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Literary Radicalism and the tools of its articulation: A case study of the Progressive Ventures in Films (1953—1971)

Abstract

Progressive writers made concerted attempts to establish successor organizations for promoting their ideas and put up resistance through other means such as literary journals, individual literary works and other forms of cultural expression, such as film. Since many progressive writers found a creative outlet in theatre and film, the article presents a brief overview of how the radical interventions affected local cinema at the time.

The article looks at the ventures in the film industry of Pakistan from 1953 to 1971 made by progressive writers who used the medium of film to articulate cultural politics of the Left. Employing auteur theory, I have tried to illustrate how most writers, filmmakers and producers associated with the project were acutely aware of the social functionality of literature and their vision had a profound impact on their artistic output.

Keywords: Progressive writers, literary radicalism, Lahore, cinema

Since this article makes frequent mention of the terms “progressive” or “progressive writers”, it is relevant to refer to its contextual meanings in the South Asian milieu. Some prominent poets and writers of India and Pakistan have used this term, for example, Tabassum Kashmiri (b. 1940) writes:

The Progressive Writers Movement, in its essence, was not a pure literary movement. Basically, it was a social and political movement, and its followers were motivated by deep conviction that society can be transformed through literature and arts. Therefore, the movement, [to its followers] was “*eik zariyaaurekhatiyar*” (a means and instrument) to bring about change. There is no doubt that it functioned as a great mobilising force as it stirred the imagination of Indians and greatly enriched literature by enhancing social consciousness¹.

As it is obvious from this single source, the term progressive refers to an artistic commitment with a large social context. The concept of progressivism that underpinned Leftist writers meant a commitment to look at the disabilities and deprivations of the poor and marginalised segments of society like religious minorities, women, peasants and the urban working class. Such writers held a strong conviction that literature could be used to as a tool of resistance to conservative forces and foster an alternate, pro-people outlook. They believed that such transformation could create an enabling environment to create an egalitarian society wherein all the members of society could find justice and felicity. For literary historian Saleem Akhtar (d. 2018):

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The literati associated with the movement believed in realism in literature. Meaning thereby, they wanted to show the bitterness, rottenness and putrefaction of life as it was (emphasis added), or as they perceived it to be. They did not want to hide the scars and abscesses of human life. Rather, they were convinced that the task of the literati was to scrape or scratch (the scars and abscesses) to remove the noxious substances (figurative)².

The Left is generally explained in the context of ideological referents of communism, socialism and Marxism. Here I use Marxist literary scholar Frederick Jameson's definition, for him the Left is a "political and societal aim and vision". Commonly the term "Left" refers to an idealised, egalitarian society, which requires the state to play a proactive and interventionist role in economic and social affairs. The Left also represents an alternate concept of human nature and culture. In the South Asian context, the Left was many things to many people: to scholar and activist, Puran Chand Joshi (1907-1980), economic determinism emerges as the defining feature of the Left; while to Shalini Sharma it signifies the deployment of the language of class struggle. A number of contemporary Pakistani scholars such as Tariq Ali, Ishtiaq Ahmed and Taimur Rehman write that bourgeois democracy, or the struggle for democracy, is the essence of the Left in the context of the Pakistani politics. To Jamal Naqvi (1933—2017), a veteran communist leader, "progressive thinking" as a commitment to the future is what essentially defined the politics of the Left³.

Setting the Context

One can argue that when the Left found it exceedingly difficult to advance its cause through traditional methods of political mobilisation, for instance, through the labour and trade union movements, it turned to other channels of expression to disseminate the message. The literary movement of the PWA went some way in propagating a this view. But the administration was quick to clamp down progressive cultural activity, bracketing literary radicalism as anti-state. In trying times, the PWA decided to change track and, by 1952, literary journals scaled down their critical tone and tenor. For instance, in December 1949, the proprietor of *Adab-e Latif*, Chaudhry Barkat Ali (1902–1952), brought greater moderation in the ideas articulated in the magazine. In 1950, Mohammad Tufail, the proprietor of *Naqush*, abandoned progressive policy altogether, replacing Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi and Hajra Masroor with Waqar Azeem. The periodical *Sang-e Meel* (Peshawar) was closed down in 1951. The following year, *Sawera's* proprietor also yielded to government pressure and adopted moderation in its editorial policy. By July 1954, the government banned the PWA and its affiliated organizations, despite its avowed disassociation from Left-wing politics⁴.

Progressive Writers Movement in the Post-1954 Context

As we have noted in the previous section, from July 1954 the progressive writers found it exceedingly difficult to advance their radical agenda in literature through formal literary organisations. This section covers a brief period of five years between 1954 and 1958. I argue in this section that the imposition of the ban on the PWA could not contain the PWM⁵.

