expounds the Gandhi’s philosophy of non-violence and ahimsa and progressive ideals in his poem “Evil Word” very dexterously as he advocates that in times of turmoil, reproach should not belittle us and we should use art as our shield and sword to fight the evil outside and inside us. The existential anguish following doomed
ideology enables him to traverse to infinite and abstruse valley of eternity and existence. The transformation is befittingly depicted in the poem “The Naked Fakir”. The emptiness and nakedness of eternity is covered only by the simple wisdom. And wisdom here is not revolutionary wisdom but it is sapience arising out of inner serenity and tranquility. This maturity does not breach his commitment to his life-long ideology but only strengthens it, making him more aware of the terror engulfing the world.

The dangers of state terror, disarmament and the dangers of nuclear war also engage the attention of Ali Sardar Jafri. It is indeed worth noticing how the threat mongering west is itself blazing under the apocalyptic concerns of progressive writers during the cold war period. He writes several poems exposing the nuclear threat of 20th century in powerful imagery:

Suddenly the atoms began to split
Every molecule spewed the blood of sun.
Light rays became an inferno;
And with evil edge
Split the chains which had held
Demons and devils in bondage. (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 398)

The third part of this powerful and futurist poem “A Distraught Dream” titled “After the Dance of the Evil” presents the universal catastrophe in its minutest detail to bring the horror associated with it. The poem begins as follows:

Skyline
Exploded in the air.
Mountains
Glowed like cotton fire balls,
Their flames licked the heavens.
... the world turned into wilderness. (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 402)

Jafri sets out the poem by delineating the physical damage caused by the horrendous act. The pictorial quality of the poem makes the havoc even more terrifying. The images of exploding
skyscrapers and mountains bursting out like weightless cotton balls remind us of the Faiz’s nazm “Hum Dekhenge”. Faiz also uses the same analogy of mountains glowing like cotton balls. But there is a difference in the treatment of the subject. Faiz desires explosion of mountains of tyranny like cotton balls whereas in Jafri’s poem, mountains are shown as victims of that tyranny. The physical damage is attenuated by the emotional appeal of the poem as post cataclysm:

Babies prattle  
Mother’s fingers  
Tiny exquisite insects,  
Butterflies, cuckoos, nightingales,  
All obliterated. (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 402)

In the above lines, Jafri highlights the stillness that embraces the country after the havoc. All the components of Eros or life principle are eradicated from the earth. All the sources of warmth, love and romance cease to exist. Not only this, the calamity has more to offer as:

No more will there be  
Revolutions  
Seductive dreams  
Dream interpretations. (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 402)

Like all great poets he is a prophet engaged in unraveling the mysteries and ambiguity of human drama. The principal theme of his poetry is compassion, love, perseverance and sensitivity surviving amidst the callous inhumanity of our times. In his unique style, he depicts the exemplary survival of the human spirit in face of all-pervasive adversity and defeatism. In doing so, he not only carries forward the traditions of Urdu poetry but enriches its treasure with new symbols and powerful imagery. Indeed, his poetry gradually evolves into a genre of its own kind whose influence is difficult to ignore among the present generation of Urdu poets.

The variation in the style of addressing the theory and praxis of marxism is worth exploring. The three poets have their own distinct answer to the call of their ideology. Faiz.
like a crusader ravages whatever hinders his ideological progress. He univocally hooks the reader by the hard hitting, highly politicized yet aesthetically astute verses. Kaifi Azmi approaches his poetic talent in league of a reformist who is a vanguard in mission to ameliorate the ailing masses from malady of slackness, subjugation and subjection. Ali Sardar Jafri enacts the role of a revivalist in the gospel of progressive writing. He through his literary course tries to bring out the humane in humanity, nestling them under the warp of our ancient wisdom.

