

Political and social dynamics of class in revolutionary Urdu poems by

Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Habib Jalib

Farkhanda Shahid Khan

Revolutionary poetry is considered the most concentrated verbal expression and literary mode practically suited to provoke political uprisings and revolts in a society. This article explores the intricacies of class on political and social grounds in the revolutionary Urdu poems of Faiz Ahmad Faiz (1911–1984) and Habib Jalib (1928–1993). Given the pace of social progress in Pakistan, the writings of these poets have played a radical role in shaping people’s ideology by educating them about freedom of expression and provoking them to speak out against imperialism and other exploitative systems of the status quo. The power dynamics in the devastating system of capitalism in Pakistan led to the exploitation of workers and the suppression of their rights. Against the background of these problems, through close reading, this article analyses selected poems by progressive writers—Faiz and Jalib, under the guidelines of Marx on class, Gramsci’s hegemony, and Louis Althusser’s ideological and repressive state apparatuses. This article concludes that the revolutionary poetry of these two poets aims to transform the social and political fabric of Pakistani society.

Keywords: class; hegemony; ISA (ideological state apparatuses); Marxism; RSA (repressive state apparatuses); revolutionary poetry.

1. Introduction

Progressive Writers Movement was the iconoclastic, Marxist-leaning literary movement started in London in the mid-1930s by two British-Indian writers, Sajjad Zaheer¹ (1905-1973) and Mulk Raj Anand²

¹ Syed Sajjad Zaheer, an Indian Urdu writer was one of the founders of the Association of Progressive Indian Writers (1935, London). This radical revolutionary was also a member of the Communist Party of India.

² Mulk Raj Anand was also the founding member of the Progressive Writers Association. He is admired for his valuable ideas in drafting the manifesto of the association. Anand was the pioneer of Indo-Anglian fiction.

(1905-2004). The movement was brought to India in late 1935 by Zaheer, who then organized the first all-India meeting of the Progressive Writers Association on 9-10 April 1936 in Lucknow with the eminent Hindi-Urdu novelist and short story writer Premchand³ (1880-1936) as President (Faiz, Coppola and Beg 1974:128). The movement inspired a large number of writers and intellectuals of the time. Faiz and Jalib were also eminent parts among several others. They engaged in the movement through their writings on anti-imperialist attitudes, political reforms, and the ideology of human development.

Much has been written and said about Faiz and Jalib as their poetic verses have become part of films, public concerts, and newspapers, but in academia, formal and systematic research is the least available area. This article examines how the two writers bring about change in the social and political structure of society through their revolutionary poetry. Their writings awaken people against social injustices, inequalities, and imperialistic agendas. Since the works of these authors are less widely used in research, this article attempts to bring these authors into the arena of academic research by emphasizing their egalitarian ideologies through an analysis of a few selected poems. Furthermore, this study deals with the analysis of the essential concepts of class, hegemony, and ideological and repressive state apparatuses in *مجھ سے پہلی سی محبت مری محبوب نہ مانگ* (*Mujh se pahli si muhabbat mari mahbub na māng*, 'Don't inquire for the love I gave you once, my darling'), first published in Faiz's collection of poems *نقش فریادی* (*Naqsh-e faryādi*, 'The Image of One who Laments') in 1943, and *دستور* (*Dastūr*, 'The Constitution'), initially written in 1962 by Jalib under the theoretical perspectives of Marxism.

Poetry remained a prominent literary form in Urdu literature, later followed by short stories and then novels. In Pakistan, *mushairas* (poetry symposia) are regularly broadcast on radio and television, attracting a large and diverse audience. These public poetic concerts are a partial medium of political and social commentary. When it comes to revolutionary poetry, it touches people's emotional and moral sensibilities, because revolutionary poetry can always be used to raise awareness among people of diverse nations (Hussain and Sohail 2011: 8). Occasionally, revolutionary poetry also conveys the tragedy of displacement from native roots and the trauma of exile.

The revolutionary poetry of Faiz and Jalib is one of the most vibrant examples of contemporary writing traditions. Their verses are a commentary on Pakistan's political and social problems (Arif

³ Dhanpat Rai Srivastava/ pen name *Premchand* was elected the first president of the Progressive Writers Association. The writers associated with this literary movement wrote for equality and social justice for all classes, races, and ethnicities. Premchand is considered a pioneer of Hindi and Urdu social fiction.

2010:45). Sometimes, these writers inform about critical moments in history, such as the fall of Dhaka in former East Pakistan during the civil war and the successive emergence of Bangladesh as a separate nation in 1971. In other cases, their poetry is written to rouse the Pakistani public against dictatorship and martial law.

Under the umbrella of the Progressive Writers Movement, the revolutionary poetry of Faiz and Jalib has played an essential role in communicating progressive ideologies. Furthermore, revolutionary ideas never remain still, they travel and become a global voice. Faiz's wife, Alys Faiz emphasizes the fact about the growing influence of the Progressive Writers Movement:

The movement spread with both force and swiftness, along with Urdu to several other languages of South Asia, such that it became, next to Gandhi, the most powerful literary force in the literature of South Asia during the first half of the twentieth century (Faiz, Coppola and Beg 1974: 129).

