

Carlo Coppola

PREMCHAND'S ADDRESS TO THE FIRST MEETING OF THE ALL-INDIA PROGRESSIVE  
WRITERS ASSOCIATION: SOME SPECULATIONS

*A case of ghostwriting?*

Two aspects of Premchand's personality brought him into contact with the organizers of the so-called progressive movement in South Asian literature. First, throughout his life he offered encouragement to young writers, often in personal letters but also by publishing their works in his literary monthly *Hans* (The Swan) or by participating in numerous literary meetings at which young writers were in attendance. Second, towards the end of his life Premchand seemed to exhibit a disillusionment with the Gandhian approach to the questions of India's independence from Britain, the plight of the Indian masses, and the role of the writer in society, and looked to a more forceful, aggressive political, social, and literary activism to attain these various problems. According to some scholars, this new aspect of Premchand's thinking was a vague sort of leftism, according to others, communism. Among the organizers of the progressive movement Premchand found both young writers in need of encouragement and assistance from an older, established author, and political thinking of a distinctively leftist cast.

In this paper I will scrutinize an important literary document in both the corpus of Premchand's literary criticism and in the canon of the progressive movement: his address to the first meeting of the All-India Progressive Writers Association (AIPWA) held in Lucknow on 9-10 April 1936. First, I shall discuss Premchand's affiliation with the founders of this movement and his participation in the first meeting of this group, then an analysis of his address, and, finally, some speculations about the authorship of that address.

1. Premchand and the Young Progressives.

As with all literary movements, the progressive movement finds its origins in both distant and immediate antecedents. One of its earliest precursors is the 1857 rebellion/mutiny/first war of Indian independence, its aftermath, especially within the Muslim community, the so-called Aligarh movement of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the literary theories developed by his literary lieutenant, Altaf Husain Hali, the Islamic resurgence articulated in the poetry of Muhammad Iqbal, the leftist-liberal poetry of Bengali writer Qazi Nazrul Islam and his various Urdu imitators, and the poetry of the late Josh Malihabadi.<sup>1</sup>

The more immediate antecedents of the movement are found in the publication in 1932 of the famous (or infamous) collection of short stories entitled *Angāre* (Burning Coals), to which four young Urdu authors had contributed works: Sajjad Zaheer (1905-1973), Ahmed Ali (b. 1910), Rashid Jahan (1905-1952), and Mahmuduzzafar (1908-1956).<sup>2</sup> This volume sparked considerable public controversy due to its direct criticism of middle-class Muslim mores and practices of the period. These attacks on Muslim society were immediately construed as assaults on Islam; therefore, the book was considered "blasphemy" and eventually banned by the United Provinces legislature. Reaction to the book was so vehement that Sajjad Zaheer left the country and eventually returned to England to complete further studies. The other writers remained in India and faced severe criticism, public censure, and even death threats. In a reply to critics of *Angāre*, Mahmuduzzafar and Ahmed Ali wrote a letter to the English-language newspaper

*The Leader* (Allahabad) of 5 April 1933, in which they justified their literary efforts and called for the formation of a "League of Progressive authors" throughout India which, in addition to seeking honesty and free expression in writing, would also look after writers' interests.<sup>3</sup>

In the meantime, Sajjad Zaheer, together with Mulk Raj Anand, established an organization in London called the Progressive Writers Association.<sup>4</sup> The group met for the first time on 24 November 1934 in London and eventually formulated a manifesto, which articulated the aims and aspirations of these young writers. Copies of the manifesto were sent to Premchand, who published an edited version of the original London manifesto in *Haṅs* (October 1935), and to the *Left Review* (London), which published in February 1936 a version of the manifesto closer to the original passed by the London association.<sup>5</sup>

Sajjad Zaheer also sent copies of this London manifesto to the following: Dr. K. M. Ashraf, the influential Communist Party of India member and Reader in History at Aligarh Muslim University;<sup>6</sup> Zaheer's fellow *Angāre*-group members, Mahmuduzzafar, who at this time was teaching at Mohammeden Anglo-Oriental College, Amritsar; Rashid Jahan, now married to Mahmuduzzafar and practicing medicine in that city; and to Ahmed Ali, who had become a lecturer in English at Allahabad University. Returning to India, Zaheer went to Allahabad, where his desire to establish an All-India Progressive Writers Association (AIPWA) met with favorable responses from many individuals at Allahabad University, including the distinguished Urdu poet Firaq Gorakhpuri, Vice-Chancellor Amarnath Jha, and Dr. Tara Chand, Professor of History.<sup>7</sup>

In December 1935 the Hindustani Sabha, an organization which sought to popularize Hindustani, a neutral form of language which was neither "High Hindi" nor "High Urdu," met in Allahabad. In attendance were three major doyens of Urdu, Maulana Abdul Haq, Josh Malihabadi, and Premchand, to whom Zaheer showed his manifesto.<sup>8</sup> Agreeing with its tenets, Haq and Josh signed it. Zaheer wanted to elicit as wide a response as possible to his movement and to hear from individuals who might be interested in organizing chapters of the AIPWA in various cities throughout India. Initially, Premchand did not favor the formation of AIPWA centers in other India cities; he felt that the best the group could do was set up provincial branches. However, Zaheer insisted on the notion of establishing as many centers as possible, an idea to which Premchand eventually acceded.

