Chapter III

NATIONALISM AND BEYOND: REFLECTIONS IN URDU
PROGRESSIVE POETRY

Nationalism has been one of the most difficult and contentious ‘isms’ to talk about. The ambivalent features of this ‘ism’ and its contested meanings have drawn various sorts of reactions. The association of national literature and Indian freedom struggle is primarily connected with the idea of national identity – the self-awareness of the nation, its self-image and its value. Before the advancement of the British, we have a psychological and geographical idea of one India but it is quite loose in its conception owing to the pluralistic structure of Indian society. When we come in contact with the western knowledge, the new learning brings about tension which we see slowly developing because of the emergence of the colonialism as well as nationalism as a counter force. The emergence of nationalism on the one hand strengthens continuity and on the other hand urges to introduce reforms in the society.

Neil A. Martin in the article “Marxism, Nationalism, and Russia”, reviews the economic analysis of the philosophy of Karl Marx and how he situates a close relationship between marxism and nationalism. He says:

His fighting call, “Working-men of all countries, unite!”; his oft-quoted slogan that “the working-men have no country,” his observations about the rise of “a world literature,” and his estimate that the gap between nations was “daily more and more vanishing” – all attested to Marx’s basic confidence in the ability of socialism to overcome nationalism. (232)

Nationalism is, therefore a steppingstone to internationalism and prelude to appearance of classless society. He also realises that nationalism can be an important factor in freeing countries from yoke of oppression and barbarism. Marx by his emphasis on the role of nationalism in breaking down the old socio-economic order and creating large economic units clearly indicates that the workers have a stake in national movements. The Communist Manifesto dismisses the common dictum that communists desire to abolish countries and
nationality. Instead, the document gives the workers problem a national sanction when it declares:

Since the proletariat must first of all win political supremacy, must rise to become leading class of the nation, must constitute itself as the nation, it is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word. (32)

The progressive writers (influenced by Marx), their literature and its emphasis on classlessness is an offshoot of nationalism as for Marx and his followers nationalism is also a step forward in establishment of socialism. The dawn of twentieth century witnesses major antinomy in the way nationalism is perceived. In the nineteenth century, the idea of national identity emerges in literature and the Indian writings turn into voice of enlightenment. The element of colonial experience is so strong that writers cannot escape it and create their own world of fancy. At the time of our freedom struggle we show concern for a unified nation and take the word ‘nation’ in a singular sense of the world. But nationalism does not limit itself simply to patriotism and anti-colonial discourse rather it ramifies itself into complex and contradicting terrains of zealotry and intolerance.

The first phase of freedom struggle is marked by feeling of devotion towards the motherland. In this phase, the poets and writers seek inspiration from India’s spiritual glory but the revivalist trend is not entirely backward looking, though narrow in range and perspective. Mahatma Gandhi relates the age old values of asceticism and non-violence to the needs of modern mass movement and nation building. The poets emphasise search for beauty in man and nature and insist on creating a world of romantic individualism. They lay stress on our cultural traditions, human values, and spirit of freedom, imagination and idealism. In nutshell, the emphasis is on the establishment of universal humanism.

In the first twenty years of the twentieth century with the Partition of Bengal, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, the Rowlatt Act, the Khilafat Movement and other such events, the national struggle is intensified. In literature also the emphasis begins to shift from romantic individualism to social relations. The earlier romanticisation of the past begins to give way to more realistic and critical approach to existing social institutions. The traditional idealistic view of life also gradually yields to greater concern for the socio-economic conditions of
society. The poets whose poems romanticise freedom now take cognizance of the life of ordinary peasant, their poverty and the national oppression. The new outlook and consciousness is imbued with new optimism and a positive view of life, free from fatalism which has been bane of our outlook over the centuries. The pen of progressive writers also shows a similar shift. Soft, tender and quixotic ideas of medieval valor and sacrifice transform into more naturalistic understanding of the state of affairs.

Nationalism has had different meanings. It has been a contested terrain. Before Independence, nationalism of Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and Jinnah all have different meanings of nationalism yet their discourses are located on anti-colonial paradigm. In free India, nationalism manifests itself best when the basis of our nation rests on democratic and secular constitution. To clear the debris of British raj and rebuild a new nation is the goal of nascent and naive nationalism of few years after Independence. In the post-disillusionment period of Indian history, nationalism starts to manifest itself in jingoistic forms as supported by minority groups, tribes, castes, naxalites, and even language enthusiasts.

In late 1950s, the historical experience of resistance against colonialism fades in our memory and ideological edifice of nationalism is thwarted, threatened and undermined by the aspirations of new groups who try to assert their regional, linguistic and ethnic identities. Nationalism, a disputed term forms affiliations with corruption and untutored religious consciousness. The hue and cry of unemployment, failure of five year plans, minority rights, gender equality, castecism and parochialism ultimately complicate the nation building process and unemployment, red tapism, slow development, Hindu fundamentalism, caste wars and Muslim nationalism gain currency. The conceptualisation of nation-state has now become an ideological discourse which cannot be ignored. Anirudh Deshpande in his article, “Nationalism and Nation-State as a Discourse in India” pondering over the question of evolution and concept of nation-state asserts:

This discourse is legitimised by a collection of myths and symbols associated with a presumed national unity and its theoretically shared past. In due course all nations, dominated by the culture of their establishments and ruling classes, develop discourses predicated upon a selective interpretation of their written and lived history. Thus France, the ideal republic, nourishes its national myth
by an ample dose of the revolution and heroic anti-German images of the resistance. In Britain, at least up to 1939, the empire sustained the national myths. The US, another republic, is consumed by a belief in a so-called free world dominated actually by a hegemonic capitalism committed to anti-communism. (1442)

In contrast to the values of India’s freedom movement and the principles of Indian constitution, India is projected as an underdeveloped, barbaric Hindu rashtra. It also brings forward the notion of cultural nationalism, the earlier version of which was Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan in contrast to the Muslim communal version of, Urdu-Muslim-Pakistan. Cultural nationalism is contrasted to the notion of India as a nation state, as a geo political phenomenon, and carries the saffron flag as a symbol. It is because of the religious affiliations in politics, religion becomes the sole marker of culture. The rich concept of culture as the set of aspects of social and political life are reduced to the values derived from the brahmanical version of Hinduism. The politics of religion initiates the Hindi-Urdu controversy where language becomes one of the prime loci of national identity.

The progressive writers (at least most of them) never show affiliations to any one land. The literary, political and cultural life of these writers is fluid, flowing and overlapping. The very fact that Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Ali Sardar Jafri and Kaifi Azmi still remain popular and well-read across the borders bears testimony to their complex identity. Amidst so much of antipathy between the countries, the writers and their literature provide a basis of cross cultural bonding. Of the poets under scrutiny, Faiz shifts to Pakistan after Partition yet never practices jingoism in any form. He is disillusioned by the events taking place in both the countries in the name of development.

Partha Chatterjee while tracing the trajectory of nationalism writes:

In the 1950s and 1960s, nationalism was still regarded as a feature of the victorious anticlonal struggles in Africa and Asia. But …practices of economy and polity in the postcolonial states were disciplined under the conceptual rubric of “development” and “modernisation”, nationalism was already being relegated to the domain of particular histories of this or that.
...the emancipatory aspects of nationalism were undermined by countless revelations of secret deals, manipulations and the cynical pursuit of private interest. (5)

The nation building process is thwarted by selfish interest of the leaders of the country. It is revealed in economic crisis, growing corruption, often protracted civil wars, caste politics and increasing sophisticated and virtually unstoppable acts of terrorism. The progressive poets are dismayed at failure of the cherished goal of secular and democratic country.

For better understanding of this concept of nationalism in relation with the poetry of the progressive poets, we shall look into various manifestations of nationalism in Indian scenario since time immemorial. The chapter is sub-divided into different sections to map the responses of progressive poets with regard to language, religion and internationalism – the defining ingredients in the making of any nation.

Section I: Language, Nation and Progressive Poetry

“Pakistan was not created by Jinnah, nor was it created by Iqbal; it was Urdu that created Pakistan” (qtd. in Rai 264). These words are spoken in 1961 by Abdul Haq in the last year of his long and controversial life. The process of nation-building in South Asia in the first half of the 20th-century gets crystallised by this statement as language, otherwise an innocent and naive medium becomes a tool of unification and exclusion selected by nationalist groups. Language becomes an important aspect of nationalism when it starts to be associated with a particular community or group which further has its own political goals. Butler supports this theory and asserts that “language becomes one way of asserting criterial control over who belongs and who does not” (Butler and Spivak 59). The question of Urdu especially in India is layered with polemics of identification and wherefore needs to be examined historically in order to study as to how language becomes a sectarian symbol. It is also important to note how the progressive poets of our study evade any such separation from nation’s collectivity.

