

Progressive Pash

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Abstract

In this paper I try to examine those conditions of the possibilities of how Pash bereft of the cadre of Progressive National Bourgeoisie was actually one of the Progressive poets? As part and parcel of the recuperation process this paper will attempt to see how Pash reckoning with dark times, from 1950s to 1988, in which he lived and realized the culture as a whole terrain for struggle, mediated in his poetic oeuvre? How recognizing radical and inevitable connection between a writer's real social relationships and the style or forms or content of his work as the expressions of these relations Pash disinvest himself from that Progressive Fascist attitude which was dominant structure of feeling of Khalistani elements active in Punjab by being cognizant of its Reactionary Progressive attitude? Inquiring into the texture this his Progressive schemata as how on one side induced by Naxalite ideology infiltrated by AICCCR (All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries) engaged in guerrilla warfare raging throughout the country during 1969, Pash is opposed to the Akali Fascist who were also working on the principles of the warfare- informed by their Regional Syndicalism? Despite the fact that after 1964, for electoral gains the two offshoots CPI and CPM formed alliances with Akali Dal, giving this party, which had worked with the principle of Minority Communalism throughout, certain credibility and legitimacy. Subsequently inquiring into the texture of his commitment to see had he given up the spontaneity of his being for a more regulated, destined future perpetuated by the epistemic categories of CPI's affiliations to/of Socialist future as a literal destination? Then looking at to what extent his Progressive self recognizes the fact of absorbed complexities of the social contradictions within, generated by the material social relationships of the dominant habitus, and to what extent he is effecting, disturbing and determining them?

How in rejecting the automatic inevitablism of Khalistani ideology Pash attempts to activate specific relations among 'species-being' using poetry for its project as the material articulation, which materializes the recognition of

the lived experience in which specific consciousness, specific feeling is realized? And in this way struggling against Revisionism, Capitalist restoration, Fascism, Militarism Pash effects not only the context - of what is communicated but also the social relationships within which the communication takes place!

Keywords: Progressive Pash, Swadeshiness, Moronization, Naxalism.

Introduction

‘Chaos is necessary for the birth of a new star’- Sachin Sanyal

To see his vociferous decisionism (in Schmittian sense) where there is a clear sense as to who is friend and who is enemy we will consider Pash’s three collection of poetry. First is Loh Kathaf Iron’s Tale) 1970. Second is Ud De Bajjan Magar (In Pursuit of Flying Eagles)1974. Third is Saade Samian Vich(in Our Times)1978.

But before going to the texts lets us have a brief overview of the residual effects of Extremist dissent which started in 1900 in Punjab ultimately turning out to be one of the very important cause for the death of Pash. This extremist dissent had been basically a set of Factional quarrel between Lala Harkishan Lai and Lala Lajpat Rai splitting Lahore Brahmo Samaj because both had certain alternative strategies and ideals to put forward for controlling Congress and providing it a national character to fight for independence. Two issues emerged from this quarrel at that period. First, idea of Swadeshiness largely self-development through constructive work which was basically ignoring rather than directly attacking foreign rule something which later emerged as a section of Comprador Bourgeoisie. The second stand was of Revolutionary Terrorism- which sought short cut to freedom via individual violence and conspiracies. Then the event which further aggravated this factional extremism was the prosecution of the Punjabee, a newspaper by Lala Lajpat Rai and Hansraj for writing about racist outrages at the time and the trial of its editor led to the demonstrations and stray attacks on "Whites, furthermore the Land Alienation Act in February 1907 led to the protest movement organized by Siraj- ud-din Ahmad and Ajit Singh(uncle of Bhagat Singh) in 1909 through the journal Anjuman-i-Mohibeen-i- Wttan in Lahore urging people for not paying revenue and water rates. Something which later sought Akali’s as

Sole point for their politics of minority communalism. Idea of the water of five rivers exclusively for Punjab.

Its overseas counterpart was seen in Ghadr movement in 1913 in San Francisco by Hardayal who turned communist under Rattan Singh and Tara Singh Swantrata. Then after the communist conference in Kanpur in December 1925 by Hasrat Mohani whose subsequent developments were also being published in the journal called Kirti in Punjab drew in some radicals from Babbar Akali forming Kirti Kissan Party under Sohan Singh Josh. And from this period onwards structural homology of the class struggle of radical extremist was appropriated and restated by Sikh Communalist in caste struggle. More openly and vociferously after Partition when Akali openly denied the idea of secular polity. Fuelling the communalism through victim's psyche rumouring around about all sorts of conspiracies being fabricated against Sikhs. And Congress along with Hindu Nehru who ruled from Delhi became the special target for Akalis.

