

A Critical Analysis of Gadaism in the Light of Chinese Socialism

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Abdul Karim Gadai (1901-1978)

Abstract

The political ideas of Abdul Karim Gadai, a revolutionary resistance poet of the colonial and post-colonial eras of Sindh, have been subject to a shower of conflicting, and often erroneous surmises. Among such ill-informed conjectures is his being identified with the Maoist philosophy or the Chinese version of Socialism. On the face of it, Gadaism seems like having a lot in common with Maoism esp. the former's accent on the class of peasantry. However, as we burrow deeper into it, their convergence begins to dwindle. By posing a hypothesis that dismisses any relationship of Gadai's political thought with the Chinese Socialism, the poetic verses of Gadai Sahab, sifted under purposive sampling, have been put to the extensive scrutiny by means of the qualitative

content analysis. The findings of the study reveal that Socialism of the Chinese model has no bearing on Abdul Karim Gadai's credo whatsoever. Gadai Sahab at his best was a resistance poet who protested the perpetuation of the legacy of exclusion bequeathed by the British colonialism calling boldly for a thorough reconfiguration of the society based on socio-economic justice. However, unlike socialism, he preferred the evolutionary constitutional approach to politics in which change hinges entirely on the judicious exercise of ballot by a voter.

Keywords: Abdul Karim Gadai, Mao Zedong, Socialism, Maoism.

Introduction

Gadaism refers to the political ideas of Gadai as reflected in his poetry. Abdul Karim Gadai (1901-1978), henceforth referred to as Gadai Sahab (his pseudonym) was the extremely underrated revolutionary poet of colonial and post-colonial Sindh. All along his poetic career extending over almost six decades, he remained off the limelight. After his death to even this day, he has failed to win renown he truly deserves as a poet extraordinaire. In the Sindhi literary circles, literators betray a nodding acquaintance with him, his works and his thought. In public, his name is subject to anonymity. In other words, Gadai Sahab has been wholly consigned to oblivion. Whosoever has put pen to paper to write on him can hardly be appreciated to have done justice to him. Articles piling up in the substandard magazines and newspapers have but mutilated the rich texture of his thought. The erroneous contextualization of his thought has led to the basis of his philosophy having been clouded. There is a gap to fill by demystifying what forms the bedrock of Gadai Sahab's political thought or at least by disproving the faulty propositions attributed to him.

Gadai was born to a rural humble family in colonial India. None of the members of the family ever received any education. By good fortune, little Gadai attended the primary school. Later, he secured himself free boarding. However, he could not continue his further education after Matriculation (Sadhayo 49). Gadai Sahab remained associated with journalism and poetry throughout his life. He was very prolific. In addition to the three books of poetry, he wrote a prose work on the history of Jacobabad. His poetry travels across vast and varied subjects. Nevertheless, 'post-independence disillusionment' is the kernel of his works. In the similar fashion, even though his poetry of love and romance is no less intriguing, the themes of politics, government, freedom, disappointment and the like dominate his poetry, as almost 95% of his poetic oeuvre relates to the latter.

The paper bids for a better appreciation to situate the political credo of Abdul Karim Gadai in the context of Maoism. Employing a relevant research method, we shall address the question posed in the study as to whether or not Gadai's political philosophy fits in with Maoist version of Socialism/Socialism with the Sino experience, and if it does, in what way basically. Accordingly,

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198

this study, espousing a deductive research approach, proceeds to formulate the hypothesis that much likeness notwithstanding, Gadai Sahab's political thought does not really correlate to Maoism. It may be highlighted here that their respective views on rural peasantry will specifically be focused on. Deduction refers to a method of reasoning where a conclusion is drawn logically from things already known (Jonker & Bartjan 143). In a research project operationalized using a deductive approach, a researcher operates according to a clear plan of action wherein research questions are already set forth and a hypothesis is laid down in advance for testing. According to Nayak and Priyanka, a hypothesis denotes a tentative supposition or provisional guess that explains a situation or phenomenon under observation. A hypothesis is a tentative generalization, the validity of which remains to be tested. In its most elementary stage the hypothesis may be any hunch, guess, imaginative idea which becomes the basis for further investigation (55).