Section V: Prison: An Important Metaphor for the Progressive Poets

Prison is a very important aspect in Faiz’s poetic oeuvre as prison serves an important metaphor in his poetic and personal life. When Faiz uses both his pen and activism to defend the rights of the people, he is repeatedly sent to prison and exiled for his resistance. From behind bars and in solitary confinement, he writes some of his most poignant verses in which emerges the metaphor of the beloved through which he addresses his people and his country. His poetry is banned by dictators for decades, but it continues to be recited in public gatherings, and six decades later, its relevance has made it a timeless anthem of resistance. Faiz himself wrote: “In our society, for a whole lot of people, getting sent to jail is not something out of the ordinary or unexpected; rather it is a part of their lives” (qtd. in “Faiz to Alys Faiz” 117)

Faiz himself describes this period of incarceration as follows, and in so doing give us at least three clues as to how he views his prison poetry:

[My] two books subsequent to Image of Complaint - i.e., Hand of the Wind [Dast-e sabā, 1952] and Prison Narrative [Zindān nāma, 1956] are souvenirs of this [four-year] stay in prison. ...prison itself is, nevertheless, a fundamental experience in which a new window Faiz of thought and vision opens itself. Thus prison is first like adolescence when all sensations again become sharp and one experiences once again that same original astonishment at feeling the dawn breeze, at seeing the shadows of evening, the blue of the sky, and feeling the passing breeze. (qtd. in Coppola, “Another Adolescence” 152)

Apropos to the above statement, Faiz sees his prison experience as one of the most distinguishing literary period of his life. Prison provides him a distilling experience as he is
able to see hackneyed things in new light. He continues and says:

Second, it happens that the time and the distance of the external world are both cancelled. Even things which are near become very distant, and those which are far become near. The difference of yesterday and tomorrow is eliminated, effaced in such a way that sometimes a moment seems an immeasurable span of time and sometimes a century appears to be a thing which happened just yesterday. Third, in the tranquility of separation, one finds greater leisure to attend to the outer adornment of the bride of poetry, in addition to meditation and study. (qtd. in Coppola, “Another Adolescence” 152)

Thus, in spite of the turmoil which prison brings to his life, (including what is doubtless acute anxiety over the fact that during last part of this period) he was under the sentence of death. Faiz uses his prison sentence to produce many of his best poems. Hand of the Wind (1952) contains forty-one poems, and Prison Narrative (1956) thirty-two, for a total of seventy-three poems written within four years, between 1951 and 1955. Faiz’s poetic output increases dramatically due to imprisonment.

The social conditions following Independence are not very conducive for PWA. After the Partition of the country, few of its very important members like Sajjad Zaheer, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Habib Jalib and Josh Malihabadi migrate to Pakistan. Ali Hussain Mir and Raza Mir in their book A Celebration of Progressive Urdu Poetry: Anthems of Resistance draw attention to Ali Sardar Jafri’s premise that romanticism of the revolutionary fervour of the Independence struggle gives way to realism. As a reaction to the changing times, PWA in 1949 comes out with its most explicit leftist manifesto under the aegis of radical B.T Ranadive, the general secretary of Communist Party of India. The Pakistani counterpart of PWA comes out with similar manifesto to clear its socialist stand.

In Pakistan the political ideology of Progressive Writers Association is unwelcome. Their position is further compromised by the early adventures of the Communist leaders. After the exodus of the Hindus from West Pakistan the Communist Party ceases to exist; for at least nine months (August 1947-April 1948). After the Partition, CPI tries to operate in Pakistan from its secretariat in India. However, CPI at its Calcutta session (February 28-
March 6, 1948) decides to establish a separate Communist Party in Pakistan. The CPI is hard-pressed for respectable and well-known leaders with roots in Pakistan. Finally, Sajjad Zaheer is named Secretary-General of the Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP) and All-Pakistan Progressive Writers Association (APPWA) is also formed in Lahore. From 1948 to 1954 the CPP operates as a technically legal party, but it is constantly under the surveillance of the Government of Pakistan. In March 1951 the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaqat Ali Khan, accuses the CPP of having conspired to overthrow the government with the aid of certain military officials of the Pakistan Army. Consequently, Sajjad Zaheer and Faiz Ahmad Faiz are arrested and tried along with Major General Akbar Khan, the Chief of Staff of the Pakistan Army, and other military officers. The trial results in the conviction of all the accused persons in January 1953; in July 1954 the CPP is banned throughout Pakistan.