Faiz himself writes of the movement: The Progressive Writers' Movement began as a labor movement process, and it was as if several schools were opening in the garden (Faiz, Coppola and Rahman 1974:128). Moreover, Faiz explains progressive literature in his article *Progressive Concept of Literature* "... only those writings are progressive that may fast-track the stride of social progress, and they are fully measured up to the artistic strictures" (Faiz 2000: 2).

Faiz Ahmad Faiz was a famous Marxist Urdu poet and a member of the Pakistan Writers Association (PWA). He was imprisoned several times because of his left-wing solid tendencies and socialist political stance, which gave him solitude. In this loneliness, he contemplates and writes his humanistic thoughts, and eventually transforms them into heart-breaking poetry. The musicality of Faiz's poems offers the slightest possibility of commendable translation due to his poetic genius; however, the poems have been translated into English for detailed understanding and to reach a wider audience. Like working-class poets, progressive writers – Faiz and Jalib too, sided with the poor classes of Pakistani society against their exploitation in their daily works. These authors believed that action could eliminate suffering (Singh 2016: 01). Additionally, Faiz and Jalib introduce basic notions of history into the narrative of their poetry, and Faiz can arguably be compared to the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda in taking a similar revolutionary approach (Rahman 1999: 108). Faiz's literary taste is also compared with other poets of different literary cultures, such as English, Russian, and French, which explains why he has sometimes been referred to as a cross-cultural writer (Rehman 1999: 110). Edward Said writes about Faiz:

The crucial thing to understand about Faiz ... is that like Garcia Marquez he was read and listened to both by the literary elite and by the common masses. He would use classical forms (*qasida*, *ghazal*,

masnavi, qita) and transform them before his readers rather than a break from the old forms. You could hear old and new together. His purity and precision were astonishing, and you must imagine therefore a poet whose poetry combined the sensuousness of Yeats with the power of Neruda. He was, I think, one of the greatest poets of this century, and was honored as such throughout the major part of Asia and Africa (Said 1992: 92).

Faiz remains relevant mostly because of the themes that deal with timeless and universal issues like human miseries, inequalities, and injustices (Dawn 2011: 2). Noman-ul-Haq, a Pakistani scholar and historian, appreciates the poetic expression of Faiz by writing that it is unparalleled in the whole history of Urdu poetry because of its use of metaphors, the string of nouns, the rhythm, and the structure that will never go stale (Dawn 2011: 1). At first, Faiz wrote about the conventional themes of love and beauty, which later with his maturing political flair, developed into a depiction of socio-political realities. Muhammad Arif in his *Romance and Poetry* writes that Faiz's feelings for nature and women amalgamate with the love of homeland since his love for his homeland dominates everything else (Arif 2010: 56). Faiz championed socialist humanism through his poetry, giving a whole new meaning to the familiar love imagery so prevalent in the traditional genres of Urdu literature.

His poem *Mujh se pahli si muhabbat marī maḥbūb na māng* ('Don't inquire for the love I gave you once, my darling') is a beautiful and celebrated example of the conventional treatment of love and beauty which ultimately leads to an intense awareness of the harsh socio-political realities. Sufferings in his poetry are never private. Along with widening social perspectives, the poem depicts the rise of (inter)national over personal, the factual over the imaginary, and bitter truths over beautiful lies, as the poet believed in internationalism, unity in diversity, and global cultures. With a radical departure from the conventions of love, he asks his beloved (while acknowledging her huge importance) to agree with taking his social pledge as an imperative duty. Like Marx, Faiz too believed in mankind's basic needs which a life involves, including the everyday habits of eating, drinking, habitation, clothing, etc. There is a revolutionary reorganization of society within the change of this shift in writing as Marx also points out that class structure consists of ruling and oppressed classes and the struggle between these two classes determines the social relations between human beings. These tensions and conflicts arouse masses, including the general public as well as intellectuals and writers for the restructuring of society (Bendix and Lipset 1976: 6).

The history of Pakistan has been torn by underhand deals, financial gifts, putting price tags on souls, selling consciences in self-interest, and compromising on principles. The fame and admiration of Habib Jalib took a tremendous turn after the publication of his poem *Dastūr* ('The Constitution'), which he wrote as a rebuttal to the nuisance of the newfangled Constitution of 1962 imposed by the then military president of Pakistan, Ayub Khan. This Constitution was a milestone in the country's

history that sanctioned the shift from governmental democracy to a despotic presidential system. Through his poetry, Jalib made a remarkable and helpful contribution towards creating a free democratic society by defining the Constitution in the poem mentioned below. After facing the hardships of the military presidencies of Ayub Khan and later Yahya Khan, when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the founder of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), assumed charge as Prime Minister in 1973, it was expected that Jalib would take some rest in the hope that Bhutto's sociopolitical views and ideologies would stir up the stagnant social environment of Pakistani society. However, Jalib's hope did not turn into reality. As Bhutto raised more in power in the backwash of a weakened military following the fall of Dhaka; it was absurd to note that the distance between the ideology of the Pakistan People's Party and the policies implemented by the government went tremendously widened. With his ambition for power, Bhutto's attitude towards other political and democratic leaders confirmed for him the impression of an autocrat. It was an upsetting experience for a dynamic player such as Jalib, who could only turn his voice against the ruthless government and once again was sent to prison (Barelvi 1991: 20). He contended with the civil and military dictatorships in Pakistan, as his poetry echoes the voice of the people of Pakistan, especially the oppressed, downtrodden and broken people. In so doing, he used his poetry to fight against social injustices, coercion, and abuse of power. When seen through a critical lens, Jalib's collection of the verse, like that of Faiz, also gives the impression of a sociopolitical trajectory of Pakistan.