One of the earliest AIPWA centers was in Aligarh Muslim University under the direction of Dr. K. M. Ashraf and Dr. Abdul Aleem, who had recently joined the faculty.<sup>9</sup> A group of students there immediately rallied behind the movement, among them many who would later become major names in the progressive literature in the decades to come: Ali Sardar Jafri, Jan Nisar Akhtar, Hayatullah Ansari, Asrarul Haq Majaz, Akhtar Husain Raipuri, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, and Shahid Latif.<sup>10</sup>

Other organizers included Oxford-educated Hirendranath Mukherjee in Calcutta and Sibte Hasan in Hyderabad, Deccan, where he was working for the Urdu daily *Payām* (Message), edited by Qazi Abdul Ghaffar.<sup>11</sup> Zaheer himself travelled to Amritsar and Lahore to meet with Punjabi writers for the purpose of encouraging them to join the movement. Among those whose support he enlisted were Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Akhtar Shirani, and Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum, who was elected secretary of the Lahore group.<sup>12</sup> Iqbal, too, offered his verbal and moral support for the movement.

Responses from all sectors of India were encouraging enough for Zaheer to plan the first meeting of the AIPWA for 9-10 April 1936 in Lucknow. The choice of venue was determined by the fact that the Indian National Congress would be meeting there at the same time. Several benefits could accrue from having this

meeting coincide with that of the Lucknow Congress. First, it was possible that the presidential address to the AIPWA meeting could be given by Jawaharlal Nehru (this did not materialize); in addition, many of the people attending the Congress meeting might wish to attend the AIPWA conference as well, thus insuring an audience for the progressives.

Elaborate plans were made for the meeting, and all details were carried out by Zaheer himself. On 14 February 1936, for example, Premchand attended one of the many planning meetings held at Zaheer's house in Allahabad. Premchand's friend and publisher, Daya Narayan Nigam, had earlier expressed his apprehension about the success of such an organization.<sup>13</sup> In response to these concerns, Premchand wrote Nigam: "I am an old man, but I wish to do what all young writers wish to do. I, therefore, would launch my unsteady boat on the stormy seas. In what direction it goes is hardly of consequence."<sup>14</sup>

Given Premchand's positive disposition to the idea of the AIPWA, Zaheer invited him to give the presidential address. At first Premchand was reluctant to do so, since he was in ill health but also because he had been asked to serve as president of the annual meetings of both the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan (Hindi Literary Academy) in Lahore and the Hindi Pracar Sabha (Association for the Propagation of Hindi) in Hyderabad. He replied to Zaheer:

As regards my presidentship, I am not fit for it. I do not say this out of humility, but I actually find myself weak. Mr. Kanaialal Munshi would be a better person than myself, or even Dr. Zakir Husain. Pandit Jawaharlal [Nehru] will be too busy; otherwise, he would be the best one. At this time everyone will be intoxicated with politics and few will be interested in literature. But we have to do something. If Mr. Jawaharlal shows an interest in it, the meeting will be a successful one.<sup>15</sup>

However, Premchand is not completely adamant in his refusal, for he adds later in the letter, "It would be better if a person from outside presided over our meeting. But if no one is available, then I am ready to do so. I will utter a few words." In a postscript he suggests the name of Amarnath Jha as another possible president. Here one should note that Premchand pleads reasons of health for not wishing to preside. His health was, in fact, failing, and he would die on 8 October, seven months later.

A few days after writing the letter above, Premchand wrote Zaheer that because he would be attending the first meeting of the Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad (All-India Literary Conference) to be held in Wardha on 14 April, with Gandhi presiding, he would have to withdraw from the presidentship of the AIPWA meeting; he would not even be present. In fact, he suggested that Zaheer's meeting be postponed: "I think we should not worry about the meeting at present; after working quietly for some time, let us then make arrangements for holding the meeting. If we meet right now, only a few persons will participate and our purpose will have been defeated."

Premchand seems to have changed his mind, for the next day, in a letter dated 19 March 1936, he writes two important points: first, that he had been asked to come to Lucknow to translate Nehru's Congress meeting speech into "common language," presumably Hindustani; and second, that since he would be in Lucknow he would be willing to serve as president. "If you are in any difficulty in finding a suitable person for presiding at your meeting, you might consider my name for it." Similarly, he accedes to Zaheer's notion to the local chapters of the AIPWA: "The objections I have against the local committees are now removed. I agree that the local committees would perpetuate a

lively interest in our activities." In addition, he asks Zaheer to give him some suggestions as to what he should talk about in his speech.

Five days later, on 26 March 1936, Premchand wrote Zaheer that the Wardha meeting of the Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad had been cancelled because of Gandhi's bad health:

Hence, I find no need to send my apology [to you] about presiding over the meeting. You may now make an announcement about it. My address will be brief. I may not be able to write it soon for publication [prior to the meeting]. I do not think there is any need to do so. It can be published after it is read at the conference.

Here Premchand is alluding to the fact that the conference organizers had asked speakers to send their speeches in advances so that they might be published and distributed to the various other participants prior to the meeting. The various points in these letters (viz., Premchand's initial reluctance due to ill health, the proposed brevity of his speech, a request for suggestions as to subject) will be important later on in our discussion of the actual address Premchand presented to the the AIPWA meeting.