Victim's psyche on which Akali's capitalized its political agenda that Punjab, because of being a Sikh state, and Akali Dal, being a Sikh party, were above the political norms and the structure of the country or the interest of other neighbouring states or democratic federal mechanisms for the resolution of interstate dispute. Punjab to be a Sovereign state. As in 1953 All India Akali Conference declared it to be, using SGPC (Sheromai Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee) 700 gurudwara's as the political units to disseminate Akali politics. Rejecting Nehru's accommodative strategies by getting them sign pacts twice in 1948 and 1956 to shed their communal character, asking again for Khalistan based on two issues. First for linguistic region and second for Punjabi Suba by Master Tara Singh but rejected by SRC (State Reorganization Commission) in 1956. The reason for which Akali joined hands with CPI and CPM to get political mileage. CPI which started contesting elections, trapped into Parliamentary democracy, but CPM, the party formed out of two strong organizations, Maoist Communist Centre fused with People's War Group, kept itself distanced from CPI by remaining engaged in guerrilla warfare. But third presence was felt of Communist Ghadr Party of India which opposed the capitalist democracy of Congresswallahs and the Parliamentarianism of CPI and CPI (Marxist) and Akali's demand for sovereign theocratic state- looking for a way out of this Political hara-kiri.

Since 1970s was the zenith for Khalistani's, the separate state was accorded to them in 1966 through Punjab State Reorganization Bill. However it's this historically specific time generating celebratory atmosphere against which in his Preface to Loh Katha (1970) asserts these poems are written 'in the name of those people whose outcry or sigh arising from their misery had merged into the air regarded boon for life'.

Despite being a jat sikh, himself who were supporting Akali's by and large, Pash is dissecting that socially elaborated desire of Akali s whose dominant presence led to the inculcation of the infinitesimal adjustments which in turn generated a compromise function advocating their reactionary fascism. Adjustments made quite apparent in his poem Bharat, where a farmer instead of looking for a separate state of Punjabi suba is still governed by that automation of his bodily constraints of which hunger is one of the vociferous exponents, governing him and with which he fights without any sense of time or history -

To me this word (Bharat)
For those sons of the soils stand
Who with the shades of trees
Still measures the passing of time,
With no problem except the belly,
They, when by hunger are oppressed
Can munch even their own bones.
Death is not less than a deliverance
If life is convention for them.

This is exactly how his fikre- bazi defamiliarizes the dominant progressive secular aesthetic filtrated through the systematic moronization by Congresswallahs through the 'spectacle of democracy' but withheld from people because of its resulting in threat to power if attained. Hierarchy and Equality being played off with each other by congress rationalist discourse, which democratized capitalism, 'one man, one vote' by Nehruvian unholy alliance between equality and progress, socialism and capitalism. At the same time there is also a distance from Khalistani's populist ultra-nationalism moving towards spiritual values and organic institutions to counter congressian homogenizing effect of capitalist democracy. Quite clear from his poem Two and Two makes Three:

Acceptance of demands
Does by bombs precede
And love for the motherland
Does espionage conceal,
Most heinous betrayal
Does highest office achieve.

If all this you believe
 Then two and two makes three
 Present is mythical past
 And like a spoon is cast.

This is how Pash reveals the existence of revolutionary situation as a necessity in the perception of radical disorder as seen in the poem I Contend

Some contend...
 For words cannot configure speech...
 Some contend...
 For words have lost their power...
 And I contend
 Don't talk of the part the journey entailed
 Provide me space for the next step to take.

Showing that objective situation for revolution is existing but what he is hinting is the subjective potential is to be realized. Quite explicit in these lines from Dissolution

But how can the dead lion revive
 When the addict has forsaken the opium?

As there is an onerous blockage within this renunciation of apathy and wake that tends to enervate him completely. The poem is a powerful exposition of the dilemma which a person faces when the desire to shift from/predicative existence to (transitive/living is to be realized in practise.