Several prominent literary writers like Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi and Arif Abdul Mateen unanimously hold that the ban on the PWA did not mean that the PWM had fizzled out.⁶ Saleem Akhtar, a progressive literary critic and author of a bestselling book on Urdu literature in Pakistan, has argued, ‘When an ideology or concept grows into a symbol it becomes eternal therefore the symbols do not die’.⁷ While referring to the influence of the PWM, he described the concept of resistance literature, which became ‘increasingly popular in Pakistan particularly in 1970s and 1980s’ as an offshoot and continuity of the PWM.⁸ This context reinforces my contention pertaining to the different forms of resistance that the progressive writers employed to push their radical agenda.

The progressive writers made an unsuccessful attempt to reorganise themselves and established the *Anjuman Roshan-Khayal-Musannifeen* (Liberal Writers Association).⁹ We do not have many factual details about this organisation except for some clues about its formation extracted from interviews and the writings of a founding member, Arif Abdul Mateen.¹⁰ We can assume that it could not make any headway because the Establishment remained openly hostile to this organisation. Hence, it met the same fate as its predecessor.¹¹ Moreover, the progressive writers failed to preserve their organisational culture, which impinged negatively on it and prevented it from becoming an effective organisation.¹²

The Progressive Ventures in Film Industry 1953—1958

When the progressive literati did not find enough room to manoeuvre, they focused on cultural activities. Talat Ahmed and Rakhshanda Jalil have convincingly argued in their works that films and theatre were an extension of literary activism.¹³ Faiz Ahmed Faiz in an interview to I.A. Rehman acknowledged that:

When [we] found it difficult to express ourselves through the traditional means of practical politics, then I started talking in terms of literature and culture. Thus, only, the fronts had changed.¹⁴

This excerpt highlights the shift in the focus of Faiz’s struggle, yet one can argue that the situation it depicts can also be extrapolated to the larger context of the PWM. In fact, we can extend this trend that Faiz identified to two years earlier. It was around 1953–1954 when the progressive writers started paying attention to movies as a medium for their cause, as shown in the following table.

Table `1. The use of Film as a Medium by Progressive Writers/Directors: 1953–1958

Name of the Film	Date of release	Director	Writer/ screenplay/ scriptwriter
Agosh	25 December 1953	Mumtaz Jilani	Saadat Hasan Manto/ Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi
Roohi	11 August 1954	W.Z. Ahmed	
AasPaas	22 February 1957	Akhtar Hussain	
YakeyWali(Punjab i)	22 February 1957	M.J. Rana	
Wada	2 May 1957	W.Z. Ahmed	

Source: Mushtaq Gazdar, *Pakistani Cinema 1947–1997* (Karachi:1998), pp.244–246, Yaseen Gorijah, *Pakistan Millennium Film Directory* (Lahore: 2003),

pp.132–124, and; Saleem-ur- Rehman, ‘Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi Ka Filmi Safar’, Montaj, special Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi number, ed. Mansoor Ahmed, August 2007, p.203.

This was the period when Faiz Ahmed Faiz started writing the script of his movie *Jagu Hua Sawera* that was released in January 1959. W.Z. Ahmed (Waheed ud din Zafar Ahmed) was the younger brother of the Indian communist leader, Z.A. Ahmed (Zain-ul-Abidin Ahmed). He was a progressive film director and established Shalimar Pictures in the early 1940s in Pune, where he produced films like *Ek Raat* (1942), *Prem Sangit* (1942), *Man ki Jit* [(1944), *Prithviraj-Samyukta* (1946) and *Mera Bai* (1947).¹⁵ His brother Z.A.Ahmed wrote in his autobiography that after Partition the Shiv Sena, an extremist militant organisation, forced W.Z. Ahmed to leave the country. He moved to Pakistan in the late 1940s and established the W.Z. film studio in Lahore.¹⁶ His film *Roohi* (1954) highlighted the class division between the rich and the poor. The Censor Board objected to a scene in which the heroine, who came from a wealthy background, raised money for the poor by putting up her kiss for auction. It also voiced objections to the plot because the heroine has a love affair with a poor man, despite the fact that she is married. The major objection of the Censor Board was that the film could incite class hatred.¹⁷ The film was subjected to heavy censorship and it was the first film to be banned in Pakistan. Later, the authorities confiscated the film’s reels on the pretext that its producer had not paid an outstanding loan from a co-operative bank.¹⁸ Thus the film was dumped.¹⁹

The Censor Board also banned the film *AasPaas* (1957) because it depicted class division in society.²⁰ W.Z. Ahmed produced another film, *Wada*, which was a social film and its plot revolved around realistic theme. Moreover, the use of screenplay and the film direction enabled it to win the inaugural Nigar Award.²¹