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical foundations of Marxism have informed this revolutionary study with Karl Marx's idea of class, Louis Althusser's ideas of ISA (ideological state apparatuses) and RSA (repressive state apparatuses), and Gramsci's idea of Hegemony. Marx's idea of the ruling class and the working class, and the oppressed class's struggle towards a revolution to bring harmony to society was revolutionary. Like Marx, the reorganization of society on an equal level was also an absolute dream of revolutionary writers. Marx's view that the proletariat class is the reason for the capitalist class's existence indicates that class structure needs to be revised to 'no class' which, Marx calls "a classless society" (Giddens and David 1982: 57). Marx defines class as the manifestation of economic difference (Nazir 2013: 194) and his notion of classless society conveys the idea of equality among all the people. Though the existence of class, as Olin Wright observes in his book, *Understanding Class*, is central to the existence of contemporary capitalism, and to fulfill the economic opportunities and conditions, it merely leads toward class exploitation and mechanical features of macro-power relations (Wright 2015: 39) making the phenomena of class existence complex. It makes possible to move power into the hands of those

once powerful, who then get more power, while the others get subjugated, lower, and weaker to be exploited by the powerful. These ideas of power dynamics, Faiz and Jalib also discuss through their poetry.

Furthermore, Gramsci's conceptual marker of hegemony is also critical for progressive writers because hegemony in a capitalist system works through coercion. To Gramsci, hegemony is not only cultural but moral and ideological control of one group, usually powerful, on the subalterns or the weaker. The element of consent is central to the working of hegemony. Moreover, he opines that people with hegemonic power see the world with their ascending agenda. For him, the state is the primary coercive force while fulfilling its agenda of consent through the working of its institutions—family, churches, etc. Gramsci elaborates that the class exercising hegemony is economically powerful and articulates its supremacist ideologies in the discourse of the working class in a unified manner which is achieved through false consciousness (Bates 1975: 19). Working class can only subdue their false consciousness when they come across elite practices which bring in them the consciousness of revolution.

Althusser further opines that the unified entities or institutions acting as repressive state apparatuses are controlled by the ideological state apparatuses (education, media, churches, army, trade unions, and family), which were not formerly controlled by the state. While Ideological State Apparatuses work by ideology, they get entangled over those points where both are in control of the authoritative ideologies as Althusser writes that the “state is the machine of repression” (Althusser 2014: 49). Althusser's idea of state oppression is similar to Gramsci's idea that the state is the primary institution of coercion. Repressive State Apparatuses are also called ‘hard power,’ which operates by exercising violence (Althusser 2014: 45). Only the working class's resistance can combat the working of these ideologies through repression.

3. Faiz Ahmad Faiz

Faiz was primarily a poet. But he was also an essayist, a filmmaker, a soldier, a journalist, a political protagonist/ thinker, a savior of art, a trade unionist, a teacher, and above all a great humanist. He was a humanist with a holistic vision, for whom politics and culture run side by side. There is harmony between his ideas and their practice. For example, his idea that art serves humankind's struggle for peace, justice, equality, freedom, and progress, becomes a fact in his writings. He devoted his life and poetic talent to the entire liberty of humankind and believed in the human spirit instead of believing in race, colour, nationality, and religion. Faiz established worldwide that man's struggle between subjugation and freedom articulates the battle between socialism and imperialism. He was a strong

admirer of the Russian Revolution and wanted to see the same spirit in his people; consequently, he wrote to provoke them (Ahmad 2007: 10).

Born on 13 February 1911, Narowal, Faiz Ahmad Faiz comes from British Indian Punjab (now in Pakistan). He studied at Government College Lahore and served as a lecturer in English. Later, he served in the army. In 1946, *The Pakistan Times* appointed him as an editor, and in 1951 Faiz was imprisoned with some other military and political personnel for an alleged conspiracy to overthrow the government. The news of his death sentence remained in the air, but he was released after four years in 1955. Later, the government of Pakistan conferred *Nishan-e Imtiaz*,⁴ in 1990 upon this publicly honoured poet (Dawn 2011: 3). Further, Faiz is the first Asian poet to receive the Lenin Peace Prize, a Soviet comparable to the Nobel Peace Prize.

Vividly, renowned intellectuals like Patras Bukhari and Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum, the accomplished names in Urdu, Punjabi, and Persian poetry, were Faiz's earliest mentors in poetry at Government College, Lahore. He recited his poem *Iqbal* at the annual *mushaira* of Lahore College, where Sir Muhammad Iqbal⁵ (1877-1938) was the guest of honour; and Faiz was awarded first prize for this recitation. Later the poem was published in the college's literary magazine *Ravi* which shows that his poetic genius was acknowledged even in his student life.