Nationalism is described by Paul Brass in the essay “Elite Interests. Popular Passions, and Social Power in the Language Politics of India”, as the struggle to find a “multi-symbol congruence within a constructed community” (184). In purview of Indian context, the two main symbols remain language and religion. Hindi is labelled as a Hindu language which is...
intrinsically Indian, while Urdu is viewed as the language of Muslims. Hindi and Urdu are the languages chosen by these respective groups as symbols to unify their supporters. When the languages do not live up to the hopes of the community, they are modified to suit their intended purpose. For the progressive poets, Urdu language is not separate from *hindustani* composite culture. Their poetry speaks volumes for their belief in syncretic inflections of Urdu language. The poets of our study do not show any bias towards the language. Urdu is their preferred medium of expression as it is part and parcel of their cultural make up. All of them have their writings in other languages like Hindi, English and Panjabi. Panjabi *nazms* of Faiz though small in number are equally popular. Kaifi Azmi has also penned extensively Hindi songs for films. Yet Urdu words and expressions remain an important part of his poetic repertoire. Ali Sardar Jafri continues to write in Urdu and English both. He continues to fight for the cause of Urdu as after Partition; he notices a diminishing popularity of the language. Jafri has written a beautiful poem, “*Taran-e-Urdn*” in which he asserts that Urdu is not a pan Islamic language as Urdu is that language: “... *Jisko Ganga ke jal ki paakeezgi mil ki Awadh ki thandi hawa ke jhokon main jinke dil ki kali khili*” (Jafri, MS 19) [Urdu got its sanctity from waters of Ganga/ In the cool breeze of Awadh, it blossomed (Translation mine)].

During the language controversies of the early 20th century, the publication of journals becomes a very important aspect in language and power game. Print market has been essentially seen as an integral part of rising of national consciousness since time immemorial. According to Benedict Anderson, “…print-capitalism created languages-of power of a kind different from the older administrative vernaculars” (43) and publishing industry plays a major role in this game of dominance of language. The journals printed in varied politically charged languages serve as the mouthpiece of the intelligentsia to the rest of the population, since members of the educated class are often important players in the nationalist movements of colonial states. The journals not only aid in the promotion of the language but also help in initiation of various discussions on political matters surrounding the interest of community. The process of nation building around language in India gathers momentum with the efforts of scholars like Abdul Haq, Mohsin ul-Mulk, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and forums like Urdu Defence Association (Urdu) and the impetus of Sangh Parivar, Bhartiya Sahitya Parishad, Hindi Sabha and various other bodies.

It is important to note that the select poets of our study never get swayed by the trends
of the market and nation. Faiz despite staying in Pakistan after Partition continues to write about *Hindustan* (not India) and its causes in Urdu language. The political, social and economic turmoil’s faced by India are commented upon by Faiz. He even writes a dirge on the death of Mahatma Gandhi. The progressive writer’s to a great extent resist the hegemonic interpellation of Urdu into Muslim centred community and make efforts to raise it to the stature of a universal language (of love and humanism) devoid of any religious and community affiliations. Kaifi Azmi is unable to comprehend the language controversy and freely uses both the languages to satiate his poetic and ideological muse. For these poets, end (establishment of communism) is important and not the medium and language. The poets work hammer and tongs to meet the much desired fate of their countries becoming a socialist state. Ali Sardar Jafri believes that Urdu runs in the blood streams of the India when he says: “rawaan hai hindustaan ki rag rag main khoon ki surkh dhar bankar” (Jafri, MS 19). [Urdu runs in the heart of country as blood runs in veins in our body (Translation mine)].

Religion, question of language and its relation with nationalism cannot be ignored in Indian context. The Hindu-Urdu debate sprouts from religious affiliations and still continues to be. But it is with the endeavours of organisations like AIPWA that Urdu still carries the secular flag. The members of the organisation purposely use Urdu language to the cause of universalism. They take up the herculean task of filtering languages of their religious and community biases. Kaifi Azmi chooses to use Hindi words in his poetry in order to show how Urdu and Hindi are intertwined and inseparable. Sanjay Kumar in his article “Faultlines of Hindi and Urdu” while delving on similarities between the two languages states:

There is no reason why Ismat Chughtai, Sahadat Hasan Manto, Sajjad Zaheer, Nazir Akbarabadi, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Akbar Allahabadi, Quruwatull in Haider and Kaifi Azmi should be read as part of Urdu canon and not of Hindi, as they use a language which is not heavily Persianised but has words which have long been assimilated into the common spoken idiom. Similarly, there is no reason why Rahi Masoom Raza and Abdul Bismillah should be considered as part of Hindi canon and not of Urdu. (18)

Urdu, once the language of masses, is being subjected to linguistic genocidal policies of the state owing to the parochial communal politics. As soon as Urdu is given the status of
national language of Pakistan, it is tagged as a language of Muslims. Kaifi’s approach regarding marginalization of Urdu is very broad. From the point of view of use of language in his poetry, he uses simple language free from the ornate Persianised words. By using simple Urdu, he liberates the language from the domination of Persian (that was the language of elites during the Muslim rule in India), and hence contributes in making Urdu the language of masses. One of the major contributions of progressive writers is the de-islamisation of Urdu language. Faiz and Ali Sardar Jafri also strive to refrain from the two overwhelming corporeality of the post-Partition literature in India and Pakistan i.e. cultural community and political nation. They write poetry that rises above these binaries and distinctions. Their poetry aims to capture the wholeness that surrounds the contested attributes of the language.

Languages are not sacred as they do not have any affiliation to religion and race. But in case of Urdu-Hindi controversy (as fostered by British divide and rule policies), language becomes one of the major forces that advance cultural nationalism. The insistence to promote Urdu over Hindi and vice versa informs us that, language recognition is a very significant way in which a particular community or religion can be excluded and included as a part of the nation. This qualm and insecurity further manifest itself in jingoist and ethnocentric tendencies which the world witnesses in form of Partition of India and Pakistan, ultranationalism and ghettoism worldwide. Edward Said also holds language as the linchpin in creation of nation as:

… with the growing discoveries of new lands by Europe it came to be realised that Language became less of a continuity between an outside power and the human speaker than an internal field created and accomplished by language users among themselves.(136)

Partition of the country encourages the self-willed creation of Indian nation where Hindustani culture makes representation in Hindi language. But language alone cannot be considered responsible for nationalism. I have argued that adoption of language is an important aspect of nation building. Language becomes a key symbol of identification. Literary and educational reform movements are established to transform language into a nationalist standard which can be used both to include some and exclude others. The mass appeal of these poets across the sub-continent cutting all boundaries and distinctions of religion, language and race, and
immense corpus of translation work being done on them speaks for the impact the progressive writers. In the hands of progressive writers, Urdu becomes a language of universal brotherhood. Ali Sardar Jafri is unable to comprehend Urdu-Hindi controversy and continually voices his concern for Urdu, a language without a home and state in India. He champions this cause throughout his poetic career with I.K. Gujral, Anand Narayan Mullah and others. In his autobiography, “November, My Cradle”, he expresses his love for both his mother and mother tongue (Urdu). In this poem, he compares his language Urdu to “…lullaby of my mother” which is safe with him and all his poems are witness “to this trust.” (Jafri, MJ 358).

The newly invented equation, which conflates script and language (linguistic identity) with religious identity, is seized and subsequently expanded by the latter-day cultural nationalists (Hindu as well as Muslim), for constructing separate and exclusive national identities. The Hindu nationalists increasingly view themselves as the original inhabitants of the nation and thus its true inheritors. As an extension of this logic, tracing a direct line of descent from Sanskrit, they claim ‘pure’ Hindi as their true language, which is contaminated with Arabic and Persian words due to the presence of Muslims on the Indian soil – who are now seen as invaders and usurpers of the true national heritage. Hence, the need arises to recover and restore pure Hindi to its true national status by purging it of all foreign influences. Similarly, need for a true national literature is realised, which will act as a secure foundation of a true national culture through which the nation can attain the highest social and cultural ideals of its existence. By this claim, Hindus and Muslims contend for a separate race and nation with their own national language and literature. It is in this increasingly shrill climate of competing nationalisms that Hindi and Urdu get split along religious lines with Hindi (in the Nagari script) becoming identified with Hindus, and Urdu (in Persian script) identified with Muslims.

The members of AIPWA strive against the incorporation of their literature under any such jingoistic terms. They make Urdu language of national literature. For them, national literature is reflected in humanism which is sans any boundaries and discrimination. Urdu under progressive banner produces national songs which infuse spirit of patriotism in all Indians. A major portion of our nationalist literature has been written in Urdu. The songs that enthuse spirit of revolt in the rebels fighting for cause of freedom are also written in Urdu. The
attempts to carve out monolithic literatures in terms of singular and exclusive literary traditions prevent a genuine understanding of our literary past. These literary histories refuse to take into account the deeply plural and heterogeneous nature of pre-colonial Indian society, marked as it is by a wide variety of linguistic, literary and cultural traditions and practices. Hindustani (not Indian) culture is composed of many layers. Each layer, though distinct and autonomous to some extent, is shaped and influenced by other layers in this formation. The boundaries between these layers are fluid and porous, each flowing seamlessly into others.

The very etymology of the word Urdu clears its meaning as it is a camp language. We find people with different backgrounds in a camp; similarly in Urdu we find conglomeration of different dialects and languages. Hindi and Urdu both borrow and share extensively with each other. The controversy surrounding the two is rooted in a much bigger issue, which is faith and religion. In order to understand this disputed history, we need to trace the genealogies of these two terms, Urdu, the Persianised Khari Boli in Persian script, and Hindi, the Sanskritised Khari Boli in Devanagari script. Sanjay Kumar in the article, “Faultlines of Hindi and Urdu” cites as to how the term Urdu is of fairly recent provenance. We find it being used for the first time in 1780 in the first *Diwan of Mushafi*, but not in the sense of a language different from Hindi. In fact, the terms Urdu and Hindi continue to be used interchangeably until the first half of the nineteenth century and, in some instances, even later up to the early decades of the twentieth century. Initially, Urdu, or *Urdu-e-Muallah* is used to refer to the city of Shahjehanabad (rather than a military encampment or bazaar attached to the Mughal court as some historians suggest) and not to a language. The term used for the language practised in the city was *Zuban-e-Urdu-e-Muallah* (speech of the exalted city). With the passage of time *Zuban-e-Urdu-e-Muallah* is first shortened to *Urdu-e-Muallah* and finally to Urdu.