As the forgoing discussion shows that the progressives from 1953 onwards had made initial efforts to use films as a medium to articulate the Leftist ideology. However, the progressive project of filmmaking had barely got underway that the Leftist movement had to confront another formidable challenge in form of the imposition of the Martial Law of 1958. The statist version of the factors leading to the imposition of the Martial Law provides a grossly oversimplistic analysis by laying blame on the politicians.²² However, the circumstantial evidence tells an altogether different story. The writings of Hamza Alavi, Mohammad Waseem, and Huma Naz establish its connection with apprehensions of the bureaucratic elite concerning the prospective electoral victory of the Leftist parties particularly belonging to the Regional Left in the elections, which were scheduled to be held in 1959.²³ The developments between October 1958 and April 1959 also show that the main thrust of the policies of the regimes of Iskandar Mirza and (later) Ayub Khan was on the containment of the Left in Pakistan. I concur with Hamza Alavi (1921—2003) in that the 1958 Martial Law was not a “transfer of power from political to military government”; rather, the military-bureaucratic oligarchy asserted complete control over the state apparatus.²⁴ Hamza Alavi considered it a “change of partners”, since it was the bureaucracy that had earlier been the senior partner of the military. With Ayub assuming power, the equation was reversed and the military now assumed the role of “senior partner”, reducing the bureaucracy to “a collateral role” that later became the defining feature of Pakistan’s political

system.²⁵ This change notwithstanding, the ordeal for the Left continued unabated..

It is not surprising then why General Ayub Khan immediately mounted a major crackdown against the Leftists. There were wide scale arrests of Left-wing political activists and intellectuals. The letter issued by the National Awami Party (NAP) in January 1959 provides a glimpse of the situation arising after martial law. The international committee of the National Awami Party underscored the fact that:

nearly three hundred people have been imprisoned without trial in Pakistan by the military regime that took power in October 1958. Among them are some of the most loved and respected people in the country. They include some of the leading intellectuals, writers, poets, journalists, university teachers...the finest lot in society has been put in prison.²⁶

In its bid to stifle the Left, the military regime did not hesitate in taking over the Progressive Papers Limited.²⁷ This institution had been a bastion of support to the Leftists since 1947. Even before the PPL take over, Sibte Hasan, the editor of *Lail-o-Nahar*, was dismissed from service and arrested.²⁸ To cut the long story short the circumstantial evidence clearly shows Ayub Khan's martial law regime systematically targeted Leftist parties, radical activists progressive literati and the Left-wing press. In these challenging circumstances the progressive consciously used the medium of films as a effective means/outlet to put across the message of the Left to general public. Thus, in the period between 1959 and 1971 they made sustained efforts to advance their radical vision through the medium of films.

Seventeen “progressive” film ventures, 1959—1971

It was in this environment of repression that progressive writers and other Left-leaning intellectuals turned toward film making as a popular medium of expression. The seventeen films chosen here for review had the direct involvement of Left-leaning poets, writers and professional filmmakers such as Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Ahmed Basheer, Hameed Akhtar, Zaheer Kashmiri, Ashgaque Ahmed and Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi.²⁹ Among them, only Ahmed Bashir had formal training in filmmaking, while the rest were writers and visionaries. There was another group of professional film makers such as Riaz Shahid, Khalil Qaiser and Zia Sarhadi, who were influenced by the ideas of the Left and made commercial films based on anti imperialism and secular humanism. They tried to portray the life of working class people and other marginalised sections of society.

For *Jagu Hua Sawera* (1959), Faiz Ahmed Faiz wrote the story based on Manik Bhandopadhyaya's novel, *Padma Nadir Majhi* (The boatman of River Padma). It was one of the earliest Dhakka-based Urdu films.³⁰ The film depicts the everyday struggles of a fisherman's family who lives in a small settlement on the banks of River Meghna near Dhakka. Akhtar J. Kardar (1926—2002) who directed the film, used a narrative style and lengthy close-ups, which were new experiments in Pakistani cinema.³¹ Mushtaq Gazdar, among the first English-language scholars of Pakistani cinema, described it as “Pakistan's first realist and experimental film”.³² It was a commercial failure because its plot and direction did not conform to popular cinematic conventions; nevertheless, it earned critical

acclaim from international film critics and received a gold medal at the Moscow film festival in the late 1950s.³³

The film *Teen Phul* (Three Flowers, 1961) was directed by Zaheer Kashmiri and written by A. Hameed. Little is known about its basic theme. Zaheer Kashmiri never spoke about it and did not have pleasant memories of his experience in the film industry. Presumably, it was a conventional film that left no impact, either on regular filmgoers or on film critics. Some impression can, at best, be gleaned from a flippant remark by A. Hameed, the writer: “People jeered at this movie and called it ‘teen fool’ (three fools)”.³⁴