Paradoxically, the military regime of Ayub Khan in Pakistan (1958-1969) brought intolerant reactionary behaviour and a suffocating attitude among people. However, Faiz, through his poetry, became a national symbol and a sacrosanct. Faiz preferred self-exile after Bhutto's execution in Zia's regime of terror. He was evicted from Beirut during Israel's pressure on Lebanon, and he came to Pakistan in 1982. He died on November 20, 1984 (Ahmad 2007: 25).

3.1. Analysis of Faiz's poem

It is apologetic to note that the evils and tribulations are so much prevalent in Pakistani society that revolutionary writers' writings will never get old. Famous Pakistani classical singer, Tina Sani appreciates Faiz as, "Faiz Ahmad Faiz... (Was) like a comrade, his thoughts were soft but effective and inspired the classical singers as did others in the plays; his verses never get old because the situations

⁴ "Also called Order of Excellence is one of the state organized awards. It is awarded for achievements towards world recognition for Pakistan or exceptional services for the country."

⁵ "Sir Allama Muhammad Iqbal was a 20th C. Pakistani Muslim poet, philosopher, politician and an advocate. He is also known as 'The Sage of the Ummah' and a Pakistani thinker."

and problems in the country have not altered. Today we sing him because of his beautiful poetry, missing out on the reasons behind his poems that had predictions” (Tribune 2003: 01). With these extolling words, there comes the selected poem *Mujh se pahli si muhabbat marī maḥbūb na māng*:

مجھ سے پہلی سی محبت مری محبوب نہ مانگ
میں نے سمجھا تھا کہ تو ہے تو درخشاں ہے حیات
تیرا غم ہے تو غم دہر کا جھگڑا کیا ہے
تیری صورت سے ہے عالم میں بہاروں کو ثبات
تیری آنکھوں کے سوا دنیا میں رکھا کیا ہے
تو جو مل جائے تو تقدیر نگوں ہو جائے
یوں نہ تھا میں نے فقط چاہا تھا یوں ہو جائے
اور بھی دکھ ہیں زمانے میں محبت کے سوا
راحتیں اور بھی ہیں وصل کی راحت کے سوا
ان گنت صدیوں کے تاریک بہیمانہ طلسم
ریشم و اطلس و کمخاب میں بنوائے ہوئے
جا بہ جا بکتے ہوئے کوچہ و بازار میں جسم
خاک میں لٹھڑے ہوئے خون میں نہلائے ہوئے
جسم نکلے ہوئے امراض کے تتوروں سے
پیپ بہتی ہوئی گلتے ہوئے ناسوروں سے
لوٹ جاتی ہے ادھر کو بھی نظر کیا کیجے
اب بھی دل کش ہے ترا حسن مگر کیا کیجے
اور بھی دکھ ہیں زمانے میں محبت کے سوا
راحتیں اور بھی ہیں وصل کی راحت کے سوا
مجھ سے پہلی سی محبت مری محبوب نہ مانگ
(فیض 1990: 47)

“Don't inquire for the love I gave you once, my darling
I had thought if had you, life will be illuminated
If I had your sorrows, those of the universe would mean nothing
Your face would bring permanence to every spring
What else is there except your eyes to see, in the world
If I found you, my fate would bow down to me
This is not how it was; it was merely how I wished it to be
There are other afflictions in the world than those of love
There are delights other than the delight of mutual love
The dreadful magic of uncountable dark centuries
Woven in silk, satin, and brocade
On every corner are bodies, being sold in the market and streets
Throbbing between layers of dust, bathed in blood
Bodies retrieved from the cauldrons of diseases
Discharge flowing from their rotten ulcers

Still returns my gaze in that direction, what can be done
 Even now your beauty is tantalizing, but what can be done
 There are other sorrows in the world than those of love
 There is joy other than the joy of having a beloved
 Don't inquire for the love I gave you once, my darling.”⁶

Faiz’s quest to address the socio-economic tensions and power dynamics within society was not eclipsed by his romantic poetry. However, those verses were crucial as a festive time to deliberate on the issues of his people. He was devoted to the traditional form of lyric poetry, transforming its content by merging romance and revolution. In the opening lines, Faiz revisits his relished memories of romantic love, once his most prominent source of solace. He addresses his beloved, reviving how her beauty illuminated his dark life, ultimately making him forget the whole world and how he used to sink into her eyes. She was the center of his life, his sole concern, and his only consideration. He wanted nothing but her in the whole universe, from his fate, and in his prayers. From thereon, there is a vivid transformation of romantic tendencies, personal pains, empathetic humanistic thoughts, and limited idealistic perspectives into the realization of truths. It finally makes him admit the idealistic love notions as he realizes that there are more considerable pains other than love that afflict the public اور بھی دکھ ہیں زمانے میں محبت کے سوا (aur bhī dukh haiñ zamāne meñ mohabbat ke sivā, ‘There are other afflictions in the world than those of love’). He no longer dwells in the happy realms of the pleasures of union with his beloved but instead looks for wider humanistic and intellectual interests. So, he is undoubtedly referred to as the poet of humankind, having his writing with a syncretic essence across time and place.