At the same time, from 1951 to 1958 the Progressive Writers Association in Pakistan is harassed but allowed to exist. However the situation radically changes with the advent of the Ayub Khan’s military regime. President Ayub Khan strikes a mortal blow to the existence of the Progressive Papers Limited in 1958. The haven of the progressive writers is accused of collaborating with a foreign power (rumor identified it with China), and for this offence its total assets are forcibly sold at auction. With the take-over of the Progressive Papers Limited, the backbone of the All-Pakistan Progressive Writers Association is broken. Thus the embryo of an organized left, which indicated vitality and creativity through its literary forum in the first decade of Pakistan’s life, is almost totally destroyed in the late nineteen fifties. This defeat of the left shifts the political focus in Pakistan to the interplay of forces on the right. The defeat of the apotheoses of communism and socialism is reflected in the poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz.

In the book *Poetry, Culture and Poetics*, Akshaya Kumar rightly points to the fact how nature’s unbound bounties offer a befitting binary to the sense of enclosure that the poet suffers in prison. Faiz seems to be quite an exception to this view as his poem titled “Visitor” says that in prison:

My doors are always open  
I am never alone.  
First comes the evening-…
All these are my visitors
And I am not concerned.
My thoughts are elsewhere-
Over the seas-
Bruised, bleeding-
My land, my home. (Trans. Akshaya Kumar 232)

The poem “Pain Will Come”, an integral part of his prison poems, begins on a very conventional note of invoking beloved (with nook of her cheek and curls of her tresses) and pain, that “…will come, with noiseless tread and its red dart” (Trans. Rahmam 73). But the very next stanza invites the reader’s attention towards the inherent transience and mutability as: “This beloved whom you cherish in your loneliness/ Has come for a short while, and will soon go away/ …she will be gone, all others will stay” (Trans. Rahmam 73).

The poem gives a clarion call to the people to rise from passivity and thraldom and kindle the spark of revolution. The poem alternates between beloved/revolution, night/daybreak, commitment/love as Faiz invites the socialists “beyond the prison wall” to let them know “how soon it will be daybreak” and till then they will continue demonstrating their “righteous indignation” and “blazing anger” forcefully. In the same poem, the red colour of the rose is not simple reflection of the red brigade of communism but red in terms of colour imagery invokes two very reverse semiotics. In the first usage of the word red, we foresee a direct allusion to separation from beloved which makes the heart and its pain red whereas in the next evocation of the colour red of the rose, red becomes a bombed word and phrases like “blazing anger”, which of course is “endowed with warmth, and movement, as well as force?” (Trans. Rahmam 75).

A close analysis of Faiz’s prison poems makes the readers aware of the keen sense that Faiz tries to make of the outside world from within the prison. Confined in the prison, on his wings of poesy, he recreates the outer space not only for himself but also for his readers. The tropical images of moon, clouds, trees, fields, rose, horizon, boughs and stars come in direct confrontation with the blackness, darkness, dullness, pain, agony and grief (not only inside him) of humanity at large. His confinement makes him more impressionable and sensitive and his suffering more acute and piercing. The absence of physical freedom is
attenuated by sharper mental liberties which enable him to rise above the yearning and pining for his beloved to more sonorous avowal to the cause of humanism and marxism. Only in some of the poems by Faiz like “Prison Evening”, “A Lover to his Beloved” and “Remembrance” do we notice Faiz becoming personal as he feels that dream and memory of his beloved and his separation from her makes “in green nooks, blue shadows gleam/ vivid as the surge of pain”. (Trans. Rahmam 53).