Hameed Akhtar’s association with the All-India Peoples Theatre (IPTA) and the PWA dated back to early 1940s. He had worked as a scriptwriter in the Bombay film industry, and served as secretary-general of the AIPWA’s Bombay branch in 1945–46.³⁵ He was deeply committed to the idea of film as “a powerful medium of communication with people”.³⁶ For the film *Sukh ka Supna*, he adapted the 1950 novel *Power without Glory* written by a radical Australian writer, Frank Hardy (1917–1994). Hardy had based his protagonist on a real person, John Wren (1871–1953), a wealthy businessman and an influential politician who allegedly amassed fabulous wealth through devious means. The novel depicted the personal and moral dilemma of the main character of the novel.³⁷ It dealt with endemic corruption in Australian society of the 1940s that had percolated across every segment of society. The film censured the ruling Australian Labour Party (ALP) for having failed to address the issues at hand.³⁸ Hameed Akhtar drew inspiration from that novel and its core idea that “the accumulation of wealth was a useless pursuit and it could not bring happiness to anyone”.³⁹ The film castigated the capitalistic value system that drove society towards insatiable lust for wealth. This film too, for various technical reasons, was a commercial failure.⁴⁰

In many ways, Ahmed Bashir was different from the rest. He was among the founders of daily *Imroze*, launched in 1948 and served two stints at the newspaper in 1948 and then in 1951. All India Peoples Theatre Association (IPTA), particularly the organisation’s ventures in filmmaking was a big inspiration for him.⁴¹ That led him to get a professional degree in filmmaking from the USA in 1959.⁴² Fully cognisant of a literary writer’s social responsibility, Bashir writes:

The writer is a merchant of words. Language is essentially a social contract because if it is not, it would become meaningless like the braying of dogs and cats. Languages would not have been created if social responsibility was not part of the basic instinct among humans. That is why animals have no language of words.⁴³

In his film, *Nila Parbat*, Ahmed Bashir portrays the life of an old man who adopts a young girl. The problem begins when, at the subconscious level, he falls in love with her. The film revolves around this core idea in Freudian psychology which was then a bold theme in Pakistani cinema. Opening with a song of Roshan Ara Begum (1917–1982), the director used Panna (Zareen)’s classical and semi-classical dance performances in Bharatanatyam, Manipuri, Shiva Thandav and Kathak to depict the conflicted emotions of the protagonists.⁴⁴ Categorised as an adult movie,⁴⁵ it was commercially flopped due to its experimental nature which the audience did not appreciate.⁴⁶ The fate of *Dhupaur Saye* (Sunshine and

Shadows, 1968), a movie written and directed by dramatist Ashfaq Ahmed and largely shot at outdoor venues to bring in the realistic effect was not different.⁴⁷

Zia Sarhadi (Fazl-e Qadir), one of the prominent directors and scriptwriters who embraced progressive ideas and had successful stint in the Indian film industry from 1938 to 1952, directed films like *Ham Log* (We, the People, 1952) and *Footpath* (1953), and written dialogues for the famous Indian film *BaijuBawra*(1952).⁴⁸ He remained actively involved with the Bombay chapter of the IPTA during the 1940s and worked with Prithvi Raj, Balraj Sahni and Durga Khote. In 1952, he moved to Pakistan where the government took him for a Leftist. He was “hounded” in the “military crackdown” by General Ayub Khan against the communists and was subjected to atrocious treatment again under General Zia-ul-Haq’s government and left the country in the 1980s to settle in Spain.⁴⁹

During the 1960s, Zia Sarhadi directed two films, *Rahguzar* (Passage, 1960) and *Insan* (Human, 1966) and wrote the stories for three films—*Lahkon men Ek*(One in a million), *Kafir* and *Elan* (Announcement)which were released in 1967.⁵⁰ In *Rahguzar*, he portrayed the social realities of the poor.⁵¹*Lahkon men Ek*(1967), directed by Raza Mir, was among the three important Pakistani films on the subject of Indian Partition.⁵² The film narrates the story of Hindu and Muslims families affected by the events of Partition. The heads of these families, Ahmed and ParharDayal, are close friends. Just before Partition, Ahmed is forced to send his family to a village called Prem Nagar, a place in India. But communal riots erupt in the village and Ahmed’s wife is killed while his son, Ijaz, survives but loses his memory (which he regains later). Meanwhile, Dayalhas to take refuge in Ahmed’s house due to the communal riots. Ahmed manages to send his friend to India while remaining guardian to his daughter, Shakuntala. In India, ParharDayal falls prey to extremist Hindu gangs who beat him up so he lands in a mental asylum where he lives for several years. Meanwhile, Dilber Khan, a Pukhtoon, brings Ijaz back to Pakistan. As the story unfolds, Ijaz falls in love with Shakuntala, who was brought up by his father. Later, when Dayal regains his mental health, he returns to Pakistan to fetch his daughter and Ahmed sends Shakuntala with him. The film ends with the death of Shakuntala who is torn between her loyalties. The film affords a glimpse into the trauma of partition and how individuals families affected by it, rose above communal hatred and held on to human values. But the script depicts the deep personal suffering that these political events had on the lives of even good people who were mentally and physically torn from their homes.⁵³