Faiz’s political commitment does not mean he would not address his beloved in the rest of his works. When he addresses his beloved most often, revolution is involved, as Indian poet Agha Shahid Ali remarks, “as the lost or cruel lover” (Ali 1990: 82) who is unwilling to return. In this way, the subject of Faiz’s poetry remains true: the loss of the loved one—whether it is a lost lover or a lost ideology. Since Faiz’s idea travels from the pursuit of a lover to the ideology of revolt for the better fate of the working class, it echoes Marx’s belief in the revolution that Marx considered both deeply important and unavoidable to the evolution of society. Marx believed that workers would lose only their chains in a revolt against the capitalists’ and industrialists’ exploitation; however, it would create a global communist society by bringing equality irrespective of rank, wealth, and nationality. Following Marx’s belief system, Faiz renounces his love because he has seen all the ruthlessness of the social systems where there is inequality, corruption, and manipulation of people along with poverty. Faiz was also

⁶ All the Urdu texts have been translated by the author.

able to discern the centuries-old status quo of the government and elite classes, beautiful veiling of ugly truths, and afflictions of masses, as well as poverty, misery, homelessness, and pettiness of human life. This pessimistic situation further depicts the starving human beings, diseased bodies, and triviality of human life by showing people being killed in the streets, children dying of hunger, women selling their bodies for insignificant amounts of money, and human beings suffering from incurable diseases for the non-availability of medicines. Faiz remarks that the solution to these despondent situations is possible through Communism, which Marx describes as the most egalitarian and natural system of existence. He does not deny the beauty of the beloved, her alluring charms, and the provocative power of her eyes; he does not deny the existence of romantic love, but he recurrently says that the above-mentioned brutal pains are sharper than the personal joy of the beauty of beloved. The world of love does not lose its appeal in his life. However, Faiz prefers humanity over his happiness. He finds serenity in the world's peace, that in Marx's terms, is possible through the working class's revolt, and Faiz also preaches the same idea. Thus, emotion has been transformed into motion blurring the lines between the romantic and the revolutionary to bring an image of an ideal state or, as Marx called it, a welfare state. Faiz mentions,

لوٹ جاتی ہے ادھر کو بھی نظر کیا کیجے
اب بھی دل کش ہے ترا حسن مگر کیا کیجے
(Faiz 1990: 47)

Still returns my gaze in that direction, what can be done
Even now your beauty is enticing, but what can be done

Furthermore, Faiz's preoccupation with the poor class, workers, and the oppressed, what Marx calls the proletariat or peasant class, stems from his involvement with the Progressive Writers' Movement; thus, his poetry depicts his personality, and his progressive writings act as a tool for social development. Marx also believed that capitalism is essentially self-destructive and a threat to prosperity, so there is a need to educate the proletariat class to overthrow the system of capitalism through revolution and establishing Communism. Faiz's poem is a vivid announcement of his expedition toward conveying awareness to the people to stand against the absolute powers so that there is equality and harmony in society. Faiz believed that smiles and tears were not individual phenomena but rather powerful expressions of emotions that highlight the community's ambitions and disappointments as the absolute value. This poem conveys Faiz's blissfulness because of his political struggle and solidarity as different and broader forms of love and an amalgamation of personal

delight and communal responsibilities. This poem inspires one to take on the heavy burden of social transformation and establish a classless society (Marx's idea of Communism) based on peace, equality, and justice. Faiz fulfills this responsibility without being entrapped in the aura of anger and bitterness by transcending his romantic emotions, so that they do not interfere with his poetic productivity, social responsibility, and creativity.

Finally, Faiz suggests a change in his poem. His revolutionary concentration mellowed as he matured in his political thoughts, and his concept of freedom broadened. The synthesis of the political and the romantic pervades his poetry. Sometimes the two are inseparably entangled: the political meaning informs the romantic and the romantic the political (Rahim 2008:12). He maintained hope throughout his journey and remained stuck to his quest, though whatever was the cost. As a national hero, he contributed to realizing individuals' potential and making people aware of their rights and freedom; as a poet, he remade the world with his creativity.

4. Habib Jalib

Habib Jalib (1928-1993) was born as Habib Ahmed in Hoshiarpur, a district in British Indian Punjab. After the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947, he migrated to Pakistan. His political activism made him popular among the working class in Pakistan. Since he was a celebrated Pakistani revolutionary Urdu poet with Marxist and Communist political views, he was known as a 'People's Poet.' Jalib's enthusiastic writings about the plight of the people and social issues captivate the readers, and his poetry echoes his ideology and vision of life. At the time when all writers of 'substance' were increasingly 'Persian sing' because Persian was the lingua franca before the British colonization of the Indian subcontinent, Taimur Rehman, a Pakistani professor and political activist, stated that Jalib wrote his inspiring verses about the plight of suppressed masses in a very colloquial manner that was accessible to all (Zaidi 2014: 03).

Jalib was first imprisoned during the martial law regime for his defiant views on Ayub Khan's capitalistic policies. Addressing a rally held at the famous Mochi Gate⁷ in Lahore, Faiz Ahmad Faiz said about Jalib, "No poet since Wali Dakhani⁸ (1667-1707) has been able to capture a larger audience than Habib Jalib" (Mir and Mir 2006: 86). Jalib's poetry replicated his clear vision, un-fumbling and

⁷ One of the thirteen gates of the Walled City of Lahore which were built during the reign of the Mughal Emperor Akbar. The door leads to Mochi Garden, a famous spot for political rallies.