Qualitative data analysis is one of the cumbersome exercises in social science research due to the nuances of the interpretation involved in it. It essays to capture subjective opinions and concepts. One of the methods in descriptive data analysis, content analysis, has been applied to the present research study. It involves the categorizing of textual data into clusters of conceptual categories or entities. Content analysis in the qualitative research is an interpretative exercise, which entails a thorough examination of texts where the latter is subject to open, intense and subjective interpretation (Given 120). A researcher using content analysis method digs painstakingly into the manifest as well as the latent multiple meanings. Simultaneously, he believes that text produced and the context in which it was produced are not mutually exclusive. Thus, it is context dependent. Content analysis though a member in the fraternity of such qualitative data analysis tools as thematic analysis, etc. is broader and more complicated. Becker & Lissmann outlines the forms of content: themes and main ideas of the text as primary content; context information as latent content (Myring 1). Thus, the researcher will take stock not only of the patent meanings reflected by Gadai's poetry, but also of the latent implications connoted therein. Additionally, the context of their production will also be sized up.

Research methods and techniques have systematically been calibrated to suit our study. The purposive sampling from the non-probability sampling, also known as *Selective, Subjective or Judgmental Sampling*, has been adopted to sift those poetic verses/poems of Abdul Karim Gadai appertaining to the Chinese socialism or bespeaking, to whatever extent, the attributes thereof.

According to Otho, Abdul Karim Gadai's poetry circles around the motif of class tension. Gadai Sahib is mouthpiece for the [subaltern class of] peasants, workers and students. He enquired reflectively into the predicament of his own class (36).

Ansari and Asifa observe that the subaltern find in Gadai's poetry the echo of theirs. He is affectionately remembered as the 'People's Poet' and "Poet of the wretched" and "Poet of the Farmers". His work mostly reverberates with the message for the oppressed. Gadai reaches the peasants convincing them that they are not eternally cursed to an ignoble life, and that change is their destiny provided that they collectively struggle. Gadai Sahab is for a socialist change. He holds the egalitarian precepts of socialism in a very high esteem. He visualizes a society existing on equality of all with no class differences and no victimization of one at the hands of the other (37-38). Likewise, Dr Dad Muhammad Khadim Brohi (72) believes that Gadai was not just a people's poet, but he was a *revolutionary* poet [italics by the researcher].

"Gadai Sahab believes in a class struggle and wants the constitution of such a society as may essentially be classless where every mortal may have equal opportunities and the same rights. He wants to abolish the class differences of the rusted society" (Mahar 123).

Chinese Socialism/Maoism

Socialism with the Chinese characteristics is the fusion of the following:

- 1) Marxism
- 2) Leninism
- 3) Stalinism
- 4) Maoism

However, above all, it derives both: inspiration and its substance from the teachings of Mao Zedong, the legendary Chinese statesman who brought about the sinicization of Marist socialism thus tailoring the latter to the Chinese conditions. Indeed, Mao's socialism issues forth from the Leninist school; he adopted Marxism, Leninism (a strand within Marxism) and Stalinism (a decomposed form of Leninism), as a method of analysis of the social reality of China (D'Mello 2). In fact, harmonizing the socialist creed with the Chinese society was one of the remarkable experiences in the communist world. To put it in other words, he made possible the enrichment or refinement of the original (D'Mello 2).

Mao, hailed as Chairman Mao (1893-1976), was a revolutionary ideologue, guerilla strategist and Chinese leader who became the founding father of the People's Republic of China. He was born to a rich peasant family (Chen 1). He was of the rebellious temperament even in the early days of his childhood. He defended truancy calling it strike (Chen 1). He had superb leadership qualities. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was tottering from crisis until Mao was elected its Chairman. He spearheaded the famous Red Army to the sixty thousand mile Long March. Mao's dynamic leadership steered the masses to the victory, ultimately leading to the establishment of Modern China, People's Republic of China in 1949.

Imperialism and feudalism were the two forces confronting the revolutionary class to reckon with. The landlords and the imperialists impeded the development and progress of China's productive forces; thereupon, they were the arch enemies of the Chinese people (Chen 41). They were operating in cahoots with each other to further their interests. As a consequence, there was unprecedented victimization of the lower classes esp. peasants. Living conditions of the proletariat in the pre-revolution China were appalling. According to Richards and Saba, situation arising out of the imperialist-feudal oppression was ripe for a spillover effect. Thus, the necessity as well as possibility of the change had already been created by the exploiters (2).

1. Dialectical Materialism

The Dialectical Materialism lies at the core of Marxism. Marx and Engels held that the development of the world hinges on the interaction of the opposites, which exist inside everything (Cheng 9). Lenin defines dialectics as study of the contradictions lying within the very essence of things (236).