With a firm commitment from Premchand to preside at the first AIPWA meeting, Zaheer proceeded with his plans. Premchand arrived in Lucknow and stayed with Zaheer, who was pleased that Premchand had brought a friend, the young Hindi novelist and short-story writer Jainendra Kumar (b. 1905).<sup>16</sup> Since no other major Hindi writers attended, the presence of both of these authors was especially welcome.<sup>17</sup>

The first session of the meeting was to be on 9 April from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; the afternoon session from 3:00 to 5:30 p.m.; the place, Rifah-Am Hall. According to Zaheer, the crowd that attended the first session was quite different from the usual sort of conference gathering:

Gradually, the hall started to fill up. Two or three front rows were occupied by delegates from Bengal, Madras, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Bihar, Punjab and U. P. Nearby sat the fifteen or twenty persons of the reception committee. Two-thirds of the hall was filled with one-rupee ticketholders, consisting of visitors, students, office workers, journalists, lecturers, school teachers, lawyers--all lean and thin, somewhat bashful, fond of literature--communist and socialist party workers, trade union workers, people working among the peasants who were from different parts of India and were meeting in Lucknow at this time; they were all interested in the new progressive literature of national and social freedom. These were the representatives of the intellectuals in our country who possessed a new national and social feeling and consciousness. The hall was not filled with activity, nor noisy and confused. People spoke in subdued voices; the quiet was more than was necessary. There did not seem to be any enthusiasm in this crowd.<sup>18</sup>

The session opened with a welcoming speech prepared by the host for the meeting, Chaudhuri Muhammad Ali Rodolvi, who, while a remnant of the old Lucknow culture, was, according to Zaheer, a progressive-thinking man.<sup>19</sup> The host was not present for the session, but his speech was read.

Following this opening, Premchand spoke. The speech was neither brief--it ran nearly forty-five minutes--nor inconsequential, as Premchand suggested in a letter to Zaheer.

## 2. The Address: "The Purpose of Literature."

Calling the first meeting of the AIPWA a "memorable occasion in the history of Indian literature,"<sup>20</sup> Premchand states that the Indian writers of the past confined their works to a very narrow view, in terms both of style and content, but particularly style, which has led to a preoccupation with language as an end in itself. However, this concern was necessary as a "purifying process, for until language is pure and steady it cannot express fine or powerful feelings" (234). Echoing sentiments which had been discussed by other western and Indian critics of the period, Premchand states that because writers were depending on patrons, the literature these authors produced necessarily reflected the taste and mentality of those for whom it was written, in this case a people in "a period of decline" who "either indulged in sexual passion or lost themselves in spiritualism and renunciation" (237).

When literature is dominated by the inevitability of the transitoriness of the world, every word, steeped in frustration, obsessed with the adversity of the times and reflects elaborate feelings [of love], one should understand that the nation has fallen into the grips of dullness and decline and has lost the will to undertake [action] and struggle. It has closed its eyes to the high aims of life and has lost the capacity to discern and understand the world. (237)

But writers of the past, according to Premchand, were not concerned with the "capacity to discern and understand the world"; instead, they "created from imagination and worked into it any sort of arbitrary spell they wished" (236):

The sole purpose of these writings was to entertain and to satisfy our lust for the amazing. It was a delusion to think that literature had any connection with life; a story was a story and life was life; both there considered contradictory to each other. Poets were also dominated by the notion of individualism. The ideal of love satisfied lust and that of beauty contented the eyes. Poets exhibited the splendor of their brilliance and imagination in depicting those elaborate feelings [in poetry]. A new word-scheme or simile, no matter how farfetched from reality, was enough to get appreciation [for the poet from his audience]. Imagery about the nest and cage, lightning and granary, and the story of different conditions of frustration and agony in separation all used to be depicted with such dexterity that the audience could not control their emotions. (236)

But Premchand views literature in an entirely different manner: "Only that creation will be called literature which describes some truth in a mature, refined and graceful language, and which has the quality of affecting the head and heart. And this quality is acquired by literature only when the truths and experiences of life are expressed in it" (235).

According to Premchand, literature is best defined as "'the criticism of life'; whether in the form of an essay, story or poems, the chief function of literature is to present an honest and critical view of life" (236). The operative words here are "function" and "honest." That literature should have

a "function" implies a basically utilitarian view. In fact, Premchand declares this tenet explicitly in one of the most famous and oft-quoted statements in this address: "I do not hesitate to say that I also measure art with the rod of usefulness" (244):

That literature which does not rouse our good taste, does not provide us with a spiritual and mental satisfaction, does not produce activity and strength in us, which does not awaken our love for the beautiful, which does not produce in us resolution and the determination to achieve victory over difficulties, that literature is useless today; it does not deserve to be called literature. (238)

In the past, religion was the basis of man's spiritual and moral civilization; it functioned, states Premchand, through fear and temptation, with issues of piety and sin as its weapons. But now literature has nullified this function of religion; its means, "the love of beauty":

It [literature] tries to awaken this love of beauty in man. No man is unimpressionable to beauty. A writer's creation is impressive to the extent to which this quality is alive and active in him. Due to his keen observation of nature and his incisive impressions, [the writer's] esthetic sense becomes so refined that whatever is ugly, ignoble, and devoid of human qualities becomes intolerable to him. He attacks this with the full force of words and feelings at his command. It could be said that he is wedded to humaneness, virtue, and nobility. To support and plead for the oppressed, suffering, and destitute, whether an individual or a group, is his duty. Society is his court and he submits his plea to this country and deems his efforts successful if it arouses a sense of the esthetic and a sense of justice. (239)