⁸ Wali Muhammad Wali was a popular classical Urdu poet from India who composed poetry under his pen names of Wali Dakhani, Wali Aurangabadi, and Wali Gujarati.

undeviating empathy for humanity, and his love for suppressed human beings, human rights, and jurisprudence, simultaneously serving as the main themes of his poetry. His masterpiece *Dastūr* was written against the capitalist policies of President Ayub. Ayub's regime symbolized oppression (the repressive state) and the darkest period of dictatorship in the country's history. The poem was considered a voice against capitalism and in favour of the oppressed. Jalib himself says, "I saw our dreams shattering one by one. How we could establish democracy and freedom in our country, I kept thinking, and then I wrote this poem" (Barelvi 1991: 7). He was locked up by the military authorities of the time for reciting *Dastūr*. Reciting his verses, Jalib stirred the political rallies of Lahore and later the people across Pakistan. After that, *Dastūr* was sung in Pakistan by all and sundry as a hymn. Notably, in Jalib's poem, the verse 'We do not accept such a constitution' was a popular chant (Pakistan Forum 1971: 1). The government made efforts to stop him from reciting the poem through pressure, coercion, bullying, and bribery, but all went in vain (Jalib 1991: 59).

Jalib was popular with the Pakistani people because of his agitated and human-centred poetry. Though he was banned by the government from reciting his poems in public, undeterred, he continued to write his egregious works against the regime. He called it atrocities against the masses and ridiculed the power dynamics using satire and humour. This technique distinguishes him from the older group of progressive writers like Faiz, who does have a serious tone (Toor 2014: 03). There were the principles behind his poetry, emotional energy, and the socio-political musicality that stirred the massive people. He could never settle with the martial law of Ayub Khan, and once, during a live transmission of Radio Pakistan in 1959 (01: 2022 لون), to oppose the martial Law policies, he tersely recited:

کہیں گیس کا دھواں ہے کہیں گولیوں کی بارش
شبِ عہدِ کم ننگاہی تجھے کس طرح سراہیں

there is the smoke of teargas in the atmosphere,
bullets are raining in the surrounding,
how can I praise you?
the night of the period of short-sightedness.

Jalib died on March 12, 1993 and was buried in Lahore. The Government of Pakistan, posthumously awarded Jalib the highest civilian honor, *Nishan-e- Imtiaz*, in 2009, which then went to Tahira Habib Jalib, the daughter of this legendary poet.

4.1. Analysis of Jalib's poem

Habib Jalib's poem *Dastūr* has strong Marxist tendencies. This poem is not ambiguous in its meaning; its expression is clear and direct, as Jalib says what he feels without any discretion or reservation. Althusser's theory of ISA (ideological state apparatuses) and RSA (repressive state apparatuses) (Jubilee 1988: 16) is apparent in the poem, which begins with a retort against the state. *Dastūr* was first included in his book *Sar-e Maqatal* ('سر مقتل', 'Toward Execution') published in 1968 which was banned and confiscated by the martial law authorities.

دیپ جس کا محلات ہی میں جلے
چند لوگوں کی خوشیوں کو لے کر چلے
وہ جو سائے میں ہر مصلحت کے پلے
ایسے دستور کو صبح بے نور کو
میں نہیں مانتا میں نہیں جانتا

میں بھی خائف نہیں تختہ دار سے
میں بھی منصور ہوں کہہ دو اغیار سے
کیوں ڈراتے ہو زنداں کی دیوار سے
ظلم کی بات کو جہل کی رات کو
میں نہیں مانتا میں نہیں جانتا

پھول شاخوں پہ کھلنے لگے تم کہو
جام رندوں کو ملنے لگے تم کہو
چاک سینوں کے سلنے لگے تم کہو
اس کھلے جھوٹ کو ذہن کی لوٹ کو
میں نہیں مانتا میں نہیں جانتا

تم نے لوٹا ہے صدیوں ہمارا سکوں
اب نہ ہم پر چلے گا تمہارا فسوں
چارہ گر دردمندوں کے بنتے ہو کیوں
تم نہیں چارہ گر کوئی مانے مگر
میں نہیں مانتا میں نہیں جانتا
(جالب 2005: 129)

“The light which gleams only in citadels
Turns up the delight of the public in the shadows
Derives its strength from others' weaknesses
Such type of system, like dawn without light
I refuse to accept, I refuse to acknowledge

I am not afraid of execution
Tell the world that I am a martyr

Why do you terrify me with the prison walls?
This drooping destiny, this night of obliviousness
I refuse to accept, I refuse to acknowledge

"Flowers are budding on twigs," you say
"Every glass overflow," you say
"Wounds are healing themselves," you say
These bare-faces lies, this abuse of the intelligence
I refuse to accept, I refuse to acknowledge

For centuries, you have taken our peace of mind
But your ruling is approaching a culmination
Why do you make-believe you can subdue miseries?
Even if one claims that you've healed them
I refuse to acknowledge; I refuse to accept."