“Every phenomenon in the nature exhibits this contradiction. The struggle between the positive and negative, the old and new, decaying and developing sides of the contradiction form the basis of the true essence of the development process of things” (Stalin 45).

Mao upholds the traditional notion of the operation of the laws of the dialectics as the governing factor in the society. He refines the said concept adding that the internal contradiction, which exists within a thing itself, and intercourse with other things lead to the development.

According to Mao:

It is that old unity and its constituent opposites yield place to a new unity and its constituent opposites, and the new process then emerges in place of the old. The old process is completed and the new one emerges. The new process in its turn contains a new contradiction, and the history of the development of its own contradiction begins (8).

2. Landed Gentry

Mao termed the class of landlords *the vassal* of the imperialists, depending for its very existence on the international capitalism. This class was a stumbling block to the development of the productive forces in China (Mao 13-14). “The feudal lords constitute the lynchpin of the imperial rule in the Chinese society” (Mao18). Mao characterized them as “the jackals of imperialism” (155). Interestingly, Mao believed that since the imperialists were at loggerheads with each other, their pet dogs, landlords, were also hostile towards one another.

3. Peasantry Class

According to Marx and Engels, peasants did not constitute a distinct economic class of their own. Instead, they were viewed as transitory groups that would progressively be reduced to proletariat (Cheng 30). Mao, on the other hand, placed huge significance in this class believing it to be the harbinger of the revolution. In illustrating the major role of the peasants in the revolution, he extolled them as the fountainhead of all the strength of industrial workers and army. This class was the mainstay of the market industry as well as was the real force to fight for a democratic order (Cheng 31).

Highlighting the hallowed character of this class, he says:
All the revolutionary comrades and all the parties will stand before the peasants to be tested and to be accepted or rejected as they may decide (22).

Mao Zedong studied the Chinese peasantry of the semi-feudal and semi-imperial society into three classes:

- 1) **The Rich Peasantry:** It was defined as the national bourgeoisie of the rural China. Despite the fact that it itself was engaged in the labour, it also exploited the farm labour by means of low wages, usury, and land-leasing (Cheng 30). However, having said that, Mao did not favor the extermination of this segment saying ‘they and their productive activities will come in handy in the times to come.’
- 2) **The Middle Peasants:** They included the petty bourgeoisie who, being self-sufficient, owned most of their land. Yet, they did not generally exploit others. This class was not immune from the exploitative imperialists and landlords.
- 3) **The Poor Peasants:** This, the most oppressed class, constituted about the seventy percent of the total population of rural China. They were designated by Mao as *semi-proletariat*. This peasant hardly possessed land of his own. Rather, to make both ends meet, he had to sell his labor or a part thereof under duress. “Of the most hard-pressed of the peasants, this class forms the centerpiece of any movement for a change, as it could be attracted to any revolutionary activity. It was therefore one of the most reliable allies of the Chinese proletariat” (Mao, Hunan, 22).

Mao’s proletariat thus were largely peasants who constituted the larger bulk of Chinese rural population who was subject to unimaginable oppressions at the hands of the landed gentry (Chen 32). China was chiefly an agricultural economy. Peasants made up for both military manpower as well as material and financial resources for sustaining a protracted war.

4. Nature of Revolution

Mao elaborated at a good length at more than one place the nature and objectives of the Chinese Revolution that he and his comrades sought to trigger in the semi-feudal and semi-imperial China. Initially, Mao had asserted that the objective was constitution of neither a socialist society nor a capitalist one. Instead, it aimed at the establishment of a democratic social system (Chen 43). Later he outlined the chief motive behind the anti-feudal and anti-imperial revolution that it would create merely a transitional stage to lead eventually up to a socialist society. Therefore, the nature of the revolution was not that of the proletarian socialism, but that of the bourgeois democracy.

In the original Marxist ideology, revolution was predicted to be sparked by urban proletariat comprised mostly of workers. Conversely, in the Maoist view, the mechanism of the revolution was quite reversed.

Marx said (78), *“Modern history is the urbanization of the countryside, and not as among the ancients, the ruralisation of the city.”*

To Mao, however, the modern history was shaped by the peasantry in the countryside who transported the revolution and their revolutionary activities to cities thus overwhelming the relatively conservative or reactionary urban dwellers (Meisner 28). Thus, Mao’s Ruralism focused predominantly on the development of the rural areas. In fact, the true base for the socialist reconstruction lay essentially with the rural peasants (Meisner 28). Maoism differs largely from Marxism and Leninism on more than one point.