Another very important aspect of the study is how the three select poets of our study view Urdu. The three poets cannot escape the cultural memory of Urdu which is once the lingua franca of North India. It is for the love of the language that they use Urdu. For them the language is never associated with their religion, Islam. There is no inherent association between language, script and religion until political groups form these associations. In the words of Paul Brass (in his essay, “Elite Interests, Popular Passions, and Social Power in the Language Politics of India”), the argument over script is meant to “impose a symbolic barrier
to communication between Hindus and Muslims, which doesn’t in fact exist” (196). However, as figurative concepts become more accepted by the masses, they become expressed in very tangible ways. The writers writing under the aegis of PWA in both the languages share the same concerns and themes in their works. At a close analysis of the works of select poets of our study, we find that language used by them is not highly persianised and speaks with a common idiom to Hindi and Urdu readers. The similarity between the two is so much that sometimes it difficult to find out whether a particular word is a Hindi or Urdu word. Ghazal, otherwise an urdu/ persianised form is now practised in Hindi. The boundary between the two becomes hazy and it clears the controversy that erupts in otherwise interlaced and integrated languages namely, Hindi and Urdu.

Section II: Religion, Nation and Progressive Poetry

The skewed and often schismatic relationship between religion and nationalism has always sparked interest. As my journey progresses, I find the relationship between the two reciprocal. Prima facie, nationalism seems to be antithetical to religion as it venerates emotion of fraternity and solidarity in face of any religious, ethnic and racial prejudice. Religion and nationalism are connected to each other. Religion helps to explain origin, power and distinctive character of nationalism. Religion also becomes a part of nationalism, and specifies modes of interpenetration and intertwining and lastly, there is a distinctively religious form of nationalism as espoused in the supra-nationalism that led to India- Pakistan divide and demands for separate state like Khalistan and Telangana.

Nationalism becomes analogous to religion in terms of faith and commitment to a common goal or enemy. This is manifested in early national movement of India where the faith and commitment are directed towards a common enemy: the British Empire. Anthony Smith in his book *Chosen Peoples* describes nationalism as religion since: “it entails a quest for a kind of this-worldly collective’salvation’, and also involves a ‘system of beliefs and practices that distinguishes the sacred from the profane and unites its adherents in a single moral community of the faithful’” (4-5). The second way of analysing relation between two seeks to specify how religion helps to explain nationalism. The influence of Catholicism on polish nationalism, Puritanism on English nationalism, Islam on Pakistan nationalism and Hinduism on Hindu nationalism cannot be overlooked. Antony Smith has focused much of his work on how religious motifs, narratives and symbols are used in political domain to
construct a nationalist ideology. On closer analysis of nationalist poetry and literature on
global scale, we find it abounding in religious imagery. Hutchinson and Lehmann in the book
Many are Chosen: Divine Election and Western Nationalisms are of the opinion that these
provide the “basic cultural and ideological building blocks for nationalists” (254-255).
Progressive poets also make abundant use of religious framework in order to appropriate the
secular and broader aspirations of nationalism. The invocation of Bharat Mata or motherland
in conventional coinages like Kali, Durga is most commonly found in Indian literature. The
usage of shared cultural and mythological appearances like Ram, Sita, Rahim and Allah
inform us of shared cultural and religious lineages that integrate the nationalist instead of
disserving them. Faiz, Kairi and Jafri incorporate varied religious and mythological symbols
in order to build upon a nationalist enterprise which will speak of common and shared
culture. People of all religions, sects, castes and trades relate to their poetry as all of them
form connection with the masses.

The relationship between religion and nationalism is not simple and linear as
discussed in the previous paragraph. There is another dimension to the relationship between
the two which goes beyond the fusion of nationalist rhetoric with religious imagery, or
formulation of nations claim in religious or religiously tinged language. There exists a
distinctively religious type of nationalist program, which represents a distinct alternative to
secular nationalism. Islamist nationalism or Jihad and Hindu nationalism exorted by Sangh
Parivar illustrate this form of nationalism. In such cases, the religious community wanting
power awaken people to their true identities (based on religion) and bring culture and polity
into close alignment. They protest against the alien rule and seek to purify the polity of
corrupting forms of alien influence (moral, cultural, or economic). The territorial nation-state
remains the dominant political reality of our time and is one of the factors that spearheaded
the holocaust of India-Pakistan partition.

The literature of progressive writers copiously castigates the vulgar form of
nationalism as it is against the very ontological structure of nationalism which according to
Antony Smith (in his book The Theories of Nationalism) is “polycentric” and “pluralistic”
(158, 170). The culturally exclusivist and aggressive militarist notion of nationalism is well
illustrated by the events that leads to the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992. Their literature
of progressives has given expression to the major national events such as the Freedom
Struggle, Partition, the process of nation-building and its accompanying disillusionment.

Section IV: Freedom Struggle and role of Progressive Poetry

C.M Naim in his article “The Consequences of Indo-Pakistan War for Urdu Language and Literature” comments on Indian literature at the rise of progressive movements by saying that:

…it was the period when the struggle for political independence was at its peak and, despite the separate demands of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, there was a common goal before the entire community: to make the British leave India. This made it possible for all the major Urdu poets, whether they belonged to the Progressive Movement or not, to express patriotic sentiments without becoming involved with the issue of the partition of the country along communal lines. (270)

Progressive poets witness important moments that do not recur in the lives of the nations, and therefore the writings of these poets become the echo of the heartbeats of the people, and revolution starts to flow out of their pen. In the writings of Kaifi Azmi, we witness journey from restlessness to mature understanding and response. He takes to task the British loyalists and toadies in several of his poems. These poems may not be his best works but serve relevant purpose of instigating spirit of patriotism in the hearts of millions of people. In the following poem, Kaifi shows his agitation at British loyalist and chief minister of Travancore, Mr Ramaswamy Iyer who starts to play with the blood of freedom fighters. He also joins the freedom fighters drenched in blood and says:

Yeh raja yeh Angrez ke meherban
Hain Bharat mein England ke pasban
Jahan pai hai rehzanon ne aaman
Woh deewar woh dar girate chalo
Baghawat ka parcham uthate chalo

[These kings, these well-wishers of the British
These are the guards for the British in India

125
Where the dacoits have found shelter
Bring down that wall, that door
Keep flying high the flag of revolt] (Trans. Hasan Abdullah, “Kaifi Azmi: A Heart” 28)

The poem is written when Kaifi is unable to contain his anger and restlessness towards the British Raj. In the poem titled “Telangana”, Kaifi supports the cause of toiling people who revolt against the British toadies. He says:

Yeh shellr yari yeh tajdari waqood par bar ho gai hai
Jafa ki khoogar ghareeb dunya jafa se bezar ho gai hai
Zameen har chhawani nigalne pe aaj tayar ho gai hai
Ke bhooq bedar ho gai hai

[This pseudo-life, this glamour, has become a burden on existence
Poor mankind accustomed to suffering is now fed up with tyranny
The earth is ready to swallow every cantonment today
Now that its hunger has awakened] (Trans. Hasan Abdullah, “Kaifi: A Heart Which” 28)

Similar poems are written by other progressive poets like Sahir, Jafri, Josh and Makhdoom as the anger and frustration of being a slave nation overwhelms the poets. Ali Sardar Jafri in 1936, at a mushaira recites the poem “The Society” (Samaj), which ends with these lines.

For how long will my life be deceived by desires?
For how long will poverty be deluded by toys?
A spring awaits to gush forth from the fissures in the rock;
The earth is restless to take a new turn. (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger web)

During the same period, he writes “Rebellion” (Baghavat). The very title of the poem evokes feeling of anger. The poem begins with the following lines: “Rebellion is my religion, rebellion my idol,/ Rebellion is my messenger, rebellion my god” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger web). These poems by Jafri are written against the British Raj and it leads to his expulsion
from Aligarh University. The progressive poets openly oppose the involvement of Indians in the British War. The antipathy is expressed in the poem, “Imperialist War” (Samraji Laraai) by Ali Sardar Jafri in which he says:

The ways of the tavern have changed,
The beautiful eye of the Saki has turned against us.
The earth is trembling with the thunder of cannons,
The earth is being consumed in a fire.
For how long will the Raj of tyranny last?
For how long this throne, for how long this crown? (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger web)

Though Jafri admits that such protest poems are not his best work, yet he is proud that they serve a cause. Benedict Anderson observes in his book, *Imagined Communities* that till Second World War, nationalism has grounded itself firmly in a territorial and social space inherited from the pre-revolutionary past. It is only after transcending this stage of imagined community that nationalist imagining starts showing greater and stronger affinity with religious imaginings. It is in this stage that havoc of Partition takes place in the country. The change in circumstances on national front affects the writings of Progressive poets as they are the mouthpiece of the changing times.