Another progressive film director and scriptwriter was Khalil Qaisar, who died quite early in 1967. Qaiser directed seven films between 1961 and 1967 and wrote the story of Shabab Keranvi’s film *Fashion*. Among his own films *Clerk*, *Doshiza*, *Shaheed* and *Farangi* are notable. The film *Clerk* (1962) depicts the harsh realities faced by blue-collar employees like clerks.⁵⁴ Khalil Qaisar took up the role of the clerk himself and played it admirably. His other film *Farangi*(Foreigner) has an interesting theme. The script was written by Riaz Shahid and the setting is Arabia of the 1920s. The main subject was British imperialism and revolved around the political career of the British spy T. E. Lawrence, popularly known as “Lawrence of Arabia”. During the First World War and right after it, Lawrence provoked the

Arabs into revolting against the Ottoman Turks.⁵⁵ The film does not focus on Lawrence as an individual but presents him as a symbol of British imperialism set on the mission to acquire newly discovered oil resources in Arabia.⁵⁶ In the film, Lawrence lives in an independent Arab principality that is under a tribal chieftain named Sardar and has his eyes on the oil wealth of the region. He asks Sardar to lease the land to him for the purpose of drilling for oil, but Sardar turns him down. Lawrence then devises a plan to remove Sardar and replace him with a more pliant man, creating a rift within the tribe. The new chief, Feroze, is a greedy man who readily agrees to lease out the land to the British for a hundred years. The British build an oil refinery and the chief remains content with his modest share in the proceeds. These developments provoke the locals against the chief and Aalia, the daughter of the former chief, plans a suicide mission. She sets herself on fire and jumps into an oil well, gutting the entire complex and thwarting the imperialist ambition.⁵⁷ The writer and director portray all of this through a small, emotionally charged story.

Among the staunchest anti colonial scriptwriters and film directors, the name of Riaz Shahid stands alone. He made a number of creative films that received critical acclaim. Born in Lahore in the 1940s, he received his early education in Islamia College and was inclined towards progressive ideals from the early 1950s. Hameed Akhtar writes that Riaz Shahid was a courageous and principled man. When the crackdown on communists began in the 1950s, particularly after the closing down of CPP *Naya Zamana* (New Times), Riaz Shahid let the party use his residence for the purpose, putting his family at risk.⁵⁸

Riaz Shahid was a writer before he was a film maker and one of his earliest forays in fiction were turned to film. His film career formally began in 1958 when he wrote story and dialogue for the film *Bharosa*. Jaffar Bokhari produced and directed the film.⁵⁹ His famous films included *Shaheed*, *Susrul*, and *Doshiza* [1962]. Films like *Badnam* [1966], *Zarqa* [1969] and *Yeh Aman* [1971] can also be added to the list for which he either wrote or adapted the scripts of famous litterateurs.⁶⁰ Like the progressive writers of his times, he used film as a medium to capture the lives of the poor and marginalised sections of society. His brief but illustrious film career (1958 to 1972) ended with his death in October 1972.⁶¹

The PPL newspapers played a key role in promoting these experimental and realistic films but they were harshly critical of the trend of copying in filmmaking in Pakistan. This led to a stand-off between disgruntled film producers and the PPL newspaper *The Pakistan Times*, one of the most popular English language newspapers of the time, between October 1967 and February 1968. The tussle aggravated to such extent that the Film Producers Association imposed a ban on the PT's film advertisements.⁶²

The reasons behind the failure of these radical interventions in film making were examined by the writers of the time. For instance, Hameed Akhtar and Ahmed Bashir, acknowledge that the major reason for this failure was because radical film makers were out of touch with the sensibility of their audience. Moreover, they failed to understand the dynamics of film production and marketing and, in some cases, the films were technically inferior in production values. These writers provide clues into how big financiers and commercial film producers, who

dominated the market at the time, banded together and systematically thwarted new ventures.

Notes & References

¹Tabassum Kashmiri, cited in Mohammad Ashraf Kamal, “Urdu Adbkay Asri Rujhanat kay FurogmeinMujallaAfkar ka Hissa”, UnpublishedPh.D. ThesisBahauddin Zakariya University Multan, 2006, 31.

²Saleem Akhtar, Cha Afsanaun ka TajziatiMutalia, (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel,1998), 119.

³The unpublished doctoral dissertation of the author of the piece provides detailed insights into the episode, Irfan Waheed Usmani, ‘Print Culture and Literary Radicalism in Lahore, c.1947—1971,’ Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, National University of Singapore,2016,10—17.