After the revolution, the PRC (People’s Republic of China) transformed itself into a people’s democratic dictatorship. This was again unlike the traditional Marxist notion that the dictatorship of the proletariat would be established in the post-revolution epoch. Mao’s democracy was not that of the old type that was in vogue in the capitalist countries (bourgeois democracy). It was instead the democracy of the new type that was based on Democratic Centralism and Mass-line. It did not rest on the traditional practices such elections or parliamentary procedures (Karl 74).

The strategy of the war adopted by the Chinese Communists can be summed up in the following lines (Piao 9):

- i. To calculate on the class of the peasantry;
- ii. To set up a rural base;
- iii. To encircle the cities; and
- iv. To get hold of cities.

Mao Zedong lays an enormous emphasis on the role peasants had the potential to play in the revolution. In order to learn the proletarian virtues, visiting rural areas and living amongst the peasant class was indispensable. This class was in fact the mainstay of the socialist consciousness and anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism revolutionary struggle. Also, it was an anchor of the post-revolution transformation of the PDR. But as to how to win over this class was a question confronting the communists. Chairman Mao put forward its answer (Snow 1970):

"Whoever wins the peasants will win China. Whoever solves the land question will win the peasants."

It is clear from the aforementioned quotation by Mao that the problem of land distribution was the question of the foremost priority to be resolved by means of land reforms etc.

The Maoist Reading of Abdul Karim Gadai's Political Philosophy:

Abdul Karim Gadai was noticeably aghast at the wanton savagery of the land owning class (Zamindaar) vis-à-vis the landless peasants (Sindhi Haris) in his surroundings. Born to a peasant family himself, he had the opportunity to observe first-hand the operation of the Jagirdaari system (landlordism) and the dynamics of the peasant-landlord relations. The lives of the poor farmers were reduced to the horrendous misfortunes in Sindh where over 80% of the land was concentrated in the hands of a few absentee feudal lords with the unprecedented incidence of tenancy-at-will (Symonds 137). The pitiful haris tilled the lands of the zamindars rented out to them on a crop-sharing basis, the terms of which were dictated arbitrarily and quite unjustly by the feudal lords settled in the big cities. The haris were forced into living an ignoble life of slavery. Fundamental rights were unknown to them. In fact, their lives, their labor, their honor, and even their wives/women were mortgaged by the so-called zamindar/waderas for allowing these haris a chunk of land to settle in and cultivate. Their nature-given right of self-expression, self-fulfillment and self-development was snatched from them. In the affairs of the statecraft, they were wholly alienated and excluded. Their say in the system or decision making was never aggregated. Their participation in the electoral process was awfully superficial and nominal, as the constituency they formed was but a fiefdom thoroughly controlled by a lord. The exploitation of the peasantry in Sindh was terribly gruesome. As a poet, Gadai was extremely perturbed by the crude injustices and oppressions of the vulnerable strata esp. the Sindhi haris in both colonial and post-colonial Sindh. In reaction, he turned to his verses to build a certain kind of consciousness amongst the oppressed. His poetry is a protest against the feudal institutions and feudalist mentality.

Gadai made his own the cause of the downtrodden haris exhorting them to caution against being inveigled into numerous tricks by feudal lords. Using the platform of Sindhi Hari Committee, he advanced the case of the haris. In the opinion of Qadri (418), “Gadai’s poetry reflected itself in a new dimension after the partition when he joined forces with Sindhi Hari Party becoming the ambassador of people’s aspirations.”

The element of disillusion with the post-colonial state of Pakistan, its institutions, and its political elite goes through as a recurrent theme in Gadai’s poetry. Unexaggeratedly, about ninety five percent of his poetry is essentially political and ninety eight percent out of that political poetry orbits around the theme of disappointment and resistance. There were high hopes pinned in the independence by the ordinary masses that once the new sovereign, independent state of Pakistan came into being, it would be a citadel of socio-economic justice and progressive political reform. However, the new state in its entirety was contrary to the one that had been promised! In the new system, Sindhi wadera/zamindar found the unchecked power vested in his hands. Now his status was that of the undisputed monarch of the kingdom. He was more tyrant than ever in the colonial period. His presence in the assembly obstructed and vetoed the passage of such progressive laws as land reforms, eradication of jagirdari system, imposition of new taxes, and the like. He monopolized electoral constituencies. The large, confirmed vote bank was readily available to him through force and fear. Elections therefore were neither free nor fair. The electorate was utterly crippled to exercise their say freely in elections (Ayub Khan 106-107).