However one cannot afford not to recognize how efficaciously and powerfully Pash invest in the political state of peasantry, realization of it as ajihistorical actor in struggle in the poem For Withered Flowers

What had gone wrong with you, the literate one?...
 To the existentialism you profess.
 Hanging you on the point of spear
 We shall transport you to the moon,
 We are naive, village-bom people
 With neither Apollo nor Luna at hand

Not as an amorphous action or autonomous action but a guided one, in Marxian sense, to de territorialize the constellation of mute forces devised by intellectual and political phelewans like Partap singh khairon and Darbara singh- two stalwart sikh leaders of congress or for that matter Sant Fateh_singh, Master Tara singh or Jamail jingh bhindrawale. Maintaining his internationalist perspective addressing the class, labour politics as American Apollo and Russia Luna occurs in close proximity bearing-Pash feeling about the American capitalist imperialism and the Soviet social imperialism being in league against the vast multitude of the poor countries of the world. And the use of spear, echoing Mao, as an archaic tool is called up because to wield spear from close range it ask for determined initiative and will of peasantry.

Moreover this process of dissecting the hegemony of the constitutive forms informing the social production of consciousness which leads to the readability of political signification of his work without having to use the terms of already distributed bourgeois sensible coordinates actually disturbs the stable bourgeois understanding of the literary as seen in the poem "Beautiful Prison Wall Papers"

At last I have to admit
When to Jupiter - begotten
Aristotle's son I bade
To let the sunlight fall
I had on only a loin cloth,
That is why fine papers

I have consigned to fire
And with a bayonet fixed to the pen
On the jail walls I want to write
With a smuggler's intent to prove
That beyond the distant horizon
Hills are there
Fields are there
Upon whose terrain
Rays and Pens
Can very well cohere

Deploying his political intent as the art of the possible, in Luckas terminology. Possibility of affecting, disturbing and determining the hegemonic form of Akal's who advocated the fight for political and ideological hegemony over the people of Punjab turning-the decades of seventies and eighties of general insurgency and armed uprising. Pash though aware of the fact of historical transition and role of consciousness for social formation, mobilizes the forces of faith and people's conviction infiltrated with progressive content seen in his - poem An Open Letter

It is a brutal clash of classes and concepts
 It is killing and being killed
 And the overcoming of death
 As a thorny cactus today
 The corpse of Warish Shah has grown
 On society's body-politics.
 Tell it that beyond the time of Warish now
 It is the age of Vietnam,
 Each Khera is the battlefield
 Where war is raged for our right's now

It is precisely in this way this shaire-e-inqalab by suspending the suspension of the political is sensitizing the protest potential of the peasantry. Showing us how the literary is linked to the revolution in assessing the preparedness of the revolutionary forces quite apparently in the poem In Her Name

My every joy is tied to the freedom of the crops,
 Every peasants tale tells the story of your smile,
 My fate is one with the fate of the changing time,
 My tale is but the tale of shining sword.
 Bitterness has so hardened my face
 That moonlight gets scratched at its sight,
 My life bitterness reserves for history'
 The challenge to awaken the people's might.

Opening up those enclosed patterns of social relations through which the emergence of the individual projects (like here of Pash) and the real history of other contemporary projects and of the developing forms and structures

are realized to be continuously and substantially interactive. Making it apparent that 'social relations are not only received :they are also made and can be transformed' paving the way in his second collection of poetry In Pursuit of Flying Eagles(1974) where his poetic practise tends to articulate the feelings of prospective, revolution leaving behind the topicality imbibed through Naxalism which asked for pristine revolution to occur in almost an apocalyptic way. As the poem of the same title synchronises with the Trotsky's concept of permanent and on-going revolution. To be its vehicle, the interlocutor renegotiates pursuits of eagles as the leitmotif of the poem. As in folklore the pursuit of flying eagles is believed to persist till it strikes the centre of the sun

Who knows when may come here
 Critics wearing red badges
 And start the campaign
 To pour false praise on poems,
 Before police station's
 Daily expanding building
 Takes hold of your village, your family
 Before the trembling leaf of your honour
 Gets glued to the daily records
 Of that rapier-tongued munshi
 Friends, it is better now indeed
 In pursuit of the flying eagles, to proceed.

Making clear that socialist future he is envisaging is not a literal destination whose function is untimed but has to be pursued through a long revolution in which poetry would notfnerely anticipate it through correctly understanding the contradictions, generated by the objective structure of capitalist democracy, which are going to bring about the revolution. But also in affecting them by its active reproduction, quite apparent in the poem "Where Poetry Reaches its End "

Poetry for you
 Is like benches the opposition occupies
 Which raising a cry against terror
 Always bows its head down
 Before interdicting for a fight,

Excuse me, my village-friends, My poetry cannot solve your problems.

The solution of your problem is such

For which poetry cannot at all vie

It takes you too far

In quest of things so different,

The solution of problems is such

That your forbearance slaps you

Right on your cowardly face,

And you then start from the place

Where poetry reaches it end.