**Section III: Partition and the Poetry of Progressives**

There is a visible shift in the thematic concerns of the writings of the progressive writers as patriotism gives way to disillusionment which further gets transformed into sectarianism and political, social and economic failures. In the given purview of violence and parochialism, Tom Nairn rightly ascertains his stake on nationalism by pointing that:

“Nationalism” is the pathology of modern developmental history, as inescapable as “neurosis” in the individual, with much the same essential ambiguity attaching to it, a similar built-in capacity for descent into dementia, rooted in the dilemmas of helplessness thrust upon most of the world (the equivalent of infantilism for societies) and largely incurable. (347)
The disillusionment that blankets the country post-Partition has been focus of many poems of the select poets of my research. Faiz is most vociferous in vocalising his disenchantment with independence. In 1951, he writes a poem “Subah-e-Azadi” (The Morning of Freedom) in which he directly addresses Independence and alludes to Partition of India and Pakistan in the following lines: “This stained light, this night-bitten dawn/ This is not the dawn we had yearned for” (Trans. Kamal 36). Faiz uses very coarse yet apt constructions to point out to the fact that in these times of disillusionment, we still need to march forward as “najate-deed:o-dil ki ghadi nahien ayi/ chale chalu ki wah manzil abhi nahien ayi” (Faiz, SSH 166) [The time for liberation of heart and mind has not come as yet/ continue your arduous journey (Trans. Kamal 36)].

A streak of pessimism and doubt can be felt in the opening lines of his poem “August 1952”. Faiz questions the very premise of the Independence as freedom is stained with so much of blood of both the communities. He is bewildered if this victory is worth the celebrations. He questions the celebration and felicity in the name of Independence and freedom, and says:

Roshan kahien bahaar main imkaan hue to hain
Gulshan main chak chand gareban hue to hain
Ab bhi khijaan ka raaz hai lekin kahin kahin
Goshe chaman chaman main ghazalkhwaan hue to hain

[Evident at last have become possibilities of spring,
In the flower-garden of few mantles have been torn;
It is till the reign of autumn, but here and there
Comers in the garden path have become songs uttering.
Night’s darkness has remained in the same place, but
A few colours of morning have become feather-scattering.] (Trans. Kiernan 179)

The usage of the word “lekin” highlights poet’s predicament. The poem is replete with words like “magar” and “lekin” and these interventions allow us to question the whole edifice of Independence which for Faiz is completely devoid of its cherished dream. A similar strain of abandonment informs Faiz’s poem “Tak e-Daar Ka Mausam” in which he appeals the
people of both the countries to be patient as “nahien hai koi bhi mausam, bahar ka mausam” (Faiz, SSH 171) [no season is season of spring (Translation mine)]. He reinforces his stance of patience and perseverance as these are testing times for people in both the countries. Faiz uses ghazalic analogies in one of the couplets and compares absence of beloved to absence of the desired dream of democracy. In such difficult and tumultuous times, he opines that: “yeh raks-e-saye-e-sarvo-ch’mur ka mausam” (Faiz, SSH 171) [Season of blossoming trees and their shadows is least seductive (Translation mine)]. The choices offered by this season are different as this is the season of gallows, passion and prison. After Partition, Faiz is optimistic that war, brutalities and hatred that have been perpetrated in the name of religion shall subside and people will be united again at emotional level.

In the poem, “Sar-e-Maqtaf” structured in the style of *qawwali*, Faiz espouses his hope and commitment for cordial relations for the divided countries. In the last quatrain of the same poem, he juxtaposes the gory, dark night of Partition with azure, bright morning star. Faiz waits to watch “jo is saa-at main pinha hai ujala hum bhi dekhenge/ jo fakr-e subah par chamkega tara hum bhi dekhenge” (Faiz, SSH 173) [That which is hidden under this darkness, we shall see that light/ that morning star which will twinkle bright, we shall see (Translation mine)]. Faiz exhibits his interest in watching the dawn of secular democracy in both the countries.

Appalled by the Partition, Jafri writes the poem “Deceit (August 15, and onwards)”. In this poem, he writes in the style of Faiz’s poem “Subah-e Azadi” as he feels that the independence is “…shade of delusion”, “…magic spell”, “snare of our leader’s incompetence” and “calamity of our desires” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 38-40). The aforementioned phrases diffuse throughout the poem and crystallise the void and abyss created by the treacherous designs of our leaders. The discourses of progressive writers evoke composite and shared culture and it is no way in sync with the cultural chauvinism of the west. Ali Sardar Jafri openly informs his appreciation of Kabir, Meera, Vivekananda and Rumi but never lets his spirituality become extension of “special national vocation of the Indian”1. Faiz writes a very poignant account of his visits to Lahore in his poem, “O City of Lights”. He evinces his disappointment and pain at the outspread pessimism, hatred and nihilism that had drowned the “City of Dreams”. In one of his impressionistic poems “Dareecha”, Faiz brings to our understanding the religious bigotry prevalent globally where: “Har aye din yeh
khudavadgane- mehro-jamaal / Lahoo main gark mere gamkade main ate hain” (SSH 198).

[Every now and then, masters of love and beauty/ Drenched in blood come to my alley (Translation mine)]. He is appalled at the wasted sacrifice of the revolutionaries who: “Aur har aye din meri nazron ke samne inke! Shaheed jism salamat uthave jate hain (SSH 198).

[Every now and then, in front of my eyes/ Their martyred bodies are picked up (Translation mine)]. The treatment meted out to the lovers of nation and its unity pierces the heart of the poet.

Despite the best efforts of Faiz to enthuse a spirit of cultural unity between the two countries, he fails in Pakistan as he is amongst the minority writers who still write about India. Faiz stirs the hearts of millions with his melodies (enthused with hope) as he still has romantic vision of a return to a beloved homeland. Symbolizing optimism, his poetry revives disheartened nationalists as the poem aims to revive belief in a destination which has yet not been realised. The fulfilment of unrealised promise marks even his most pessimistic poem “Freedom’s Dawn” with its important ideological rejection of the pock-marked dawn of freedom from colonial rule. The insecurities of minority in terms of religion are not reflected in the poetry of the select poets. The insecurities targeted by them are of different nature. In milieu of such religious spite, they are not concerned about their brothers of religion but are anxious about the hopelessness of their comrade brothers who have envisioned an entirely different country for humanity.

Ali Sardar Jafri’s poem “Murder of the Sun” also addresses communal frenzy by invoking a pathological atmosphere where: “Twilight stained by murder of the sun / Horizon stabbed, evening blood soaked” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 246). The very title of the poem is evocative of a sin, the assassination of sun: the purveyor of light. And in absence of light and knowledge, “night triumphs from earth to heaven”. In the night of ignorance and crazed rabidity; “Trust is gone” and “we can only bless the killer” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 246). In atmosphere of such prevalent maladies, Jafri an adherent to spiritualism senses a void, a morbid preoccupation as faith is no longer a cherished term and has taken insidious forms when there is: “No bow to bend, no idol to bend to/ …with no beauty to keep faith in (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 246). Jafri highlights the present crisis where humanity has been estranged from its metaphysical roots. Consequently, inertness and passivity holds us and we have: “no will to live, no urge to enjoy”. (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 246)
Ali Sardar Jafri uses emblematic ghazalic conventions to invoke the paradox located in passion of any sorts. Though at surface level, Jafri’s couplet appears to be accosted to beloved, yet on a deeper analysis the couplet evolves to be an address to a universal problem of inordinate love and passion (which openly manifest itself in religious frenzy that results in the Partition of the two countries). In the couplet, Ali Sardar Jafri digs at the strange conventions of “…the sacrifice of passion” as: “The heart is offered to the murderer/ Before the offering of the head” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 258). He hints at the emotional agony caused by Partition which has affected hearts of millions of people.

Faiz speaking for the emotional damage starts the poem “This is the Moment to Mourn Time” by painting a picture of the downfall of physical and emotional environment of the country. The poems seem to be his first impressions after havoc of Partition is meted out. To begin with, Faiz builds up on the harm that has been caused to nature. He points as to how nature is also mourning its bifurcation in the following lines:

The sky’s rivulet has come to a standstill.
Look, the moon’s sad coloured boat
Has reached the horizon’s edge.
…All the winds are fast asleep.
… All sounds have suddenly stopped. (Trans. Kamal 40)

Faiz traces the morbidity and death like coldness by using words like “standstill”, “sad” and “asleep”. In the concluding lines of the poem, Faiz begins to delineate the emotional and mental havoc caused by Partition. The aimlessness, spiritlessness and indifference of the people are cogently evoked by the poet in the following lines. The poet says:

People leave the town as day dwindles.
There is neither a path nor a destination.
Travellers are in no mood of travelling.
The moment is a broken link (Trans. Kamal 40)

In such state of depredation, the title of the poem is rightly apprehended. The poem directly addresses the holocaust of Partition in the last few lines of the poem in which Faiz in order to
draw the love-hate relationship weaves a garment of self on which he traces “...blots of remorse and love’s embroidery” together with “…runnels of tears, blood-stains, claw tracks” (Trans. Kamal 42). Faiz feels at bay when it comes to dealing with this garment as he is at loggerheads with himself as:

Sometimes in passion
I want to tear it into shreds
And other times
I want to kiss it
And put it on again. (Trans. Kamal 42)

Progressive writer’s address important theme of nation building in their poems. The literature of progressives envisions the democratic and secular future for their countries. But they face defeat in this front also as both the countries struggle with adversities caused by their own rulers and representatives.