Jalib declares his contempt for a capitalist system in Pakistan that feeds on the blood of the poor to keep the lights burning in the palaces of the privileged few. Jalib joined the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) founded by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto because socialism was part of its manifesto; however, Bhutto backed out of his promises to the people of Pakistan, and it brought an ideological clash for Jalib who criticized Bhutto's policies and was imprisoned. Jalib refers to Bhutto's government as the repressive state apparatus. He blames the state for exploiting the proletariat for its benefit. Jalib also coined the slogan بیس گھرانے (*Bees Gharanay*, '20 Families') as a protest against the ownership and control of eighty percent of the country's resources in the grip of only twenty elite families of Pakistan. In contrast, the rest of the eighty percent of people were being fed only on twenty percent of the country's resources. He further declares that he is not fearful of writing against the ideological shackles controlled by the ruling elite (Zaidi 2014: 1).

Furthermore, Jalib is fearless in the face of all atrocities as he announces that he is neither afraid of the death sentence nor imprisonment. Jalib refers to himself as *mansoor*,⁹ 'a martyr.' He proclaims that he is not afraid of the police or the mullahs, the tools of the repressive state apparatus, who heap charges of blasphemy on those who defy the status quo. Jalib was skeptical about the mullah-

⁹ Mansoor is a reference to the Persian Sufi saint Mansoor Al-Hallaj (858-922), who was executed because he went too far on the path of truth and called himself *انالحق* (*anal-Haq*, 'The Truth, God'). His claim was interpreted as the claim of divinity, and on another level, as the annihilation of his ego (Ibn Al-'Arabī 2007: 1).

military alliance in Pakistan, the interrelated workings of religion and the military, as they wanted to control the public by their blind obedience.

Another essential agent of the ideological state apparatus is the media. Jalib exposes the role of mass media in this poem as he narrates how media hides, molds, (de)forms, and reforms the societal realities to convince the people to instinctively obey the ruling class to maintain their unquestioned authority on the lives of the masses. He describes how the media censors everything and reshapes people's ideologies to perpetuate the ruling class's ideas. However, Jalib refuses to yield to this enslavement of minds, saying --- *اس کھلے جھوٹ کو --- ذہن کی لوٹ کو --- میں نہیں مانتا ---* (*is khule jhuuṭ ko zehñ kī luuṭ ko maiñ nahīñ māntā*, 'These bare-faces lies... this abuse of the intelligence.... I refuse to accept').

In the current context, Gramsci's concept of hegemony is often employed to explain the authority of the media in contemporary societies. Concerning the media, the concept of ideology refers to the ideas behind a media narrative and the ideological agenda of the producer of that narrative (Jubilee 1988: 8). Within society, the predominant accepted ideas and values will be those of the dominant class, and ideas are accepted via the process of hegemony. Jalib criticizes politicians' exaggerated claims, for they are made only to discourage the public from taking action against state institutions, what Althusser terms as Repressive State Apparatuses, and Jalib refuses to accept and acknowledge this type of government which only practices capitalism and dictatorship, and does not provide rights to the poor classes.

As a Marxist, Jalib addresses these ideological state apparatuses (ISA), the media, political organizations, and religious institutions that they should practice happiness, prosperity, and equality in society by listening to the voices of the people and by practicing real democracy, which points out toward socialism- in which there is no exploitation of the poor. However, when the political and ruling authorities do not do practically and only halt the false notion of helping the poor and wounded ones, Jalib mentions them as "bare face lies," and considers it the failure of the government which accomplishes her duties only cursorily, in words, slogans, and dialogues. He challenges the politicians' claims of bringing happiness, prosperity, and healing wounds as "bare, unaccomplished, and unadorned" within sociological analyses of the media, where words are without actions.

By the end of the poem, Jalib turns the whole political system on its head by blatantly refusing to accept any of its workings. He accuses state institutions- police, army, and churches of depriving people of their freedom and exploiting their minds, and challenges the status quo by negating the capitalist's ideology. He also warns that this system will soon end (maybe through a revolution). He questions the politicians' high claims of serving people facing poverty when they are too absorbed in caring for their interests. He believes the capitalists to be the biggest exploiters and unworthy of being called the well-

wishers of society. He refuses to acknowledge their power and questions their services, loyalties, and fidelities to the commoner. Thus, the political ideology of Habib Jalib and his resistance against oppression also reflected in his poem, make him the treasure of ingenuity and an immortal figure.

5. Conclusion

The revolutionary poetry of Faiz and Jalib has raised hope in the people of Pakistan, transformed them to think, and motivated them to oppose imperialism and social systems of exploitation. Their writings have enabled people to speak out for their rights and fight against the hegemonic intentions of the government and ruling classes. Their works have also proved that in order to get rid of the oppression of capitalists and to cure the plight of the working-class further struggle is needed. Jalib's poem is an iconic struggle passing on a lesson to the people for a decisive revolutionary step. On the other hand, through his poetry, Faiz has also encouraged the oppressed people to change their environment to achieve the goal of individual mental freedom. Overall, it has been noted that the poems of Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Habib Jalib reflect the pulse of the people. They represent the oppressed masses, and through their writings, they fight against social injustices, state oppression, and abuse of power. When viewed collectively, these writers' poetic works have shown Pakistan's socio-political timeline. Both poets have excelled in their global mindedness and service to humanity through poetry, rising above the growth of toxic ideas of division—be it on the basis of class, ethnicity, or nationality—that has sickened the sub-continent (India and Pakistan) for decades. Hence, this article concludes that the thought-provoking and motivating poetry of Faiz and Jalib is a medium to shift society's social and political fabric even in the contemporary era.