Such a "sense of the esthetic" and a "sense of justice" inspired by literature point toward progress and the improvement of the human condition. Thus, says Premchand, the name "'Progressive Writers Association' . . . [is] wrong" (242):

A litterateur or an artist is, by nature, progressive. He probably would not have been a litterateur if this were not his nature. He feels inadequacy inside as well as outside himself. He must remain restless in order to fulfill this deficiency. He does not perceive the individual and society in those conditions of happiness and freedom in which he wants to see them in his imagination. For this reason, he always feels dissatisfied with the present mental and social conditions. He wants to end these disgusting conditions so that the world would become a better place to live in and die in. This anguish and this feeling keep his heart and brain alive. His compassionate heart cannot bear the idea that a group of people, bound by rules and dogmas of society, will go on suffering. (242-43)

Premchand further elaborates on what he believes "progress" to mean:

By progress we mean that situation which generates [in us] the firmness and capacity to perform duty, which shows us our degradation, which shows us that, due to various internal and external causes, we have reached this condition of death and decline and must strive to remove them. (243)

In such progress there is no place for idiosyncrasy or personality: "To give importance to egoism and individual perspective is, in our profession, a thing which leads us to dullness, degradation, and carelessness. And such art is not useful to us, either individually or collectively" (244).

To progress, asserts Premchand, is to change, and in another of the most frequently quoted statements from this speech he announces, "We will have to change our standards of beauty" (246). To do this, the writer must turn away from the rich and privileged and their senseless, effete taste, and turn to the common man as the subject of his writing. Premchand points out this notion in particularly vivid terms:

Till now standards [of beauty] were based on those of wealth and luxury. Our artist wished to remain tied to the apron strings of the rich; his existence was dependent on their appreciation and the purpose of art was to describe their pleasures and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, their conflicts and competitions. He turned his eyes to the palace and the bungalow; huts and hovels did not command his attention, for he considered them outside the realm of humanity. If he ever referred to them, he did so laughingly. The villagers' inaccurate pronunciation, rustic clothes, fashions, manners, and ways were his permanent material to ridicule. It was beyond the imagination of art to consider whether the villager also possessed a heart and hopes. (246-47)

The fault here lies in the artist's narrow notion of what art is, asserts Premchand. In the past, art has meant--and in some instances continues to mean even today--"worship of form, word scheme, and novel similes" (247). In such art there is

. . . no ideal, no lofty purpose of life. Worship, renunciation, spiritualism, and retreating from the world are its most exalted imagination. According to our artist's opinion, these are the ultimate aims of life. His vision is not so wide that he can see the highest charm of beauty in the struggle of life. He does not believe that it is possible for beauty to exist in starvation and nakedness. For him, beauty is a beautiful woman--not a poor woman who lacks beauty, who sweats in the fields as she puts her child to sleep on the bare earth nearby. He had decided that beauty, without any doubt, lies on painted lips, cheeks and eyebrows; how can it [beauty] penetrate disheveled hair, dry, parched lips, and withered cheeks? (247)

When this standard of beauty changes, widens, and becomes more encompassing, feelings of idealism, courage, and self-sacrifice will also emerge in mankind. At this point Premchand also makes a call for political improvement as well as moral and esthetic progress:

It [beauty] will not stay confined to one class. Its flight will not be limited by the four walls of the garden but will have the entire universe at its disposal. Then we shall not tolerate base taste; we will gird our loins and dig its grave. Then we will not be ready to tolerate that state of affairs in which thousands of people are slaves to a few; then and only then will we bring into being a constitution which will not be in contradiction to beauty, good taste, self-respect, and humaneness. (248)

Here Premchand is doubtless alluding to the 1935 Government of India Act, which seemingly set up a constitution for greater self-government for India, something similar to the dominion status of Canada, but which in fact retained very critical powers for the viceroy and the British Parliament. Premchand continues in this political vein, perhaps wishing to steal a bit of the politicians' thunder: "The writer's aim is not to cheer the audience and not to provide material for entertainment. Don't degrade him to such a level! He is not even that truth which follows behind patriotism and politics; instead, he is the standard-bearer who shows the path" (248).

Still, Premchand warns these potential standard-bearers that the role of the writer is, in many respects, a thankless undertaking. As Premchand was preeminently aware from his own lack of financial success as an author, the writer must eschew all personal profit in his undertaking. "The temple of literature has no place for those who worship glamor and riches" (251). The interest of society must be placed above those of the individual, for the "devotees" of this "temple" called literature must know that

. . . service is the aim of the lives of those who have compassion for others, whose hearts are filled with love. Respect begets respect. If we serve society with a sincere heart and honor, then prestige and fame will surely come to us. Why, then, should we worry about honor and prestige?  
(251)

In drawing his speech to a close, Premchand notes that this Progressive Writers Association has entered this "field of duty with some principles" (252). These principles are, first, a basic view vis-à-vis literature in which content is more important than form, a view which sets it apart from all that has gone before in Urdu literature:

It [the association] does not want literature to remain a slave of wine and glamor [i.e., the monopoly of the wealthy]. It claims to make literature a message and a song of action and adventure. It is not much concerned with language. When the ideal is broad, language becomes simply by itself. Beauty of thought can afford to be careless about ornamentation. The writer who wants to please the rich accepts the style of the rich; the writer who writes for the common people writes in the common language. Our purpose is to produce such an atmosphere in this country wherein unsophisticated literature can be created and developed. (252)

The second major aim of the association, one to which Premchand had only recently adhered, is to establish literary centers throughout the country, in all the various vernacular languages, in which there would be extensive give-and-take between and among members. Through such activity India would come to possess the intellectual atmosphere in which there would be "the birth of a new epoch in literature" (252). Such literature would possess the fundamental quality of great literature, "dignified through the breath of freedom, beauty, and clarity of style, and a clear reflection of the call and bustle of life, the heart of truth. It must give us a goal; it must make us alive; it must make us think" (253). Premchand dramatically concludes his speech with the statement that this new literature "should not put us to sleep, for further slumber will mean death" (253).