Abdul Karim Gadai rose up against this class of oppressors directing his shafts against Sindhi zamindars and waderas. They were the puppets at the hands of the imperial power in United India. Later on, they danced to the tune of the establishment in Pakistan. Gadai Sahab can be credited with pioneering the resistance poetry in the Sindhi literature in practical terms. He put an entirely new complexion on the Sindhi literature. As a matter of fact, he was amongst those who laid the groundwork for the progressive poetry in Sindhi. They redefined the overall character of verse-making bringing it down to the level of the grassroots. With them, the Sindhi poetry saw a radical shift from being merely an expression of sensuousness to becoming the vehicle of dissent, a viable agency of propagation.

While we hold Gadaism in comparison with Maoism or the Chinese Socialism, we are led at the first glimpse to the conclusion, albeit impromptu, that Gadaism is the personalization of Maoism/Socialism with the Chinese characteristics. As stated above, it would however be an adlib to conclude as such. There is a need for the critical, scholarly juxtaposition of the principles of Maoism and poems of Gadai to show similarities or contrasts and establish or reject any relationship.

Gadai incites the subaltern strata esp, those of the hard-pressed peasants seemingly to an organized struggle – the one with violence and bloodbath as a natural consequence – to lay the groundwork for a just order. He believes (at least as revealed in the following verses) that bloodshed is an unavoidable result of the revolution against the evil forces of oppression. To wage a war against the oppressors, the oppressed have to inflict violence upon the former. They have to be mentally prepared to lay down even their lives in the middle of the protracted fierce combat with the formidable enemy. No change is possible without a certain sacrifice.

He says (302):

ڪجهه خون ته آخر وهڻو آ،
اي شاگردو، اي دهقانو!

English Translation:

*Some bloodshed is destined on your hands,
Students and peasants, O' my friends!*

Gadai Sahab is filled with an intense loathing for the mechanical watertight division among the human beings. He feels an overwhelming sense of aversion towards a class society, which has condemned the large segment of human beings to the perpetual disgrace. Like a Marxist-Maoist socialist, he preaches about bringing the whole edifice of capitalism and the latter's concomitant evils crashing down. He sets out to dismantle the pyramids of tyranny. Late Gadai aspires with his absolute conviction for equality, justice and a genuinely level playing field for all of the people irrespective of any distinction. He declares (373):

دل ٿي چئي هڪ آگ لڳايان،
گهٽ وڌ جو هي فرق متايان!

English Translation:

*Setting this [world] on fire do I crave!
Interring the coffin of classes in grave!*

He cannot resign himself to the world, which encourages one to devour the flesh of the other. Late Gadai is left chagrined at the way the capitalist-bourgeois society operates. He looks for an escape from it. The non-involvement/non-intervention or inaction of God has dismayed him further. Accordingly, he tells God (37):

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مونڪي اي پڳوان! هي جڳت نه آيو راس!

اوج نيچ جي ويڇن مونڪي، توکان ڪيو نراس!

English Translation:

*A stranger to myself in the world of thee I found!
Discriminations of class in the world of thee astound!*

On the question of peasantry, Gadai and Mao have marked similitude in common. Perhaps, this is the only most significant point of departure in the comparative analysis of their respective ideas. Like Mao, Gadai places a considerable emphasis on the class of peasantry. Like Mao, he waxes lyrical about the role of the peasants in the economy of a given state. Like Mao, he praises peasants to the skies as they alone make up for the mighty manpower necessary for the survival of the nation. They alone lift the life-standard of people. Regrettably, they themselves are excluded from benefiting the fruition of their toil. Again, like Mao, Gadai regards haris as the mainstay of the revolution/change. A change can take place only after this class has gathered social-political consciousness. He says (77):

ڪسانن کي ڌرتي جو مالڪ بڻائي،

ڏئي ديس جي واڳ محنت ڪشڻ کي!