Section IV: Progressive Poetry and the Disillusionment in Nation-Making
The disillusionment that frequents the writings of progressives is not circumscribed to the catastrophe of Partition only. The tyranny, dictatorship and corruption that lead both the countries post-Independence equally concerns them. Tom Nairn, author of the path-breaking The Break-up of Britain remarks: “The theory of nationalism represents Marxism's great historical failure” (317). The progressive thinking people view nationalism taking form of marxism as prophesied by Karl Marx. But events turn out to be different as the dream of classless society and reformism gets a strong jolt owing to rampant corruption at personal, political and economic level.

The hopefulness of Faiz in the wake of failures at political and national level takes to violent forms of writing. His poems titled, “Tarana”, “Hum Dekhenge” and “Nisar Main Teri Galiyon” take up cudgels against the tyrannical rulers and despots who have been ruling Pakistan at different point of time. In the Ghazal “August 1955” which he writes from Karachi on 14 August, Faiz uses an acerbic tone which pierces the otherwise flowery language of ghazal tradition. He cautions the tyrants to rejoice for some more time as the rebels have not yet come out to rescue the country. Faiz in the last couplet of the same poem
shows mixed feelings of pathos and anger towards the self-seeking countrymen who have lost the ability to act. Therefore, he goads the fellow people and says: “Phir se bujh jaenge shamaen jo hawa tez chali/ Lake rakho sar-e-mehjil koi khurshid abke” (Faiz, SSH 205). [The lamps will douse in face of strong winds/ Arrange for sun in order to continue the gathering (Translation mine)]. He also shows his apathy towards the rulers who have loosened the basest instincts in society. Feroz Ahmed in his article “Faiz Ahmed Faiz” featured in The Economic and Political Weekly says that everything that Faiz abhorred now has official sanction. “It was an Orwellian world in which truth had been made to stand on its head” (2071). Faiz depicts the debasing irony in a poem written in Samarqand a month after Bhutto's hanging:

Ub fogihan-i-haram daste-i-sanam choomaingay
Sarv qud mitti bay bonon kay qadam choomaingay.

[Now the theologians of the holy places will kiss the hand of idols
Those with the grace and stature of a cypress tree will kiss the feet of clay dwarfs.] (Trans. Feroz Ahmed)

Incarceration is an important theme in work of Faiz. “Aaj Bazaar Mein Pa Ba Jaulan Chalo” (“Let us walk with fetters in the street”) is written in 1959 when Faiz is once again imprisoned under Ayub's martial law. He is taken to the Lahore Fort's torture cell passing through the streets of Lahore in a horse driven cart with his fetters on. In this poem, Faiz exhibits Sufi like non-conformism and motivates his countrymen to show strong resistance to the despotism prevalent in the country. Faiz's book Sar-e-Wadi-e-Sina (In the valley of Sinai) is the outcome of his poems written between 1965 and 1971. The collection also includes two thematic poems, “Lahu ka Suragli’ and “Zindan Zindan Show-E-Anal Haq” written on the occasion of the firing on the Karachi people protesting against the rigged election of Ayub Khan as president defeating Miss Jinnah, the sister of the founder of the country. He says: “Na mudai na shahadt hisab pak hua/ Yeh khoon-e-khak nashinan tha rizq-e-khok hua. [Neither plaintiff nor witness but the decision was made/ It was the blood of the wretched of the earth so it mingled with the earth (Trans. Afzal Mirza web)].

Kaifi Azmi in the poem “Circle” shows same signs of despondency and hopelessness
by using diverse mythological symbols. He quintessentially asserts that he has lost hope in any future for the country as the life of this country is “…imprisoned like Sita,” (Trans Varma 10). In face of such cynicism, Kaifi suggests in another poem, “Courage” to uphold their natural self as: “You are lightning, continue to strike” (Trans Varma 31). Kaifi uses natural images in the poem like sun, moon and lightning to enthuse a spirit of revolt in his fellow countrymen. The sentiment of revolt has been the characteristic feature of the inhabitants of this country as it is the spirit of revolt in them that has helped them in ousting British from India. Kaifi is outraged at the helplessness of his countrymen who are being victimised by their own people as they have turned despots like the British after attaining power.

Ali Sardar Jafri also addresses the problem of passivity in the poem “Ardent for Thirst”. The title itself is suggestive of Jafri’s call for action as he wonders: “Where the old comrades are” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 284). He begins the poem by questioning the change in the behaviour of those who “…wanted to change the world,” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 284). He is alarmed to witness how the countrymen have become deaf to the voice of their own consciousness as they are bewitched by “the velvet of opulence” and “The silk of beggary” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 284). He ushers his brother comrades (over brimming with arrogance, greed and covetousness) to “blaze up”, “burn with courage” and “rise again” like phoenix from its ashes (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 284).

The poem “One More Dream” by Ali Sardar Jafri recoils at the inertia and helplessness enveloping the country. He shudders at the supine attitude that his countrymen have exhibited after Independence. Inertia and complacency have shaken the very roots of rebellion and change. Jafri rightly posits the state of affairs as “real burning wasteland” of “helpless sands” and scaring images” where: “Dreams forged in our heart’s naïve fire/ Now lie beyond fancy’s boundaries” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 130). In the same poem, Jafri draws parallel between wrecked condition of our country and withered human anatomy by outlining phrases such as “forlorn smiles”, “severed hands”, “blind eyes” and “tongue” that “balks at speaking”. This diseased body illustrate the sickness unfolding in our country where: “questions go begging from door to door/ but answers slip off like convicts” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 132). Kaifi Azmi in the poem “Akhri Marhala” laments the defeated dream of bourgeoisies’ reformism in the struggle for Independence. He castigates the leaders for
will be victorious”. Consequently, no talk will be needed as “hate will leave forever/ giving way to affection” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 278). For Jafri idea of nationalism is similar to the theological nationalism of Sri Auribindo. But it is not primarily Hindu nationalism instead he situates it on the works and philosophy of rich spiritual Vedic treasure found in India. For him, there can be no true emancipation without the latter. He argues that as long as man is still governed by his senses, he cannot claim to be liberated. Without control of the senses, independence is meaningless. This interconnection of spiritual and political liberation is a major theme in his poems.

Faiz feels it necessary to side with his belief in socialism and humanism and uncompromisingly wages war against tyranny and imperialism. In the specific conditions of Pakistan, he struggles against the dehumanising manifestations of nationalism peculiar to his environment. The pathological hatred for India and its concomitant religious bigotry is one of the major challenges, writers like faiz have to face. He continues to work for friendship between Pakistan and India, and is held in very high esteem in India. The poem “Remembrance” is written in quintessential manner of Lucknawi school of Urdu poetry as it uses extended metaphors and symbols. Faiz uses analogies of desert, mirage, rose, jasmine and of course love. The “Jaan-e-Jahan” or “Love” of the poem is beloved country whose sweet, fragrant and warm memories of union puts him into such a trance that Faiz says: “...I am deluded into believing/ that there never was any separation” (Trans. Kamal 44). Faiz believes that love for composite Hindustan still comes to him “…smouldering in its own fragrance”. Faiz firmly upholds love for the country of his birth as the same love “…in midst of thorn bushes/ bloom the rose and jasmine/ of your beauty” (Trans. Kamal 44).

In the poem “Return from Dhakha”, Faiz clamours his disappointment at the mishaps that follow India and Pakistan’s war of 1965. The partition of Pakistan and Bangladesh is the last jolt in establishment of communal harmony in the country. Faiz disapproves of India’s involvement in the act. The poem is impregnate with impressions of loss, injury and remorse. On his visit to Dhakha, Faiz grasps a sense of unease arising out of breach of promised commitment. In the opening couplet of the poem, Faiz reveals his defeat as alienation continues to brew amongst the countrymen who have been united in terms of faith and love for such a long time. He shows his doubts as to whether the estranged brothers will ever be able to establish cordial relationship. He also quips: “khoon ke dhabbe dhulenge kilni
barsaton ke baad” (how many rainy seasons will it take to clean the splotches of blood). The answer to both these questions is elusive to him. His heart yet strongly yearns to see: “bedaag sabze ki bahaar” (spotless garden) (Trans. Kamal 96). Faiz in the poem shows his earnestness at starting a dialogue yet admits his failure at the hands of “shikast-e dil” (defeated spirit). The poem is an expression of bottled up desire for retribution. Faiz sums up his personal agony and that of many inhabiting the soil of Pakistan and Bangladesh as their friendship is torn asunder by the war. The final lines are: “Un se jo kehne gave the Faiz, jaa sadqa kiye/ Ankahi hi reh gayi vo baat, sab baatoon ke baad”. [Faiz, what you had gone to say, ready to offer everything, even your life/ Those healing words remained unspoken after all else had been said (Trans. Agha Shahid Ali 87)].

In another poem on Bangladesh titled “Bangladesh II”. Faiz uses imagery of red colour of blood to bring forth the crimson deeds and barbaric days that characterise world politics at large. The bifurcation of Bangladesh is a jolt to his belief and he envisages a world where: “The moon erupted with blood, its silver extinguished/ The sky promised a morning of blood/ And the night wept only blood” (Trans. Agha Shahid Ali 77). The hard hit stroke makes Faiz vulnerable and he is unable to see silver lining of hope in these scarlet clouds. Yet in the end of the poem, he musters up hope amidst enveloping passivity and ushers his fellow countrymen to: “wash this blood forever from my eyes” (Trans. Agha Shahid Ali 77). The poem is also a polite entreaty to propel belief in the doctrine of peaceful co-existence.