### 3. Some Speculations.

Because of the occasion of its delivery and its contents, this speech has come to be considered by progressive critics as one of the major documents of



the their movement. Coming late in Premchand's life, after a fruitful and prestigious--if financially disastrous--literary career, his speech not only delineates certain critical problems which would be discussed and debated throughout the history of the progressive movement (viz., language, the peasant and worker as fitting topics for this "new" literature, attitudes towards earlier literature), but also provides a profound insight into the "revolution in Premchand's art," as Urdu critic Akhtar Husain Raipuri calls it, which developed in Premchand's thinking prior to his death.<sup>21</sup> In writing about this speech in his memoirs in 1959, Zaheer states that "nothing better to date has been written in connection with the progressive literary movement in our country."<sup>22</sup> Other progressive critics have lavished this speech with unqualified praise. Through the conscious or unconscious efforts of these various authors, the address seems to have taken on a literary life of its own, as if detached from Premchand's other extensive literary criticism, public addresses, commentary, and letters.

A careful scrutiny of Premchand's many writings and comments--both public and private--from as early as the 1920s, but more so in the early 1930s, shows that this speech is in many ways a summing-up of his esthetics. It may be viewed as an encapsulation of a great deal of what he had said earlier in these other contexts.<sup>23</sup> There is relatively little which could be called truly "new" in this address. It also contains ideas and thoughts which were articulated in some of the critical rhetoric of the period. In fact, the address bears a startling resemblance to an important article written by the twenty-one-year-old Akhtar Husain Raipuri entitled "Adab aur zindagi" (Literature and Life), published in July 1935 in *Urdu* (Hyderabad), the prestigious literary journal edited by Maulana Abdul Haq, nine months before the first AIPWA meeting. A brief description of Husain's piece is appropriate.

This essay, which draws heavily upon the literary theories of such writers and Prince Alexander Kropotkin,<sup>24</sup> Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), and Maxim Gorky (1868-1936), can be reduced to the following thesis: The nature of literature depends on the economic class of those for whom it is written and, in turn, by its authors. Great literature, or "true literature" (*haqiqi adab*) as he calls it, is created by that class which advances the techniques of production.<sup>25</sup> Literature, then, is a commodity, an aspect of a society's economic life. When this particular class is in ascendance, it takes the entire world and the whole of life as its focus of interest. Literature produced by that class nurtures and reflects that whole of life. Life and the world, according to this theory, are moving towards a goal of perfection--Marx's class society-- which is somewhere in the future. However, this class which has been extending the techniques of production and creating literature degenerates into a group with vested interests; it then uses literature as a means of supporting its own power base and status and as a mode of amusement.

These points established, Husain then applies his theory to the Indian context. Until recently, he argues, literature in India has been the monopoly of two classes: ascetics and mystics, and the poets of the nobility. The former group he dismisses in order to focus on the latter, which, according to him, had managed to warp literature because of the demands made upon writers by their elitist audiences. He lists three major faults of ancient Indian literature: (1) the topics of literature were antiquated and limited; (2) sense and intention were sacrificed for elegance of expression and adornment of story line; and (3) people chose literature as a profession.

Because "the standard for true literature is that it express the aims of humanity through those means by which the greatest number of people can draw influence from it" (24) and because such courtly literature did not express the aims of humanity, but of only a miniscule section of humanity, it failed to be "true literature."

The essay continues with an economic analysis of ancient and medieval Indian literature in which he criticizes Kalidasa for saying "nothing against the tyranny of nature and the wrongs of society, and his characters remain in only one class and are nourished in only one environment" (30). Poets such as Kabir were not writers of "true literature" because they "prefer death to life and advise people to live away from the push and pull of life and remained unconcerned with physical wants" (32). Early Urdu poets are chastized for their over concern for meter, rhyme, brilliance of expression, and narrowness of subject matter.

Husain then offers an economic analysis of modern Indian literature. Such venerables as Bankimchandra Chatterjee and Abdul Halim Sharar are criticized for introducing the element of communalism into their works.<sup>26</sup> Nobel Prize-winning poet Rabindranath Tagore (1869-1941) receives a thorough analysis at the end of which Husain states that Tagore exhibits an immature imagination, a lack of political consciousness, and a reluctant attitude towards change. Muhammad Iqbal is shown to be an "Islamic fascist" (62) whereas Qazi Nazrul Islam is deemed a true poet for he is "a revolutionary, anti-conservative and a lover of change" (68-69).

Obviously, there is considerable overstatement here, especially in the analysis of Tagore and Iqbal, and what the essay demonstrates in scholarship and argumentation it lacks in subtlety and tact. However, the publication of this essay was an important event in the development of progressive criticism in Urdu, and it was much discussed in Urdu literary circles at this time. After stripping away the hyperbole, one can see a remarkably close resemblance between this essay and Premchand's AIPWA speech. The question then is: so what?