English Translation:

*Should the peasants be crowned!
Should the laboring be enthroned!*

Like Mao's ***Agrarian Socialism***, which centers on the agrarian countryside rather than the urban laborers and which draws the revolutionary vanguard mostly from China's hinterlands, Gadai Sahab tilts more towards the rural bent than the traditional Marxist preoccupation with the industrial work force. Accordingly, Gadai seems to be of the opinion that a revolution must gestate first of all amongst the Haris. In fact, only the peasants/Sindhi haris have the potential to trigger a wide-scale upheaval in the status-quo. The urban working class, when compared to the rural farmers, hardly preoccupies the poet. The latter are his *idée fixe*. In some of the verses the idea having been implied points out that to the haris should go the seat of government. The peasants may be enthroned to manage the affairs of the state. It may be noted here that the said idea runs quite contrary to Marxism and Maoism, both of which hardly ideate to install the peasantry in the executive even if they esp. the Marxist version of Socialism may so declare, that is, the proletarian dictatorship. However, there is a climate of impenetrable obscurity surrounding Gadai's political

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ideas. It is sheerly unclear as to who exactly has to have the reigns of the state. Will it be the haris to rule the country? Or it will be a sort of a representative government based on the professional guilds? Gadai fails to put flesh on the bare bones of this question. As a point of fact, Gadai as a political poet has the definite strain of complexity.

As revealed in a good deal of verses, the poet is pretty definite about the breaking out of a violent struggle on the part of the suppressed to knock down the rural bourgeois. It logically follows that it would be a revolution and would be intrinsically ruthless. It would be the rural proletarians/haris that have to gear the rest suppressed classes up for that combat against the oppressor. As indicated in one of the verses above, the carnage is destined to occur. All of these reflections are closely relatable to Maoism, at least on the surface.

In this connection, see his following verses where the poet reminds the peasantry of their worth as the virtual rulers and arouses rebelliousness in them (167):

تنهنجو نصيب آهي دنيا سنڊي حڪومت!
ات دور ڪر جهان مان سرمائيداري لعنت!

Translation:

*For thy kingdom is the world slated!
Should thou rise be capitalism eliminated!*

At another place, he prophesies the tsunami, which will flush out the vestiges of the bourgeois (81):

ايوان عيش ۾ ٿا اچن هاڻ زلزله،
قدرت جي ديڳ آئي آ شايد اُٻار ۾!

English Translation:

*With earthquake the mighty palaces moved!
Just deserts have the nature approved!*

A radical revolution is almost in the offing. The oppressed have calculatedly been kept miles away. However, once they are awake to their abject conditions, they will spring into action. The monuments of jagirdari and sarmayedari will crumble down at their hands. According to Gadai (179):

جڏهن هي حقيقت کان آگاه ٿيندا!

وڏا انقلابات دنيا ۾ ايندا!

Translation:

*When they be awake to their conditions,
The world would be overtaken by revolutions!*

What follows when the exploited class rises from its slumber? Gadai answers this question referring to the greatest upheavals in Russia (October Socialist Revolution of 1917) and in China (Chinese Communist Revolution of 1949) to both of which he himself was a witness. He says (183):

ڏس تخت ڪريا! ڏس تاج لٿا!

قهرام متا محلاتن ۾!

جمهور جي قسمت آ جاڳي!

ڏس چين اٿيو، ڏس روس اٿيو!

تيونس ۽ ملايا، موراڪو!

ايران، به آرس آ پڳي!

ڪجهه پنهنجي به چئو، ڪجهه منهنجي به سڻ!

English Translation:

Lo! The thrones are dethroned!

The crowns are tossed away!

There is agitation in palaces!

Good times of the public have arrived!

Lo! China has risen! Russia has also risen!

Tunisia, Malaya and Morocco have simultaneously stood up!

Iran has also awakened!

At another place, the similar idea has been expressed in the following verses (188):

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A Critical Analysis of Gadaism in the Light of Chinese Socialism

209

اچي ٿو غريبن ۾ شانِ جلالي
مزورن هٿوڙو ۽ ڏاٽي سنپالي!

English Translation:

*There is disquiet among the paupers!
The workers have taken to sickles and hammers!*

Abdul Karim Gadai was celebrated as the ambassador of peasants. He was the mouthpiece for the ill-treated haris. He wrote more on the latter than any other class. He joined the Sindhi Hari Committee in 1950-52 becoming its general secretary in Jacobabad (Qadri 418). He actively took part in the movement for the peasants' rights. Against the backdrop of the movement, Sindh Tenancy Act was enacted with a view to regularizing the relationship between zamindars and haris. However, given the tepid attitude of the government, which failed to implement the act, hardly were any benefits reaped by the sharecroppers. Actually, Gadai wants fair play for all. He wants in place the supremacy of rule of law. He calls for a relative equality in a sense 'he who tills should only be its reaper'. His harvest may not be unlawfully taken away from him. Gadai Sahab declares (91):

سڄي اوج ۽ نيچ هموار ٿيندي،
نه رهندو وڏيرو نه ڪوئي ننڍيرو!
جو ڪيڙي سو ڪاٺي سندو دور آيو،
لٽيندو نه ڪڙميءَ کي ڪوئي لٽيرو!