Creating an aesthetic situation where Rancierian Hetrology is observed which disturbs the meaningful fabric of the sensible, so a spectacle becomes something like Extra-aesthetic which exists outside the network of meanings defined by the coordinates where it appears. An aesthetic situation which becomes Extra-aesthetic informing the human reaction to reality representing a particular stage of the division of labour. This is exactly the stance where it seems that Pash is not looking for a politically committed aesthetic. As quite apparently he rejects the notion of self-transcendence in socialist trajectory handed over from Hegelian Left appropriated by subsequent communist cadres as a duty bound approach. A notion of self-transcendence quite clearly seen in CPI and CPI (Marxist) as they opted for Parliamentarianism in 1970s against which Communist Ghadr Party of India reacted ideologically the self-transcendence work with the idea of as If I can change myself I can change the world, self-mastery, self-realization, self-abnegation. If it is such then one is dividing oneself into something which is not you. Hence there is a distrust in this liberty of self-transcendence which Berlin calls Positive Liberty. Something quite contrary to Marxian idea of Species-being and quite apparent in the poem "Where Poetry Does not End"

Then they, the advocates of truth, came along

With the chopper of dispensation in their hands,

Only then the truth of it all I sifted

That chopper and flag are fashioned alike...

I have got all benumbed

Going about in the mechanical commotion

Where bands in their bling rage struck against meanings

To what end have I come

I, who wanted a human being to become.

Therefore Pash creation of the Extra-aesthetic situation informed by his human reaction to reality tries to do away with those affective ties of melancholia (in Ashis Nandy's terminology where one has absorbed the love and hatred of the other) as the generative mechanisms of either self-transcendence (the dominant structure of feeling of Communist in 1970s to 1980s Punjab) or the Fascist self-glorification (the second dominant structure of feeling of Akali s during the time). As instead of looking for either of these abstract and absolute entities Pash is looking for Negative Liberty which calls for participation, actualization of the possibilities, total mobilization which cannot be realized by aligning either to the cause of the rationality of the state (capitalist democracy of congress) or the irrationality of private religion (Akali's communalism). Quite clear persistence of the cultural above the political, culture as the terrain for long revolution by mapping out the wholeness of the process. As his commitment is politically polyvalent one, not reduced to some propaganda, in Adorno's sense. As in recognizing the violence of conscription of structural violence effected by the political economy which produces certain forms of epistemologies through which a subject, particularly an oppressed subject articulated his/her being. Epistemologies determined by the dominant habitus Pash recognizes the fact that subject is not entirely determined by these epistemologies particularly against which h"e has to "commit himself which will ultimately bum itself down to propaganda. Because of which Pash asserts in his poem Talking to a Comrade

Comrade don't you know, this bourgeoisie,

Has like old wine bettered.,

And we like old meat have stalled!

The petty bourgeoisie is still fugitive

As from lunatic asylum absconding

But not from struggle, for theory

Like the household or the police

Is still at his track

Precisely addressing the problematic as this theory of Marxism is also one of the strategically contained form of violence to the self which is of

conscription, adherence and subscription to the end mechanically envisaged by it (establishing the domination of epistemological structures). Interpellating the self and convincing it for the end as a literal destination after achieving which everything will be good, a desire inscribed by the capitalist modernity in which human history moves in stages, immanent direction as Pash asserts

How could I break the siege of monstrous hordes?

You by making reed-pens of that all

Provide entertainment to cowardly critics,

be it so for scholars the police patronizes

But why for you, comrade

Poet's felicity is essentially his defeat?

Comrade! You have learnt to hate the defeated

You little know of those who could not win!

Quintessential making a case for spontaneity, lightness, quickness, exactitude, visibility, multiplicity, consistency instead moving on a regulated track provided by party's dictates or theory's interpellation. Though Marxian theory one is aware, conscious about the hegemonic noumenal structures and generative mechanisms fabricated by capitalist world which in turn determines the epistemologies through which subject recognizes his/her identity but there is also the subject potential of human Self not entirely determined by episteme. But works with its own relative autonomy through his/her lived experience as Pash asserts:

Comrade! You don't know the havoc

You have done to words

What ill had they caused to you

Those feelings wrapped in words?

Why their dispensation

To authoritarian brokers?

Comrade! Why did become their dowry

The windfall of class-hatred?...

I have suffered words with their sharp edges,

In their bid to escape the severity of winter
I have provided them shelter in my blood.