⁴Hameed Akhtar, Hameed Akhtar interview with Farrukh SohailGoindi for Pakistan Television,parts 1–5,[Up loaded on]August 27, 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nf99jNFYx8I>, ___ Hameed Akhtar, *Kalkothri* (Lahore: Book Home, 2009), and; Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi, interview by Arif Abdul Mateen and Fateh Mohammad Malik [c.1980s] for Radio Pakistan. Parts 1–3.wmv, uploaded on June 27, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/redirect?q=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.radio.gov.pk%2F&redir>.

⁵Here we need to distinguish between the PWA and PWM. The PWA was a literary organisation that the Establishment banned by branding it as the front organisation of the CPP. The PWM as a literary movement, as a movement of ideas, and as an agency of literary resistance represented a cause and a goal that those progressive writers had set for themselves.

⁶In a number of interviews and writings they all pointed to the all-encompassing impact of this movement, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Tahir Masood’s interview with Faiz Ahmed Faiz, in *Yeh Surat-gar kuch Khwaboan kay*, ed. Tahir Masood,1984, p33. Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi, ‘Dibac[h]a’[introduction] to *Hum keh Tharay Ajnabi* by Ayub Mirza,p.8, and; Arif Mateen, Ghulam Hussain Azhar’s interview with Arif Abdul Mateen, in, *Ru-ba-ru*, ed. G.H.Azhar, n.d., p.192.

⁷Salim Akhtar, *Urdu Adab ki Mukhtasar Tarikh, Aghaz Say 2000 Tak*, 25th ed. (Lahore: Sang-e Meel Publications, 2003), p.466.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Arif Abdul Mateen, *Imkanat* (Lahore: Technical Publishers, 1988), pp.398–399.

¹⁰M.A. Beg’s work on the Progressives Writers Association in Punjab does not shed much light on it beyond giving an excerpt from A.A. Mateen’s book, *Imkanat*, M.A. Beg, ‘AnjumanTarraqiPasandMusannifeen Punjab Men’, p.91.

¹¹Arif Abdul Mateen, Ghulam Hussain Azhar’s interview with Arif Abdul Mateen, in *Ru-ba-ru*, p.196. One can cite the drastic action against A.R.Malik, the PPH’s proprietor, in the mid-1950, as another example of the aggressive policy it continued to pursue against the progressive literati between 1954 and 1958.

¹²One can also mark several other factors for its lack of progress. For instance, it lacked a coherent organisational structure, which its precursor organisation the PWM had succeeded in creating. In addition, the hard line that the PWM adopted in 1949–1952 widened the gulf between the progressives and the non-progressive literati, as well as writers who had maintained a neutral stand.

¹³R. Jalil, *Liking Progress, Loving Change*, p.xiv, and; Ahmed, *Literature and Politics in the Age of Nationalism*, pp.105–106.

¹⁴Faiz, Faiz’s interview with I.A.Rehman, in, *Makalamat-e Faiz*, comp. Khalil Ahmed (Lahore, Sang-e Meel Publications 2011), p.99. [I.A.Rehman’s interview with Faiz in 1984 was published in *Herald* its March issue that year]. The progressive writers, instead of

merely sticking to overtly political issues, tried to focus on cultural issues. S.Toor in her work has highlighted the fact. To reinforce her contention, she has engaged the opinion of Naseem Hijazi, who was a rabid anti-progressive intellectual. In the preface to his drama anthology, *Saqafatki Talash*, published in 1978, he specifically pointed out the progressives' activities in the mid-1950s. While drawing attention to the activities of the progressive writers, he identified the performing arts as an important domain for radical interventions during that period. He alleged that they had been inspired by sinister motives. Notwithstanding the sarcasm his preface contained about the Leftists, it provides evidence of how the cultural sphere emerged as an important priority of the agenda of the PWM. Naseem Hijazi, *Saqafat Ki Talaash*, (Lahore: Qaumi Kutb Khana, 1978), pp.i–ii, cited in Sadia Toor, *The State of Islam*, pp.111–112. If we further open up this debate we can specify further areas of the Leftist intervention in the cultural sphere like films, theatre, and the promotion of regional languages.

¹⁵Shoib Ahmed, 'News Report: W.Z.Ahmed Passes away', *Dawn*, 17 April 2007.

¹⁶Z.A. Ahmed, *Merey Jewan ki Kuch Yaddain* [translated from Hindi by] Yaqoob Khawar, (Karachi: Idarah-e Yadgar-e Ghalib, 2004), pp.21–22.

¹⁷Mushtaq Gazdar, *Pakistani Cinema 1947–1997 (The Jubilee Series)*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.72. Mushtaq Gazdar wrote that in this film, W.Z.Ahmed tried 'to depict life as it existed with all its ugly realities', *Ibid*.

¹⁸Tufail Akhtar, *Dafinay Show-Biz Kay Ahd-saz Logon ki Yadain* (Lahore: Prime Time Publications, 2002), p.70.