English Translation:

*All the distinctions will be leveled,
There will remain neither the high, nor the low / neither a feudal lord nor a serf!
'He who tills has the right to eat' will reign supreme in the new regime.
Now, no victimizer will victimize the peasant.*

When we proceed on with further analysis of Gadaism within the framework of the socialism of Mao, we find their convergence highly diluting. Gadai appears to be very much uninitiated when it comes to the concepts such as Dialectical Materialism, Historical Materialism, demarcation of society into two classes of proletariats and capitalists, and the like. According to Mao, a society suffers from inherent contradictions, that which cannot be reconciled through normal procedures. The conflict between the two historically antagonistic classes of the bourgeoisie and the proletarians is the conspicuous manifestation of this societal contradiction. When its roots go to the depth of the society, the latter is turned upside down. The escape can be

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A Critical Analysis of Gadaism in the Light of Chinese Socialism

made good only through a revolution. Additionally, to Mao, an organized political party consisting of the ideologically committed vanguard was indispensable for leading the revolution to success. Such concepts are patently absent in Gadai's political ideas. There are not even the slightest intimations underlying his works as regards the dialectical conception of history. Likewise, he does not really invite people to violence. Rather, he is more a pacifist. The following verses illustrate his predilection for pacifism (283):

اي ساڻي اڄ سوچيو باهم!
ڪا اهڙي اڄ تدبير ڪريو!
هن پيار جي دشمن دنيا ۾!
ڪا آفت جي تشهير ڪريو!

English Translation:

*Let's put our heads together!
Let's contrive a way
Whereby love is [openly] declared,
In this hate-mongering world!*

He prays for peace and love to inundate the arid land of hate in the following words (408):

وري شل خير برڪت جون،
هوائون هت گهلن سائين!
محبت ٿئي وري ارزان!

English Translation:

*May the breeze of peace blow here!
May love become inexpensive here!*

Gadai is the priest of love and unity. He sees indivisible unity manifest in every particle of the universe. He is a staunch believer in the philosophy of Wahdat-ul-Wajud (Pantheism). If we bring this aspect closely into our focus, we will be able to see Gadai as a Sufi poet achingly calling for the unity of human beings. His preaching is always hatred against all types of hatreds. Even the religious differentiations sound trivial for him. Whatever one's religion, it is all the same to him. His religion is love. He identifies himself with the community of human beings. He does not envisage a conflict-ridden society. He does not envision the war of the opposites. He does not

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rationalize the historical antagonism of the proletariat and the bourgeois either. Thus, such views contradict the very essence of socialism/Maoism. According to Gadai (377):

پاڪستاني پائي پائي،
چا جي نفرت چا جي بياني؟
ايڪي سان سڀ آه سڻائي،
مذهب پنهنجو پيار!

English Translation:

*All the Pakistanis are brethren unto each other!
Why hate? Why prejudice against each other?
All good lies in unity!
Our religion is human affinity!*

Still another point by making which we can build up our further argument is Gadai Sahab's fixation with a vote. In every other verse where he highlights the precarious state of the downtrodden, he simultaneously underscores the far-reaching implications of elections and importance of vote therein. He persistently brings home to the poor peasants their past blunders of sending undemocratic and opportunistic elements to assemblies by voting them. He religiously presses them to vote the right person who may truly be their representative. Ballot, and not bullet is a recurrent discourse lying at the heart of Gadai's political credo. Again, this Gadaist approach is at odds with the Maoist strategy of revolution. As a matter of fact, the term revolution itself has wholly different overtones in Maoism and Gadaism. Mao's is a revolution in every definition of the word. On the other hand, Gadai is insistent on an evolutionary change. The latter believes in the fate-changing significance of a vote. Therefore, he appears more and more as a constitutionalist. He advises the peasants in the following words (249):

سنيالي ووٽ ڏج هاڻي وطن جي جان نثارن کي
ڪڍي اڇلائي ٻاهر ڪر نڪن ۽ نڪارن کي!