In recent years, scholars have been reevaluating Premchand and his works in light of subsequent developments in Hindi literature, especially rigorous critical literary standards. According to those who lionize Premchand, some of the conclusions offered by these critics are not flattering. In fact, Premchand's son Amritrai has referred to these writings as a "smear campaign" in a speech delivered on the occasion of the centenary of his father's birth.<sup>27</sup>

Amritrai's remarks aside, there is some evidence to suggest that this AIPWA speech might not have been the work of Premchand at all but that of someone else.<sup>28</sup> While it would be virtually impossible to "prove" without "hard evidence" (viz., letters, papers, a statement from someone present) that someone other than Premchand wrote this speech, there is enough circumstantial evidence to suggest that someone might have "ghostwritten" the speech for him. One must recall Premchand's circumstances at the time of the first AIPWA meeting:

- (1) Premchand's health was failing and he would be dead in six months.
- (2) He had committed himself to participate actively in a number of important literary conferences both before and after the AIPWA meeting, including several at which the national language issue was being bitterly disputed by Hindi and Urdu writers.
- (3) He was initially reluctant to participate as president.
- (4) After he agreed to participate, he stated that whatever speech he might give would be short.
- (5) He requested Zaheer to provide suggestions for topics.

In light of these circumstances as well as others which were equally stressful (e.g., the fate of his journal *Hans*), it does not seem farfetched to ask whether, indeed, Premchand wrote the AIPWA address.

There is no doubt that Premchand's literary position and the sentiments in the speech are congruent in nearly every detail. There is virtually nothing in the speech which strikes one as "un-Premchandian" or is in any way inconsistent with what Premchand had been saying about literature for years. The question, rather, is: given Premchand's health and other considerable pressures on him, was he physically and/or psychologically able to produce such a document? The image of Premchand crouching on the dias putting the final touches to his talk while quoting Iqbal's poetry is an engaging one.<sup>29</sup> However, external evidence, though entirely circumstantial, it must be admitted, suggests otherwise. It is clear that Sajjad Zaheer was anxious to have Premchand serve as president of the meeting, for the young progressives (they were, after all, in their late twenties and early thirties) needed the respectability and seriousness which the participation of a respectable and serious author such as Premchand would lend to their undertaking. In addition, there were pressures working against Zaheer's plans for the AIPWA, especially the volatile national language issue and the reluctance of Hindi writers in general to participate in any meaningful way in the first AIPWA meeting.<sup>30</sup> When Sajjad Zaheer wrote Premchand about the lack of success in mustering support for the AIPWA among Hindi writers, Premchand responded in a letter dated 10 May 1936 that

Hindi writers are pressed with feelings of inferiority [relative to Urdu]. They might understand that this movement [the AIPWA] is a kind of trap laid down by Urdu writers. Perhaps they have not as yet understood the meaning of the movement. They will remain in the dark until things are explained to them at a meeting.<sup>31</sup>

Another question: Where does the Husain essay fit in? Did someone (Premchand? Sajjad Zaheer? someone else?) borrow (appropriate? plagiarize?) from his essay? It is important to understand that the publication of the Raipurī essay was something of an event among Urdu writers at this time. It appeared a full nine months earlier than the AIPWA meeting. It was being seriously discussed among Urdu writers as a major breakthrough in the nascent "progressive criticism." In fact, Khalilur Rahman Azmi, who has written the most comprehensive and objective (i.e., non-Marxist) history of the movement in Urdu, refers to Husain as "the first systematic critic of the progressive movement" and states that this particular essay was being widely read and discussed among young Urdu writers; "for the young people of the period . . . [it] was made into a critical Scripture"<sup>32</sup> In speaking of this essay in a foreword to a collection of Husain's critical works entitled *Adab aur inqilāb* (Literature and Revolution), Muhammad Iqbal Salim Gahindri states: "It is not an exaggeration to say that no document since Hali's *Muqaddamah-e-sh'ar-o-shā'irī* [1896] has had such an extensive influence on the area of Urdu criticism."<sup>33</sup> In that Husain's view of literature and that of Premchand's earlier critical works are quite close, it is not impossible to speculate that, rather than review the entire corpus of Premchand's critical works, a "ghostwriter" might merely look to Husain's concise essay, draw from it what was needed for the occasion, and pass off the resulting address as Premchand's. One cannot state that, in this instance, because Husain's essay predated Premchand's address that Premchand must have been influenced by Husain's, for in doing so one would be guilty of a *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* fallacy. In fact, one could legitimately turn the entire question around and suggest that Husain was influenced by Premchand's literary theories. In either case, Husain's article was the subject of intense debate, and one can legitimately point out the similarities between it and Premchand's address. One can

legitimately ask whether there is a connection between the two, and this is what I wish to do in this essay.

If one then logically follows this question with another, one must ask: If there is a connection between Husain's essay and Premchand's address, did Premchand write the AIPWA address? Zaheer *needed* Premchand's participation in the first AIPWA meeting. In such circumstances, the virtual success of the meeting depended on Premchand's participation. Thus, the matter of a "ghost-written" speech might seem very attractive indeed. If Premchand did not write it, who did? Sajjad Zaheer? But, again, this is speculation. Obviously, more scholarship and study are required in this matter, if only to prove that my contention in this matter is preposterous.