¹⁹Nama-nigar, 'Kya Filmi Fannkar ko Azadi-e Izhar ka Haqq Nahin, Censor Board Siyasi Maqasid', *WeeklyLail-o-Nahar*, 15 March 1970, p.45.

²⁰ An article on film censorship that appeared in *Lail-o-Nahar* in March 1970 argued that 'the film was banned as it had made an attack on the country's nouveau riche that had been ruling the roost', *Ibid*.

²¹Yaseen Gorijah, *Pakistan ki Sau Shahkar Filmain* (Islamabad: Alhamra, 2000), pp.38–40.

²² Wayne Wilcox, "The Pakistan Coup d'état of 1958," *Pacific Affairs* Vol.38, No.2 (Summer, 1965), 142–163, and; Herbert Feldman, *Revolution in Pakistan: A Study of Martial Law Administration* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967); and; Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends not Masters: A Political Autobiography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

²³According to scholars like Mohammad Waseem, Hamza Alavi and Huma Naz, the imposition of Martial Law was an attempt to postpone the general election, scheduled to be held in February 1959, in which the regional Leftist parties like Awami League and National Awami Party (NAP) were expected to sweep the polls. Thus, according to this perspective, the military coup tried to circumvent the prospective electoral victory of the regional Left. Hamza Alavi, "Army and Bureaucracy in Pakistan" *International Socialist Journal* Vol.III, (March–April 1966), 54–57. _____ "State in Post Colonial Pakistan and Bangladesh", ed. Kathleen Gough and Hari P. Sharma, *Imperialism and Revolution in South Asia*, 152, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973); and Huma Naz, *Bureaucratic Elites and Political Developments in Pakistan (1947–58)*, Islamabad: National Institute of Pakistan Studies Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, 141–146.

²⁴Hamza Alavi, "Army and Bureaucracy in Pakistan" *International Socialist Journal* Vol.III, pp.55–56.

²⁵*Ibid*.

²⁶ Q.S. Anis-ud-Din, Secretary International committee of the National Awami Party. Non-official (un-published). ‘An Appeal’ Non-official (un-published), January 27, 1959.

²⁷The unpublished doctoral dissertation of the author of the piece provides detailed insights into the episode, Irfan Waheed Usmani, ‘Print Culture and Literary Radicalism in Lahore, c.1947—1971,’ Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, National University of Singapore, 2016, Chapter 3.

²⁸New Item: “Arrest of Syed Sibte Hasan”, The P.T., 18 November 1958.

Between 1959 and 1964, several periodicals were brought under the new management and a policy frame-work was provided them by state officials. Lail-o-Nahar toned down its critical literary voice. In 1962, Intizar Hussain was appointed editor of *Adab-e Latif*, a premier literary journal, because he was a staunch adversary of radical writers and during his tenure (1962–1965) one important platform was lost to progressive writers. With the death of Salah-ud-Din Ahmed, the editor of *Adabi Dunya*, in 1964, another radical magazine was lost. Although Salah-ud-Din was not a Leftist, but his paper followed a liberal policy with regular contributions from progressive writers. However, progressive writers did not give up and from 1963 to 1971 several new liberal magazines such as *Funun*, *Awami Jamhooriyat*, and *Takhleeq* were launched from Lahore, while two magazines, *Lail-o-Nahar* and *Al Fatah*, were launched from Karachi.

²⁹ *Radical Interventions in the Film Industry: 1959–1971*

Sources: Yaseen Gorijah, *Pakistan Millennium Film Directory* (Lahore: 2003), pp. 135–158, Interview with Nasir Saleem Sheikh, 30 January 2013, and; Interview with Ali Sufyan Afaqi, 9 February 2013, and ; A.Salim, *Sawaneh Umri*, *Hameed Akhtar* (Lahore: 2010), pp.272–274.

³⁰ Faiz, Faiz Ahmed, interview by Ahmed Salim, in, *Mukalimat-e Faiz*, comp. Khalil Ahmed (Lahore, Sang-e Meel Publications, 2011), 1983, pp.212–215

³¹ “News Report: A.J.Kardar Passes Away”, Dawn, 17 February 2002, and ; Gautam Bhaskaran, “Pak Classic Jago Hua Sevara is a true gem that wowed Cannes”, Hindustan Times, 20 October 2016,

³² Mushtaq Gazdar, *Pakistani Cinema 1947–1997*, p.78.

³³ Salah-ud-Din Haider, *JinhainJurm-e IshqPeh Naz Tha*, *Faiz Ahmed FaizShakhsyat-o-Fann* (Lahore: Sang-e Meel Publications, 2011), p.73.

³⁴ A. Hameed (comp.Rashid Mateen), *Zaheer Kashmiri, Shakhsyat-o-Fann*, *Pakistani Adab kay Memar* (Islamabad: Akademi-eAdabiyat-e Pakistan, 1998), p.45–46.