References

- Ali, Agha S. 1990. "The True Subject: The Poetry of Faiz Ahmad Faiz." *Grand Street* 9/2: 129-136. doi:10.2307/25007348.
- Ahmad, Bilal. 2007. "Faiz, Faiz Ahmad (1911–1984), poet in Pakistan." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/95337>, Online. London: Oxford University Press.
- Althusser, Louis. 2014. *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. Brooklyn, NY: Verso Books.
- Arif, Iftikhar and Waqas Khawaja. 2010. *Modern Poetry of Pakistan*. Champaign, IL: Dalkey Archive Press.
- Arif, Muhammad. 2010. *Romance and Poetry*. Lahore: Pakistan Writers Cooperation Press.
- Bendix, Reinhard and Seymour M. Lipset. 1976. *Class, Status, and Power: Social Stratification in Comparative Perspective*. New York, NY: Free Press.

- Barelvi, Mujahid. 1991. *Habib Jalib shakhsiyyat, shairi*. Karachi: Jumhoori Publications.
- Bates, Thomas R. 1975. "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36/2: 351-366.
- Faiz, Alys, Carlo Coppola and Mohtashim A. Beg. 1974. "Faiz Ahmad Faiz: A personality sketch of the poet by his wife." *Journal of South Asian Literature* 10/1: 123-130.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40871726>.
- Faiz, Faiz A., فیض احمد ، فیض . 1990. *Naqsh-e faryādi*, نقش فریادی. Aligarh: Educational Book House.
- Faiz, Faiz, A., Carlo Coppola and Munibur Rehman. 1974. "Faiz on Faiz: A rare occasion on which Pakistan's foremost poet speaks about himself." *Journal of South Asian Literature* 10/1: 131-139.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40871727>.
- Faiz, Ahmad Faiz. 2000. *Poems by Faiz*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Faiz, Faiz A. 2011. Life and Poetry. *Dawn Newspaper*, 17 February 2011.
<https://www.dawn.com/news/606752/faiz-ahmed-faiz-life-and-poetry>.
- Giddens, Anthony and David Held. 1982. *Classes, Power, and Conflict: Classical and Contemporary Debates*. Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press.
- Hussain, Ashfaq and Sohail, Khalid. 2011. *Faiz A Poet of Peace from Pakistan: his Poetry, Personality, and Philosophy*. Karachi: Pakistan Study Center, University of Karachi.
- Ibn Al-'Arabī, M. I. 2007. *Sufis of Andalusia: The Ruh Al-Quds and Al-Durat Fakhirah*. London: Routledge.
- Jalib, Habib, حبیب، جالب . 2005. *Dastūr*, دستور . Lahore: Mavra Books and Publications.
- Jubilee, Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. 1988. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Lone, Ghulam Q, لون، غلام قادر . 2022. *Habib Jalib*. حبیب جالب. Accessed through www.mazameen.com.
- Mir, Ali H. and Raza Mir. 2006. *Anthems of Resistance: A Celebration of Progressive Urdu Poetry*. New Delhi: Roli Books Private.
- Nazir, Farkhanda. 2013. "Impact of Class on Life: A Marxist Study of Thomas Hardy's Novel Tess of the D'Urbervilles." *Language in India* 13/6: 192-228.
<http://www.languageinindia.com/june2013/farkhandatessfinal.html>.
- Pakistan Forum. 1971. *Newsfront*. Middle East Research and Information Project 2/2: 19-20.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2568958>.
- Rahim, Riz. 2008. *In English, Faiz Ahmad Faiz*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris.
- Rahman, Sarvat and Faiz Ahmad Faiz. 1999. "Poet of Love and Rage." *India International Center Quarterly* 26/3: 105-118.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/23005472>.
- Sani, Tina. 2003. "Tina Sani Talks Faiz and Iqbal." *Tribune*, March 20, 2003.
- Singh, Ranjit. 2016. "Why We Need Revolutionary Poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz More than Ever." *Lithub*. Accessed: December 05, 2016.

Said, Edward Wadie. 1992 *The Question of Palestine*. Washington: National Geographic Press.

Toor, Sadia. 2014. *The State of Islam: Culture and Cold War in Pakistan*. London: Pluto Press.

Wright, Olin. E. 2015. *Understanding Class*. London: Verso Books.

Zaidi, Bilal. H. 2014. “Habib Jalib- A true people’s poet.” *Dawn Newspaper*, April 27, 2014.

Farkhanda Shahid Khan is working as a lecturer in the department of English Literature at Government College University Faisalabad, Pakistan. Currently, she is a doctoral fellow in the School of Literatures, Languages & Cultures at the University of Edinburgh. Khan works on Feminism, Marxism, Culture, and Gender & Sexuality with a focus on the Global South. She can be reached at: farkhandashahidkhan@gcuf.edu.pk