“Prison Evening”, with its rich natural imagery (associated with romantics) begins as a stock love song but the beauty, the poem describes; is an embodiment of a powerful political optimism. The poem begins by personification of night “enchanting princess”. In spite of the almost magical, fairy-tale feel of this metaphor, it can be taken as an accurate description of his state of mind in prison, in which “time and distances of the outside world are negated; the sense of distance and nearness is obliterated” (qtd. in Korner, “Don’t Ask Me” web). He says that in prison “like the dawn of love, all the sensations are again aroused” and we feel this strongly with the second image, of the breeze whispering words of love: “The breeze passes by so very close/ as if someone just happened to speak of love (qtd. in Korner, “Don’t Ask Me” web). The contracting of distance occurs again in the third metaphor, of trees embroidering the sky with their weave of branches: “In the courtyard/ the trees are absorbed refugees/ embroidering maps of return on the sky (qtd. in Korner, “Don’t Ask Me” web).

Simon Korner in her write up in “Don’t Ask Me For That Love Again” alluding to the same poem by Faiz writes that in the conclusion, Faiz sounds like Keats’s statement “Beauty is truth, truth beauty” but unlike Romantics tendency of elevating beauty above all else, Faiz is reminding us of the power of the human spirit. The imagination cannot be imprisoned and human joy cannot be extinguished, even in the most unlikely of circumstances. The very fact that the poet is able to create such beauty from behind bars has become a victory, something heroic, and thus gives encouragement to all in the struggle for freedom.

In the poetry of Ali Sardar Jafri, prison and incarceration has had a deep impact. His collection of poems titled “Walls of Stone” deal with his prison experience. Jafri also begins the poem by tracing the scenario behind the colourless walls of stone which; “never cry” and
“never laugh” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 72). Jafri begins the poem quintessentially evoking the contrast between the inside and outside of the wall. He makes charming comparisons about his state of mind in the prison, where “screaming moments” are “wounded birds” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 70) and “solitude of soul” is like “slithering snake” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 69). Amidst such horror and sordidness, Jafri hoists the flag of revolution as he says that: “Red hands grow/ From the bosom/ Of stones” and “The pulse of silence/ resounds with ringing” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 80). The beauty of the poem lies in the way revolution is foreseen by Jafri. In the process of describing the bodies behind the bars, he charts out message of revolution. He says: “Their tears are balls of fire/ Their breaths, fierce winds/ Their speech is a storm/ Their resolve smiles in their brows (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 82). Jafri shows jump from romance to realism in the poem. The wordworthian description of natural bounties outside the walls of stone is overpowered by the message of rebellion and revolution towards the end of the poem.

Urdu poets beneath the veneer of their romantic heritage and prosodic sophistication affectively challenge the structures of oppression. Prison during Indian struggle for Independence, becomes a site which offers political resistance and throws challenge to the imperialistic designs of the British. Poetry of the progressives reverberates with two contradictory emotions simultaneously. On the one hand they critique the colonial exploitation and on the other hand they also scathingly attack the passivity of the citizens of the country. In wake of the fall of their lifelong ideology, their wounded conscience continues to torment them. They persistently fight these sorrows and continuously strive to subdue them and transform them into hope and happiness. And in doing so, they come to grips with those issues that confront their age. Hence, their poetry becomes a trenchant weapon of social realism.

Notes
1 It is a Marxist belief in the ability of the working class to forge its own destiny without the need for a revolutionary party or state to mediate or aid its liberation.
2 Khairiyat is an Urdu word for well-being.
3 Khatra is an Urdu word for danger.
4 It is a Marxist belief which gives lot of importance on self-reliance and self-employment. This philosophy shows skepticism towards industrialization and technology. The prime focus
lies on Gandhian concept of Swaraj.

Marxist Leninism is a marxist philosophy which believes that dictatorship of the proletariat is the first stage of moving towards communism. It emphasizes on the need of a vanguard party to lead the proletariat in this effort.