In 1970s, the tone and tenor of his poems becomes very coarse as events taking place globally come in clash with his ideologies. His country Pakistan reels under military rule where human rights are stifled. He expresses his disappointment in the poem titled “Tooti Jahan Jahan Par Kamand’ in which he says:

\[\begin{align*}
Raha na kuch bhi zamane main jab nazar ke pasand 
Teri nazar se kiya rishtu: nazar paiband 
...nahi raha harme dil main ik sanam batil 
Tere khayaal ke lat-o-maanat ki saugand (SSH 248)
\end{align*}\]

[Nothing pleasing to the eyes is left in this world 
What relation do I keep with you and your beautiful eyes

138
...not even a thing dear to my heart is spared
I swear by the Gods of your imagination] (Translation mine)

The tone of dismay is evident in the poem as Faiz gives preference to blindness over sight in the present global situation where all the ideals he and his fellow comrades strive for, are on the threshold of decay. One can notice a constant switch in the treatment of the massive despair of Partition and disillusionment that follows it. The tone of their works fluctuates from soft, hopeful, tender treatment to that of a highly charged, enraged and caustic disposition. The vacillation exposes their own ambivalence and bewilderment at the sorry plight of their own countries. This conflict has its roots in the primordial concept of nationhood, where it becomes difficult to lose hope for redemption of their own motherland. The select poets along with other progressive poets remain steadfast to their cause of nationalism which according to them leads them closer to their socialist dream.

Section VI: Internationalism: Trait of Progressive Writings

The Progressive Writers Association comes into being when freedom movement is at its peak, and the initial writings focus on the struggle against British occupation. Internationalism in the writings of the progressive poets takes two forms: interrogation and critique of colonialism and its related issues and admiration for the Soviet revolution. Progressive poets look up to Soviet model with a hope that India’s freedom will result in similar socialist society. The idea of Third world solidarity furthers the cosmopolitanism of progressive poetry. The empathy for the suffering of others, the politically subjugated, the economically exploited and the sexually oppressed become the basis for solidarity across cultures and nationalities. The radical humanism of progressives is grounded in an acute awareness of human suffering.

The Czarist revolution of Russia widens their horizon and under marxist influence, terms such as freedom, justice, patriotism acquire a new definition and a more concrete content. There is a growing concern amongst the writers about the class structure, based on marxist interpretation of society on the one hand and Gandhian humanism on the other hand. Nationalism after Independence of the country accepts revivalism as one of the major factors inducing love and regard and concern for the change like democracy and elections, industrialization and urbanization and politicization. These may be taken together since they
all effect a social change by weakening the traditional hierarchical structure and also strengthen the desire of human dignity.

The transformation of nationalism into socialism is not as simplistic as it seems. Since World War II, every successful revolution has defined itself in national terms. Eric Hobsbawm is perfectly correct in stating that:

Marxist movements and states have tended to become national not only in form but in substance, i.e., nationalist. There is nothing to suggest that this trend will not continue. Nor is the tendency confined to the socialist world. Almost every year the United Nations admits new members. And many 'old nations,' once thought fully consolidated, find themselves challenged by 'sub'-nationalisms within their borders - nationalisms which, naturally, dream of shedding this sub-ness one happy day. The reality is quite plain: the 'end of the era of nationalism,' so long prophesied, is not remotely in sight. Indeed, nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time. (qtd. in Anderson 2)

Faiz has written several poems appreciating Lenin. Ali Sardar Jafri has composed odes to Paul Robeson. Disarmament and the dangers of nuclear war also engage the attention of Jafri throughout his poetic career. Kaifi Azmi has also written poems critiquing US involvement in Vietnam. Appreciation and admiration of Soviets ideology is evident in his poem “Fateh Berlin” in which Kaifi pictures the red army advancing towards Berlin; and ultimately, the red flag flying over Berlin in May 1945. In such a moment of epochal import, Kaifi says:

Dhal gai shab, subh-e ishrat ka payam aa hi gaya
Aftab-e Masko bala-e baam aa hi gaya
Jin ko chid thi ilm-o hikmat se adab se rag se
Ho gaye thande ulajh kar zindagi ki aag se
Jashn yeh hawwa ka hai aur eid yeh adam ki hai
Karnama Roos ka hai fataah ek alam ki hai

[The night is over: the message of the morning of happiness has come

140
The sun of Moscow is shining on the horizon
Those who detested knowledge, literature and art
They now stand defeated after having had an encounter with life
This is the celebration of Eve, and this is the Eid of Adam
This is the heroic work of Russia, but it is the triumph of mankind] (Trans. by Hasan Abdullah, “Kaifi: A Heart Which” 28)

The transformation of the nationalist dream into socialist dream has its roots in their admiration for the Soviets ideology and it is the same ideology of belief in universal humanism and egalitarianism that fosters their internationalist vision. Faiz brings a new internationalism to Urdu poetry. Urdu poets earlier primarily have targeted and given voice to the Muslims inhabiting the subcontinent. This is not to say that they have eulogised them biasedly. The progressive writers of the subcontinent, inhabiting both India and Pakistan trespass that limitation and pronounce the oppression and suffering of all and sundry. The evocative poem by Faiz, “We Who Were Executed” is written when Julius and Ethel Rosenberg are electrocuted in 1953 on charges of being soviet agents in US. The poem is an excellent example of the growing internationalism of the progressives. Similarly, “Come Africa” is an ode to oppressed people everywhere. In the poem, Faiz acknowledges the efforts of the freedom fighters in Africa and invokes their very cultural symbols though at the same time they do not sound racist.

Ali Sardar Jafri also writes poems which promote the cause of freedom of many Third World countries. The poem, “Negro, My Brother” is a tribute to all the Africans fighting for the cause of equality and liberty. Jafri casts the black body of the Negro in most powerful words comparing their bodies and endeavours to “swirling black clouds”, “flash of black lightning” and “sea of black limbs” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 324). The naturalistic analogies exude power of the orients to crush all forms of imperialism. The poet is of the view that these brawny and herculean army “can turn into spear” when need arises (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 324). The title of some of his poems by Jafri like “Afrechi Ladhi”, (The African Maid), “Habshi Mera Bhai”, (The Abyssinian- My Brother), “Louis Aragon”, “Pablo Neruda”, “Julio Curie”, “Paul Robb’s” and “Elia Ehrenberg” foregrounds his contribution on an international plane cutting across barriers of language, race and the nation. Faiz writes with equal passion about Palestine, Namibia and Chile. In each of these pursuits, he justifies his
As a writer or an artist, even though I run no state and command no power, I am entitled to feel that I am my brother’s keeper, and my brother is the whole of mankind. And this is the relevance to me of peace, of freedom, of détente and the elimination of the nuclear menace. But out of this vast brotherhood, the nearest to me and dearest are the insulted and humiliated, the homeless and the disinherited, the poor, hungry and sick at heart. (qtd. in Jalil, “The Urdu Internationale” web)

The poem “To Those Students” is addressed to the students of Iran who have become victim to the brute show of force by the Iranian monarch after the unsuccessful bid of Dr Mossadegh to topple him. It is a moving poem full of pathos and is written in highly figurative language in which Faiz delineates the figure of a monk asking for alms. The monk in the poem is “arje ajam” [Land of Iraan] and passion and zeal for Independence that the philanthropist students of the country are sweltering with, is the fulfilment of the demands of the country. The sacrifice of these students is compared to golden coins that have filled the bowl carried by the mendicant country. Faiz uses words like “kundan”, “saphire”, “silver” and “coral” to draw attention towards their priceless endeavours. The imagery shows a shift from golden colour (symbolic of fire) to other sober colours like white, blue and silver (symbolic of peace and serenity). It is emblematic of the sacrifice of the students who had burnt themselves dousing the fire of colonialism.

Faiz in the following lines articulates as to how the battle of these zealous students against this fire of oppression will welcome life of peace and tranquillity in their country in form of “...jeest ki rani ka jhoomar” (the ornament of the queen of life) and “aman ki devi kangar” (the bracelet of the goddess of peace) (Faiz, SSH 180). The invocation of powerful feminine figures like queen and goddess enunciates Faiz’s belief in quintessentially Hindu mythological practices where women are equated to Shakti. Despite being a Muslim inhabiting a highly fundamentalist soil, Faiz continues to ventriloquise his cosmopolitanism and secularism. Faiz Ahmed Faiz is a true internationalist who firmly believes in the unity of human spirit and works tirelessly towards establishment of a global culture where natural differences of race and colour are eradicated. He also wants to eliminate differences on the
basis religion and nationality (which are products of history), as the elements of domination, particularism and zealotry dehumanise the humans. At the global level, Faiz sees the modern day struggle between oppression and liberation being articulated in the conflict between imperialism and socialism. The poem “Lullaby for a Palestinian Child” is again a very heart rending cry to console the child who has lost his mother, father, sister and brother in the trials and tribulations of the time. Faiz in very simple language depicts the wretched condition of Palestine. Palestine is haunted by graveyard like silence and stillness as: “The dead sun was given its final bath/ And the moon has just been buried” (Trans. Kamal 76). In time of such holocaust all sources of light and hope [both natural (sun, moon) and familial (mother, father, sister and brother)] have been lost to the prevalent decadence and tyranny. Yet Faiz, an optimist prods the child to “smile” as state of affairs in the country will change one day.