### Notes

1. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898), one of the most influential liberal Muslim thinkers of nineteenth-century India, was born in Delhi; he founded the weekly, *Tahzib ul akhlāq* (The Social Reformer), in 1870 to propagate his views on education and social reform, and Mohammaden Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, in 1877; for a study, see Hafeez Malik, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muslim Modernization in India and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

Altaf Husain Hali (1837-1914), author of poetry and criticism which offered literary support to Sir Syed's reformist ideas, was born in Panipat. He is attributed with introducing the idea of "utilitarianism" in Urdu literature through his famous *Muqaddamah-e-sh'ar-o-shā'irī* (Prolegomenon to Poetry and Poetics, 1893); for an excellent study of this important work, see Laurel Steele, "Hali and His *Muqaddamah*: The Creation of a Literary Attitude in Nineteenth Century India," *Annual of Urdu Studies*, vol. 1 (1981), 1-45.

Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1936), the foremost literary figure in Urdu literature of the first half of the twentieth century, was born in Lahore; though his most important literary works are in Persian, his several volumes of Urdu poems were instrumental in developing a sense of nationalism among Indian Muslims; among the numerous studies of Iqbal is the well-rounded collection of essays *Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan*, ed. Hafeez Malik (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971).

Qazi Nazrul Islam (1899-1976), known in Bengali as the "poet of revolution," was born in Churulia, Bengal; his poems of the 1920s and 1930s, which advocated violent overthrow of British and freedom for India, created an impact throughout the country, especially in Urdu literature, where he was imitated by younger poets; for an introduction to his life and works, see Mizanur Rahman, *Nazrul Islam*, 3rd ed. (Dacca: the author, 1966; first published in 1955).

Josh Malihabadi (1898-1982) is the pen name of Shabbir Hasan Khan, who was born in Malihabad, United Provinces; referred to as Urdu's "poet of revolution," his poems "Bāghī insān" (Rebel) and "Baghāvat" (Revolution) from the 1930s were important models for younger progressive poets; for translations of these and others of his poems, together with a discussion of his place in modern Urdu literature, see my "Josh Malihabadi: An Introduction with Translations" (forthcoming).

2. For a discussion of the events surrounding the publication of *Angāre*, see my "The *Angāre* Group: The *Enfants Terribles* of Urdu Literature," *Annual of Urdu Studies*, vol. 1 (1981), 57-69.

For more on Ahmed Ali, see my *The Writer's Commitment, The Writer's Art: A Study of Ahmed Ali* (forthcoming), as well as the Ahmed Ali issue of the *Journal of South Asian Literature*, vol. 22 (forthcoming 1987).

For further discussion of Rashid Jahan, see S. Zubair and my "Rashid Jahan: Urdu Literature's 'First Angry Woman,'" and Khurshid Mirza's "Rashid Jahan: My *Āpājī*," *Journal of South Asian Literature*, vol. 22 (forthcoming 1987). S. Zubair is a childhood friend and Khurshid Mirza a younger sister of Rashid Jahan.

3. The text of this letter is fully produced in my "The *Angāre* Group," p. 63.

4. For a discussion of the formation of this group in London, see my "The All-India Progressive Writers' Association: The European Phase," *Socialist Realism and South Asian Literature*, ed. Carlo Coppola, Occasional Papers, South Asia Series No. 23, 2 vols. (East Lansing, MI: Asian Studies Center, Michigan State University, 1974), 1:1-34.

Mulk Raj Anand was born in Peshawar in 1905. One of the foremost Indian writers in English, he has published numerous short stories, novels, and critical essays dealing with both art and literature. His novel *Untouchable* received considerable critical acclaim in both Britain and India when published in 1933. See Krishna Nandan Sinha, *Mulk Raj Anand*, Twayne's World Authors Series No. 232 (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972).

5. *Haṅs* (October 1935), quoted in Khalilur Rahman Azmi, *Urdu meḥ taraqqī pa-sand adabī taḥrīk* (History of Progressive Literature in Urdu) (Aligarh: Anjuman-e-Taraqqī Urdu [India], 1972), pp. 35-37; *Left Review*, vol. 2, (1936-37), 240. Unless otherwise specified, all translations from Urdu and Hindi are by me.

Three different versions of the manifesto exist: the *Haṅs* version, the *Left Review* version, and the version passed at the first meeting of the AIPWA. I have discussed these various manifestoes and the differences between and among them in my "Urdu Poetry, 1935-1970: The Progressive Episode," 2 vols, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1975, 1:161-67, and "The All-India Progressive Writers' Association: The European Phase," pp. 6-16.

In my "The All-India Progressive Writers' Association: The European Phase," p. 5, due to a typographical error, I incorrectly state that the *Left Review* version of the manifesto appeared in February 1935; it did, in fact, appear in February 1936. I am grateful to Ralph Russell, formerly of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, for calling this typographical error to my attention.

6. Dr. Kunwar Muhammad Ashraf (1903-1962) was a member of the Meo tribe; educated at Aligarh Muslim University and the University of London, he published *Life and Conditions of the People of India* (Delhi: J. Prakashan, 1959), a study of early Muslim rule in India. An active participant in the Indian National Congress in the 1930s, he was in charge of its Political and Economic Information Department in 1937. He was one of the eight communists expelled from the All India Congress Committee in October 1945. In 1948 he and Sajjad Zaheer went to Pakistan to organize the Communist Party there. He returned to England and later went to East Berlin, where he taught at Humboldt University. For an excellent memorial volume of essays, as well as writings by Dr. Ashraf, see Horst Krueger, ed., *Kunwar Mohammad Ashraf: An Indian Scholar and*

*Revolutionary, 1903-1962*, Institut für Orientforschung No. 63 (Berlin: Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaft, 1966).