Breaking away from these epistemologies toward a reontologized claim upon being by negotiating the power relation between one's identity and one's self as he asserts

For you, comrade, the state is a manager
 Made of five Roman bricks
That you see feeding a four-homed bull,
 But for me, wayward by nature,
Court is no word of sacrosanct import
That in me like a bamboo-stick sprout
 Each day when hearing took place
Human to me my own self had seemed
If a sound, strange like a signal from space,
Had not through its own darkness whistled
 'Pash versus State' in my ears.
 Can you believe it, comrade,
 After hearing that sound
Neither Pash nor State can abound.

Hitting out powerfully at that collective amnesia of the 'given' turning people into tolerant progressives or reactionary modernist. The noxious consequence of which will prostitute politics to the fatalist philosophy rendering people as passive plastic material to be imperatively reformed in the role prescribed to it by any vanguard theory, it share in freedom.

Moving away from such epistemologies rendering human beings as fixed, exploited, victim subject and the limited future embourgeoisement that these epistemologies allow as Pash asserts

With my middle-class deception
 This is how I have escaped
The police-dragnet, the moneyed people lay.
Where is your revolutionary pistol, comrade!
 For a try on my bourgeois' sober way.

Poet as I am, breast is ingrained with west
 In which all the talking suns set,
 Likewise when acme of my talk is reached
 I fail to judge how at wrong time
 The sun of class-hatred sets
 And I wish to vex time's aged smile
 For a moment I wish that from somewhere
 May come that hermit, Newton's diamond I mean
 And fell the burning candle headlong
 In the open slit of my head
 And reduce them to ashes before
 Certain incomplete reports in my brain
 Get moulded into a theory
 For their non-burning too much risk

A rare sense of self-reflexivity by inquiring into the motivations of vanguards who takes the misery of toiling, complaining millions as only the raw material which can be wrought upon and traded in, for one's own poor hide-bound theories and egoisms whose relative idea of revolution can possibly push the real revolutionary purpose into abstraction. And whose alignment, mistaken to be the commitment to revolutionary purpose can doubly alienate the revolutionary forces. First alienation from the recognition of that wholeness of the process which culture enables them to discover. Secondly in form of identifying themselves to that vanguard whose fundamental forms of material social relations remains alienated from the working class social relations.

So the revolution has to be against that disordered struggle where one is not clear who is friend in arms and who the enemy in literary is.

Disordered struggle because every revolutionary impulse or sentiment (coming in form of Babbar Khalsa International, International Sikh Youth Federation, All India Sikh Student Federation, Bhindrawala Tiger Force of Khalistan, Khalistan Guerrilla Force, CPI (Maoist), CPI (M.L) Janashakti) was more or less trying to make impact based on the forms perceived through cultural negation which in turn led to bourgeois formations. Since Pash, the baker of revolutionary sentiment, a renegade, maverick avowedly declared himself against all these reactionary forces quite apparent in the poem,

about Indra Gandhi's assassination and subsequent riots in Delhi and Punjab during and after 1984, "Application for Disinheritance"

If whole country mourns the death of one
Against whom I thought and wrote all my life
Then my name off its register do strike...

I have always killed her
In each breast that I got to know
If her killing is to be revenged thus on roads
Then mine be the one to face its rigour,
I don't want to escape simply because
To her minions I am not known at all.
Whatever be the name of this kingdom of rouses:
I spit on its so called citizens.

Also bringing out 'Anit-1947' a hard hitting journal from U.S.A , lashing out against every Left-liberal, Rightist, Centrist as his poem Commitment reveals this attitude

We don't want to read books
Tucked on the lathis of the police
We don't want to hear songs
Declaimed to the tune of military boots...
Or one's own blood on the tongue
Is not a recreation for anyone
We don't want anything for form's sake
We want everything actual
Life, Socialism or what not.....

A commitment which was considered going too far but in Maoist words this going too far was the very thing required for revolution as said ' without the poor peasants there would be no revolution ...Many of their deqis in the period of revolutionary action, which were labelled going too far, were in fact the very things the revolution required'. Hence being the oppositional emergent to the dominant, Pash was gunned down by reactionary terrorist on 23rd march 1988 as on this very day fifty seven years back, the great martyr Bhagat Singh was hanged to the consternation of all who loved the

motherland. Pash" murder, when he was not thirty eight yet, might provoke the consternation of all, who have concern for life, the people, their joys and sorrows. Is it not this concern after all that he had wanted his contribution to his contemporaries revealing the gesture of defiance in the face of defeat. Something which reveals his progressive faith as in the poem "You"

Look! I have to face the heavens
As a man of honour when, defeated
Looks defiant into the foe's eyes.

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