“Paul Robeson” written by Ali Sardar Jafri is a very significant poem in regards to the vision of the progressive poets. Jafri opens the poem by paying tribute to the humanistic and motivational songs written by the Paul Robeson (American singer and Actor who got involved in the Civil Rights Movement and was even blacklisted by American government for his advocacy of communism and anti-imperialism) that have traversed all boundaries and frontiers. The impact of his songs is such that despite the physical and geographical distance, he says: “Your singing has conquered/ The heart of Delhi, of Shiraz/ Moscow is yours, Grenada and London (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 326). The pluralistic and cosmopolitan outlook of writings of Jafri is accentuated by the comparison he draws towards the end of the poem. He compares Paul Robeson to Krishna, the multifaceted sooty Indian God and says: “let me embrace you / that you too are black” (Trans. Bakht & Jaeger 326). Jafri undertakes the challenging task of translating Meera, which bears testimony to his love for Krishna. Jafri is the best specimen of a post-Independence Indian secular Muslim. Kuldeep Kumar in Jafri obituary (in Frontline) writes:

In no other Urdu poet - perhaps with the sole exception of Nazir Akbarabadi who lived in the 18th century - would one find quite the same kind of effusive celebration of Krishna with his Gokul, Gautam Buddha with his disciple Anand and Chandalika, glory of the Vedas, the Radha of Vidyapati's poetry, and so on (34).
Exile has ample influence on the writings of Faiz. His last two short books *Mere Dil Mere Musafir* (1978-1980) and *Ghubare Ayyam* (1981-1984) contain poems written in exile. After Zia-ul-haq imposes martial law in the country Faiz spends most of his time in Beirut and other countries abroad. These two books carry most of his writings relating to civil war in Beirut and Palestinian. Besides the titled poem “Dil-e-Man Musafir-e-Mun” that describes the emotions of a person in exile there are some thematic poems related to the Pakistan's political scenario resulting from Zia-ul-haq's tyrannical dispensation. “Teen Awazain”, “Yeh Matam-ewaqt ki gharri hae” and “Ham to majboor-e-wafa haen” represent the current situation. The last one is written on the execution of Zulfqar Ali Bhutto: “Tujh ko kitnon ka lahu chahiye / Jo tera aurz-e berang ko gulnaar karein. (Faiz, SSH 297). [The blood of how many people do you need my country /So as to impart radiance on your pale face (Translation mine)]. The couplet speaks volumes about the lawlessness and totalitarianism prevalent in Pakistan where every voice of change is silenced. Faiz is left with no other option but to question as to how long will this continue in the name of governance. He is seeking a country where progressivism is encouraged.

In an age when it is so common for progressive, cosmopolitan intellectuals to insist on the near-pathological character of nationalism with its roots in fear and hatred of the other, it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love. The cultural products of nationalism: poetry, prose, fiction and music show this love very clearly in thousands of different forms and styles. The demonic dimensions exist but what is more important is to see beauty and bounty in the reactions which aim at giving closure and resistance to these dynamics. Our poetry and poets also settle under this category. There is no gainsaying that the best of the literature of these poets egressed in the worst times that they and their countries faced. Books being written on progressive framework instil in us a belief that a counterforce exists which will combat all demonic dimensions of nationalism and awaken people to the true spirit of nation-ness.

**Notes**

1 For more details on this subject read “Fascism and National Culture: Reading Gramsci in the Days of Hindutva” by Aijaz Ahmad.
CONCLUSION

Poetry is not just a world of escape as some might deem it to be. It is a key element in the progress of mankind. It is not only about pining over unrequited love or exploring the subconscious, but it also challenges the system and inspires a sense of rebellion. Poetry is one of the higher art forms: it requires a sense of discipline in composition; its profundity lies in it being a fountain of life and life experiences. Hence, it becomes instrumental in spearheading social change. Poetry, (especially in oriental culture) has stood on the side of ordinary people and has endeavoured to awaken people to their true identities (as human beings first) without being swayed by national, ethnic, religious and linguistic identities.

Urdu poetry (area of my research) has primarily been medieval in spirit rather than modern. It is a literature that is markedly aristocratic in its value. Another important aspect of Urdu poetry is that it is largely of oral tradition. It is composed to be spoken, and only afterwards to be written down and read. The cultural movement started by the progressive poets is a collective effort to change the passage of Urdu literature. The birth of such Avant-garde movement is inevitable as old values start becoming meaningless and new possibilities start to emerge.

It is with the advent of progressive poets that literary scene in Urdu language undergoes a complete transformation. The progressive writers change the hitherto romantic tendencies of Urdu poetry and make it a weapon of social realism. They also reject the idea of art for the sake of art. This is an influence derived from Russian social realism that emphasise that artists should rebel against the out-dated modes of society and they should work for political and economic freedom. The writers of the Progressive Movement in their writings often protest about different problems of the times. They believe that words have the power to portray the structure of social reality. This belief is in many ways inspired by the Russian revolution, Soviet communism and international marxism. It urges the need to respond critically to repression and the feeling of frustration.

Prior to the Mutiny of 1857, Urdu literature lacks an instructive function. However, led by this event many reform movements materialise which believe in socio-religious reforms that aim at reclaiming people’s ancient heritages. After 1857, literature is perceived as a medium of writing that solves social and an aesthetic purpose. The content of new
writing that emerge shifts its focus from being about the elite class to being about the masses.

Wherefore, the poetic gatherings (*mushairas*) serve the purpose of awakening the masses by spreading the message of justice and resistance that serves as the conscience of progressive thought. These gatherings in different times have provided the resource for political resistance against tyrannies in different parts of the world. The passion of most of the poets is fanned by the desire to use their pen as an instrument for transformation and social change. Their works are part of the quest for a world with a more humane face. It is with similar understanding that literature becomes a medium of not only self-expression but also a platform for social dialogue. In the hands of able artists like the select poets of our study, words decline to cower to the dictates of capital. Instead, literature starts to place the collective dignity, interests and aspirations of the people before narrow materialistic individual gains.

Progressive poetry has been voice of dissent all over the sub-continent. It has been spokesperson of anti-colonialism, racism, casteism, corruption, fundamentalism and other maladies that are making the country hollow. The progressive poets have always taken a principled stand, critiquing all the avatars of disillusionment from to ultra-nationalism to neo-colonialism with the trenchant weapon of their poetry. It is the popularity of the poets that makes their poems anthems of resistance. Despite the fact that in hey days of these poets, country faces appallingly low literacy rate, the poets still remain popular and become instrumental in disseminating the message of equality and justice.

Progressive poetry conveys a piercing sensation of beauty and depth. In this pursuit, traversing multiple discourses of religion, marxism and nationalism, it becomes a voice of the subaltern that entails postcolonial emancipation to the third world. It represents a profound attempt to unhitch literary production from the cultural projects of postcolonial state in order to make visible meanings that have still not been entirely reified and subsumed within the cultural logic of the nation-state system. Progressive poetry can be viewed in post-colonial perspective as “intellectual history of post-colonial theory is marked by dialectic between Marxism, on the one hand, and post structuralism/post modernism, on the other” (Gandhi viii). It addresses the issues of imperialism, subalternity, gender and neo-colonialism in the colonial and postcolonial era. It has exposed various facets of marginalization (economic,
social and psychological) prevalent in the society. One of the unique contributions of the Progressive Writers Movement to the Urdu literary tradition in the subcontinent is its evocation of social problems, an aspect of life that is rarely discussed otherwise in such a serious and grave manner in Urdu literature.

They believe that reality is the product of social actions and art cannot be divorced from class struggles. This is the same idea propagated by Karl Marx. Marx did not believe in alienated forms of literature, history and philosophy. In Marx’s view, alienated form is a form which does not account for the material conditions that shape the society. Therefore, the progressive writers follow Marx’s view when they depict the social realities in the societies around them, in their works. These intellectuals mainly drew idealistic picture of socialism and contrasted it with the existing poles of the rich and the poor in their country. Moreover, they analysed social relations in terms of marxist concepts-economic determinism and class struggle. On the other hand they discuss economic and political struggle and propose solutions to it. This shows the far reaching and long lasting impact that some writers of the progressive writers movement have had, due to the strength, authenticity and beauty of their writings even when they are publicly disgraced and even when their cause is declined.

Urdu poets have been and will continue to be felt in the heartbeat of the two nations: India and Pakistan. Despite the diminishing popularity of poetry in the global market (owing to lack of readership and dearth of time), one sees the importance of project like this as it tries to give an after-life to dead canon of poetry. Urdu progressive poetry is not simple protest poetry but is a defining cultural feature of our country. The influence of progressive poetry is so monumental on Urdu literature that most of the times Urdu poetry becomes synonymous to the pen of progressive poets like Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Ali Sardar Jafri, Sahir Ludhianvi and Kaifi Azmi.

Their poetry grapples with themes that are not taken seriously in Indian literature. These themes touch human lives as they speak of emotional realities and are not intended merely to entertain readers. The poems move and unsettle the readers, and cultivate their thought processes. These novelists and poets write not just to make personal gains but also to contribute to Indian intellectualism and political activism. This is a significant departure from the Indian literary traditions of the 1930s when poets and writers did not care to write about
caste discrimination, exploitation of the poor, superstitions, or callous administrations.

In the able hands of the select poets, poetry becomes a site of resistance which engages discourses that are beyond the narrow cultural concepts like religion and nationalism. The three select poets of our study have sympathies with the poor and downtrodden but are not one of them. They walk on the tightrope of ideology and good taste, art and propaganda, secularism and sectarianism. They use classical imagery for political themes, and evolve a trope of metaphors and symbols that make radical comments by making use of otherwise highly aristocratic repertoire of Urdu poetic tradition. The select poets treat the familiar discourses of nationalism and marxism in unfamiliar ways. Nationalism, malady of present times transgresses narrow and restrictive premise of borders, boundaries and language. The poets show a new insight into nationalism which extends to pave way for international solidarity and peaceful co-existence. Their poetry resounds with universal human suffering and become hymns for subaltern of the third world.

