

Communalism : Absurdity as a tool to rake up hatred

Calling the poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz as anti-Hindu is absurd. But the Hindu communal forces use absurd accusations not only to rake up communal hatreds but also as a part of their attacks on the progressive and Marxist ideology and dismantling progressive and Marxist personalities and their role in the advancement of our society. They resort to physical elimination of the progressive persons like Kalburgi and Gowri Lankesh. They resort to smear campaign on towering historical personalities in their attempt to give a communal colour to the history.

Many an intellectuals, artists and writers are agitated about the IIT, Kanpur's decision to form a panel to examine whether the poem, "*Hum Dekhenge*" by Faiz Ahmed Faiz was communal and hurt sentiments. This decision came after a temporary faculty member Vashimat Sharma and 16 others complained against students reciting the poem in support of students of Jamia Milia Islamia in Delhi.

Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911-1984) was one of the greatest Urdu poets. Before the transfer of power, the city of Lahore was the center of Urdu literature and progressive thought. Here Faiz was born and brought up. He was part of the All India Progressive Writers Association formed in 1936 with the aim of promoting equality and social justice. Many of its leading lights were linked to the communist movement and Faiz was a Marxist writer.

In his poem "*Mujh se pehlisi mohabbat mere mehboob na maang*", Faiz tells that his passion for his beloved is bound to be diluted because a major part of his energies has to be diverted to fighting oppression and injustice.

The partition of India along with the independence anguished Faiz. In his poem "*Subh-e-Azadi*" he said "surely this is not the dawn we wanted so eagerly".

Faiz was jailed several times during 1950s for his progressive and Marxist ideas. He was incarcerated during the regime of Zia-ul-Haq which was an authoritarian and fundamentalist rule. He wrote "*Hum Dekhenge*" calling for resistance against Zia's rule. The essence of this poem is that the day is bound to come when dictators behave like gods will be toppled and the will of the people prevail.

More than 35 years after his death in 1984, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, was branded as communalist. Since Narendra Modi became Prime Minister attempt are being made to brand him as such. In 2016, at the Mumbai Film Festival, a film called *Jago Hua Savera*, written by Faiz, was banned from screening. In 2018, his daughter Moneeza Hashmi was not allowed to attend the Asia Media Summit in New Delhi. Faiz is part of our collective heritage, and shared past. Any attempt to redefine it in terms of Hindu communal chauvinism should be repulsed by one and all.