³⁵ Ahmed Salim, *Sawaneh Umri*, *Hameed Akhtar*, p. 55. He also performed a small role in the film *Azadi ki Rah Par*, which was released in 1948, Ibid, 42

³⁶ Ibid., p.274.

³⁷ Frank Hardy, *Power without Glory* (Panther, 1975).

³⁸ William D. Rubinstein, ‘The Culture Wars Down Under: John Wren, Frank Hardy, and Power without Glory’, review of *Power without Glory*, by Frank Hardy, *The Social Affair Unit*, Digital Publications, 28 June 2006. <http://www.socialaffairsunit.org.uk/blog/archives/001001.php>.

³⁹ A. Salim, *Sawaneh Umri*, *Hameed Akhtar*, p.272.

⁴⁰ Salim., pp.272–273.

⁴¹ Ahmed Bashir, ‘Documentary Films’, *Imroze*, June 12, 1949.

⁴² Ahmed Bashir, *Dil Bhatkay Ga* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2012). Ahmed Bashir, *Joo Milay Thay Rastey Mein* (Lahore: Al-Faisal, 2006).

⁴³ Ahmed Bashir, *Jo MilayThayRastey Mein*, p.226.

⁴⁴Ibid, p.719.

⁴⁵ It was the second movie after *ZindaLaash*(The Living Dead,...)that the censor board placed in the category of adult films.

⁴⁶ Ahmed Bashir provides a detailed description of his experiences in the film industry in pages 27–29 and 32 of his autobiography.

⁴⁷ *Mohammad Safdar Mir*, Interview by Muzaffar Mohammad Ali, in *PakistaniSahafatKayRazdanSahafi*, *Safdar Mir Say Hamid MirTak*, ed.Muzaffar Mohammad Ali (Lahore;2011), pp.84–85 .

⁴⁸ ‘Zia Sarhadi’, IMDb [Showbiz website], accessed 14 May 2015, http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0765167//bio?ref__.

⁴⁹ His son, Khayyam Sarhadi (1949–2011), a famous TV artist in his own right, revealed this information in an interview in 2002. Rumana Hussain, ‘The Inherited Talent: A Long Innings : Khayyam Sarhadi,’ *Dawn*, n.d., [Images edition], 1 December 2002.

⁵⁰Hussain.

⁵¹ Y. Gorijah, *Pakistan Millennium Film Directory* (Lahore: Yaseen Gorijah Publications, 2003), p.147.

⁵² The other two films are *Kartar Singh* (1959) and *KhakaurKhun* (1979); the first is in Punjabi and is still considered a classic of this genre, whereas the latter was based on a historical novel by Nasim Hijazi, who was famous for pulp fiction. Gita Viswanath and Salma Malik in their article on Partition cinema in the subcontinent, have analysed the nature of these scripts and categorised them as ‘melodramatic’, Gita Viswanath and Salma Malik, ‘Revisiting 1947 through Popular Cinema: A Comparative Study of India and Pakistan,’ *Economic and Political Weekly* 44, no. 36 (Sep.5–11), p.661.

⁵³Gorijah, *Pakistan ki Sau Shahkar Filmain*, pp.122–127.

⁵⁴ Interview with Ali Sufyan Afaqi, February 9, 2013.

⁵⁵Gorijah, *Pakistan ki Sau Shahkar Filmain*, pp.122–124.

⁵⁶ The film portrayed very important development—that is the onset of the Western Imperialism in the Middle East that subsequently redrew the modern map of the region, George Lenczowski’s work *The Middle East in World Affairs*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1963) [Revised edition], provides insightful understanding about the development.

⁵⁷Gorijah, *Pakistan Ki Sau Shahkar Filmain*., pp.85–87.

⁵⁸ Ahmed Salim, *SawanihUmri*, *Hameed Akhtar*. Lahore: Book Home, 2010, p.164.

⁵⁹ Yaseen Goreeja, *Pakistan Millennium Film Directory*,(Lahore: Yaseen Goreeja Publications, 2003),135, and; *Pakistan Film Database*[on line], “ Riaz Shahid”, <http://pakmag.net/film/artists/details.php?pid=3181> , accessed on 7 February 2019, 6:45 am.

⁶⁰Table: The Highlights of Riaz Shahid’s Film Career between 1962 and 1971

Sources: Yaseen Goreeja, *Pakistan Millennium Film Directory*,(Lahore: Yaseen Goreeja Publications, 2003), 138—158; *Pakistan Film Database*[on line], “ Riaz Shahid”, <http://pakmag.net/film/artists/details.php?pid=3181> , accessed on 7 February 2019, 6:45 am.

⁶¹Akhtar, *Dafinay Show-Biz Kay Ahd-saz Logon ki Yaddain*, p. 15 –17.

⁶²Shirin Ali, “The Pakistan Times—A Critical Study” (unpublished M.A thesis, Lahore, University of Punjab, 1969).