While tracing the trajectory of development of nationalism, we come across how language (used by a community of Muslims) can become the language of Islam and of Muslim identity in a specific time period and region. With the advent of modernity, Urdu, a language of North Indian origin, becomes laden with political, social, educational, economic and cultural meanings. It becomes a symbol of the Muslim political identity next only to Islam itself during the struggle for the creation of Pakistan out of British India. But for the progressive poets, language is a means, not an end; a stage, not the journeys end. Its purpose is to mould their thoughts and emotions and to give them the right direction. It brings to fore different types of oppression and discrimination (linguistic, regional, caste and religious) prevalent in India and other contemporary realities and enables us to see nationalism which is not a Western construct.

Urdu progressive poets can be seen as critics of nationalism as nationalism failed promise of liberty and equality for all. They are nationalist as they critique colonialism and give primacy to goals of freedom and emancipation of all. For them, time and history is important and there is no room for metaphysics and transcendentalism. Even religion is used to create egalitarian and just nations. Their attitude towards nationalism is complex being Muslim poets. Ali Sardar Jafri’s translation of Hindu saints can also be a way of proving fidelity to India that
was becoming intolerant and sectarian. Faiz’ silence over 1971 war when the Pakistani army and Islamist groups massacred Bangladeshi students and intellectuals, including revolutionaries and admirers of Faiz himself is perplexing and gives occasion to his critics of accusing him of becoming a nationalist.

Drawing on marxism, the poets attack the existing political, religious and economical institutions. They convey the message that man is the creator of his own destiny and is capable of utilizing nature for his own benefit. Their writings focus on self-respect of every individual and at the same time address the class antagonisms present in the Indian society. Their writings are inspired by social realism because it tries to present a real picture of society. As stated in their manifesto, they address basic problems existent in the Indian society like hunger, poverty, social backwardness and political subjection. These problems appear to be very important in the marxist analysis of social conditions, which tries to offer solutions to eliminate these problems from society. So, its main problem is the subjugation of farmers, women and particularly of the lower strata of society, including labourers. Despite being influenced by Russian marxism, progressive writers and thinkers offer their own version of Russian marxism as unlike Russia, they do not focus on only on the problems of labourers. They spearhead homespun marxism which is situated in Indian social realities and problems. Progressive writers are committed to the cause of peasants and proletariat but they have no idea about how these two classes actually live. These writers debate this issue passionately and propose that their place in this social ladder is determined by the capitalist social order and they urge everyone to defy their social order. Alongside their desire to engage with the struggles of the dispossessed within their own society, the progressive writers become conscious of the international context and international issues like racism, anti-fascism. These issues become a part of their political identity as anti-imperialism and social radicalism.

In wake of the growth of spirit of rebellion in the country, both colonists and neo-colonists try to reconstruct their hegemony by building up new national bourgeoisie which are backed by religious fanatics, in order to reinvigorate sectarianism and nationalism to divide and rule. The progressive poets bring out the secular colour of the two countries in their works.
Urdu ghazal has been a very important trope in spreading the message of secularism as it boasts of a tradition in which importance of Islam recedes and a strong flavour of lampooning the ruler and the priest takes over. Urdu ghazal is therefore far less attuned to the problems of spiritualism or sufism or any form of religious philosophy as the Persian ghazal. Sufi undertones are easy to detect in the very notion of unbounded love for the sweetheart, or of gam itself, reminiscent of the fundamental sufī notion of fatma (self-annihilation and immersion in the beloved, i.e., God). But these operative categories of Urdu poetry transcend their immediate context and become a plea for freedom and emancipation. The discourse of Sufism takes a new leaf in the hands of the progressive poets as the lover self annihi lates himself in love for the country and not always God.

As far as the select poets of our study are concerned, they too show varied understanding of Islam. Despite all three being Muslims, they never show allegiance to normative aspect of the religion. Instead they liberate and secularise the other pan-islamic symbols like Hussain and Karbala. They extend all the religious metaphors and symbols to meet revolutionary content of their poetry. They show divergence in their treatment of religion as Faiz is an atheist, Jafri a believer in sufism and Kaifi Azmi a skeptic who radically juxtaposes the sacred and the profane. The common thread that unites their divergent disposition is the emancipatory and secular treatment of religion and religious symbols. They liberate prescriptive religious codes of Islam and infuse them with secular content.

Progressive poetry has not been spared of criticism. It has been criticised for being controlled by communist’s wherefore the association has been accused of being a threat to the harmony of India as it creates anarchy and lawlessness in the country. Sajjad Zaheer, one of the founders was one of the well-known communist leaders, but it is wrong to say that this association is dominated only by marxists as non-communist writers like Munshi Prem Chand, Maulana Hasrat Muhani, Maulvi Abdul Haqq, Sarojini Naidu, and Doctor Abid Hussain, are also among the prominent patrons of the association. Progressive literature about communalism has been criticised of being a propaganda and not literature. Progressive writers like Krishan Chander, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas are labeled as communalists wherefore the whole movement comes under scanner of propagating communalism. What is of utmost significance in face of these petty charges is that, progressive writers have and still continue to instill courage and hope in the hearts of people. Progressive writers (even after the demise
of the Movement) and their teachings are echoed in present times in form of not only strike by workers or students but also in the mass protests that take the country by storm as a reaction to the injustices meted out to innocent people. The Progressive writers and their writings have ignited the spark of rebellion in us. As Faiz says: “Agar sharar hai to bhadke, jo phool hai to khile”. These embers of change are surely going to bring out the best in our society.

What has happened to poetry after failure of Progressive Writers Movement (PWA)? Is it correct to say that protest poetry has died after the decline of Progressive Movement? The questions whether new poetry is different from progressive poetry and whether new poetry is ahead of progressive poetry are often beleaguering. The label ‘progressive’ undergoes change in present times. Every society and times are marked by their own set of problems and writers devise their own ways of dealing with them. The progressive tradition still continues in both the countries by literature produced by those who write without any prejudice and aim to awaken the best instincts in man.

Urdu poetry from the post-progressive era voices the feeling of disillusionment, irony and unease with the device of fusing the objective and the subjective which is very similar to each other. Interestingly, the new generation of Urdu poets maintain intentional distance from categories such as progressive as well as modernist poetry. They neither take the well-trodden path of ‘art for art's sake’ nor join the hope-generating chorus of the progressives. In their poetry, the socio-political concerns get interiorised. In their poetry the subjective and objective get fused. It remains essentially progressive in its content, but its form, texture and expression get transformed.

In India, poets like Shahryar, Nida Fazli, Balraj Komal and Mohammed Alvi belong to a generation of poets that emerge out of the remnants of the Progressive Movement characterised by the disillusionment of the Nehruvian era. The disturbing aftermath of its dreams and hopes has culminated in a deep sense of loss in the new generation of poets and cultural practitioners. The works of the poets signify the alienation from the big dream of shining India. Their poetry is replete with a tinge of nostalgia and sadness for the past that once seemed so much full of promises of a new dawn, a resurgent democratic and egalitarian society.
The embryo of an organized left, which indicated vitality and creativity through its literary forum in the first decade of Pakistan's life, is destroyed in the late nineteen fifties. In Pakistan, an undeclared antipathy has existed against progressive literature. Amidst overwhelming fanaticism, religious bigotry and tyranny, it is with the efforts of poets like Kishwar Naheed, Ahmed Faraz, Fehmida Riaz, Rashed, Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi, Parveen Shakir, Naheed and others that voice of dissidence can be heard in Pakistan.

Despite the continuation of cross cultural exchanges that take place between the two countries in form of Indo- Pakistan mushairas, the popularity of Urdu poetry in terms of listeners and spectators has diminished considerably. Is it because the zeal of progressive writers is missing or have the times changed when people busy in material pursuits have no penchant for such critical enquiries? The progressive poets walk with history and time for progress of human civilisation. Their vision extends beyond the pull of tradition, religious dictates and socio-political systems like feudalism, autocracy and imperialism. The importance of the study becomes even more paramount in today’s time when colonialism and imperialism re-enter and establish themselves with economic privatisation and religious fundamentalism. Their poetry remains important for all those who desire change in the existing system. The cultural movement like the PWA introduces a moment in culture which acts a singular force that holds the potential of changing the dynamics of the society. Though the Movement has died out, yet it works as a manifest power in the construction and reconstruction of the present cultural configuration and as an immanent force which enters into relationship with other forces to change the world for better.

The progressive cultural movement must fight, in its own terrain, not only against the exploitative order presided over by the bourgeoisie, allied with the rich landed interests, but also against the ideological perceptions and cultural practices of the old order, against caste, patriarchy, communalism and all forms of suppression of the individual by the so-called traditions of the old community. The latter struggle is a permanent struggle that stretches from the present until the establishment of the new order.

The contribution of progressive writers cannot be overlooked as they have reigned the minds and heart of the people of the two countries. The progressive poets must have died but
their poetry is timeless and ageless. So, their poetry not only immortalises them but also spirit of revolution and activism which is amiss in present times. The conditions of late capitalism have blunted the possibilities of social anger which used to feed progressive urges to begin with.