English Translation:

*Thou consciously vote those having a fellow feeling!
The thoughtless and the worthless should thou fling!*

At another place, he says (364):

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وڪڻ نه ووت ڪي سادا هاري، هاڻي ٿي هوشيار،

ناه وڏيرو ملڪ جو مالڪ، تنهنجو هي سنسار!

English Translation:

*Sell not thy vote. O' peasant be little sage!
Not the landlord, to thee belongs all the stage!*

Abdul Karim Gadai was a very complex poet of the colonial and post-colonial eras. He started writing poetry in early 1920's. Initially, his themes were mostly about love, romance, beauty and beloved. Later, he composed the anthems of rebellion against the imperialists. During this phase, he was a typical Indian nationalist. His poetry demonized the alien rule and eulogized his motherland, his India. It was after the partition of the Indo-subcontinent that he virtually flowered into a resistance poet. He was devastated by the aggravation of the situation: all of the hopes and expectations went up in a puff of smoke; the haunting spectre of crisis was evoked out of thin air for a common man; injustices and oppressions were now sheerer than in the colonial period; corruption, cronyism, epidemics, inflation, poverty and the like were more rampant than ever; and the state was a coterie of the self-serving elite. The best of the poems of late Gadai were composed during this phase. He cried that a man was a slave in a free society. Independence meant nothing else but a change of rulers from the alien colonizers to the indigenous tyrants. He opted for the resistance poetry to speak out against the system. However, even during those most chaotic times, he never descended to proselytizing the nihilistic ideas of violence and revolution. His resistance meant 'the renaissance of consciousnesses'. He says (361):

اجا سازِ بغاوت تي مونڪي ڪجه گيت ڳائڻ ڏي!

وطن جي ذره ذره ڪي اڃا باغي بڻائڻ ڏي!

English Translation:

*To the tune of resistance a song may I sing!
Into resistance every bit of the country may swing!*

Conclusion:

Gadai was fundamentally a resistance poet who voiced an insatiable demand for a qualitative change in the lives of the ordinary. His political credo was not hedged in with the contemporary ideologies of his times. On our close reading, Gadai tends to have weak ideological commitments. In fact, he inadequately consorts with any of the modern –isms of the West. On certain counts, socialism in general, and Maoism in particular do harmonize with his ideas. On the question of peasantry, for example, Gadai and Mao share almost the similar view that peasants are

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the lifeblood of a given society. However, their methodology and objectives as regards the change stand in stark contrast to each other. The Chinese Socialism propounds the expansion of the revolution to purge the society of the lingering vestiges of the bourgeois superstructure by dint of the Cultural Revolution, which in other words signifies prolonged authoritarianism. To its contrary, Gadai's society is open to dissent. Gadai holds a consuming passion for democracy. Even if he showered a dictator, FM Ayub Khan and a politician Zulifqar Bhutto with praises, he was unyielding when it came to the fundamental rights. When we attempt at analyzing his political thought, we cannot take for granted his preoccupation with democracy and voting.

Abdul Karim Gadai's political ideas remain enigmatically elusive. They need to be tracked down in relation to their historical context for us to form a holistic understanding of completely different and even opposite social, political, and economic ideals reflected in his verses. Furthermore, inconsistencies, instability and even contradictions in his views come through loud and clear. Again, we need to contextualize his rather impermanent, clashing political ideas.

Gadai Sahab was no political theorist per se. He was not a philosopher either. Whatever he wrote, it was exclusively anchored in his experiences. In fact, his poetry is the chronicle of colonial and post-colonial history of Sindh. Born to an illiterate family, he had meager means of pursuing education. Somehow, he managed to get through matriculation only. It remains unclear as to whether he ever made any conscious attempt at the study of the western political philosophy. To Gadai, so to say, a theory of government hardly mattered much. What really concerned him was *change*. Whether it be socialism or liberal democracy, if it provided the underprivileged with any relief, it was acceptable to him.

The present research study critically conducted an in-depth analysis of Gadaism and its relevance to the Chinese socialism adopting the content analysis method. It constructed a null hypothesis that 'there is no significant relationship between two variables x and y.' Then, it went on to conclusively test it. After a thorough scrutiny, it failed to reject or nullify the same. However, it successfully filled the gap existing in the literature. The results of the study have much benefit for a wide range of audience esp. those interested in Gadai's thought and those interested in political thought at large!

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A Critical Analysis of Gadaism in the Light of Chinese Socialism

215

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