7. Firaq Gorakhpuri is the pen name of Raghupati Sahai, born in Gorakhpur, United Provinces, in 1898. A major Urdu poet of the progressive movement, he used traditional Urdu literary forms, particularly the *ghazal* with new, progressive content. His collected poems to 1965 are in *Kulliyāt-e-firāq* (Collected Poems of Firaq), 2 vols. (Allahabad: Sahitya Kala Bhavan, 1965). He received the prestigious Bharatiya Jnanpith Prize for literature in 1969. See C. J. S. Jossan, "Firaq Gorakhpuri: A Poet of Synthesis," *Books Abroad*, vol. 43, no. 4 (Autumn 1969), 534-41. For Firaq's acceptance speech for this prize, see "Some Reflections," *Contemporary Indian Literature*, vol. 1 (1971), 8-9.

Amarnath Jha (1897-1955) has written extensively on both English and Urdu literature. Among his major works are *Literary Studies* (Allahabad: Indian Press, 1930), *Some Autobiographies* (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1937), and *Occasional Papers and Addresses* (Allahabad: Kitab Mahal [1941]), and the posthumously published *Urdu Poets and Poetry* (Allahabad: Leader Press, 1956).

Dr. Tara Chand was born in 1888 in Sialkot; educated at Allahabad University, he received a D. Phil. from Oxford University. He served as secretary and education adviser to the Central Government (1948-1951) and Indian ambassador to Iran (1951-1956), and has written numerous books in English on Indian history, including *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* (Allahabad: Indian Press, 1936), and the four-volume *History of the Freedom Movement in India* (Delhi: Government of India, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1965-72).

8. Maulana Abdul Haq (1869-1961) was born in Hapur, Meerut District, United Provinces. He is the major twentieth-century lexicographer and grammarian of the Urdu language; his *The Standard English-Urdu Dictionary* (1937) is considered a classic; he edited the prestigious journal, *Urdū* (Hyderabad), the official publication of the Anjuman-e-Taraqqi Urdu (Society for the Progress of Urdu); for his work on behalf of Urdu, he is called "Bābā-e-urdū" (Father of Urdu).

9. Dr. Abdul Aleem was born in Ghazipur, United Provinces, in 1906; his undergraduate education was at Jamia Milia Islamia, Delhi. After receiving his Ph.D. in Arabic *magna cum laude* from the University of Berlin, he came into contact with the AIPWA while teaching at Aligarh Muslim University in 1936 and took an active part in the organization thereafter. He was written widely on Urdu and Arabic literature, as well as in the field of Islamic studies; retiring as Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University in 1973, he has since been active in the propagation of Urdu in India.

10. Ali Sardar Jafri was born in Balrampur, Gonda District, United Provinces, in 1913. Along with Sibte Hasan and Asrarul Haq Majaz (see below), he founded *Nayā adab* (New Literature), the official publication of the Urdu branch of the All-India Progressive Writers Association; his major collections of poetry include *Ek khwāb aur* (One More Dream) (Bombay: Halqah-e-Adab, 1965) and *Pairā-han-e-sharār* (Garment of Sparks) (Bombay: Halqah-e-Adab, 1966); he has also written the important study, *Taraqqī pasand adab* (Progressive Literature) 2nd ed. (Aligarh: Anjuman-e-Taraqqi Urdu [India], 1966; first published in 1952).

Jan Nisar Akhtar was born in Gwalior in 1914, the son of the poet Muztar Khairabadi. He entered Aligarh Muslim University and received a B.A. in 1937 and an M.A. in Urdu in 1939. In 1940 he was appointed lecturer in Urdu at Victoria College, Gwalior, and more recently been a free-lance song writer for films. His major collections of poetry include *Silsilah* (Chain) (Delhi: Kutub

Khanah-e-'ilm-o-Adab, n.d.) and *Jāvidān* (Everlasting) (Bombay: Idarah-e-Adab-o-Zindagi, n.d.).

Hayatullah Ansari was born in Lucknow in 1911. He has written several volumes of stories, including *Bhāre bāsār meḥ* (In a Crowded Bazaar) (Lahore: Maktabah-e-Urdu, 1945), *Sikaste kangūre* (Broken Turrets) (Delhi: Azad Kitab Ghar, 1956), as well as his *magnum opus*, the novel *Lahū ke phūl* (Flowers of Blood) (Lucknow: Kitabdan, 1969 [?]), for which he was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Urdu prize in 1970.

Asrarul Haq Majaz (1911-1955) was born in Rodoli, Barabanki District, United Provinces. He received his B.A. degree from Aligarh Muslim University in 1936 and in 1939 helped establish the journal *Nayā adab* (New Literature), the official publication of the Urdu branch of the AIPWA. His major collection of poems is *Ahang* (Melody) (1938; rpt. Delhi: Azad Kitab Ghar, 1957) and *Shab-e-tār* (Dark Night) (Delhi: Hindustani Publishers, 1945); see my article "Asrarul Haq Majaz: The Progressive Poet as Revolutionary Romantic," *Indian Literature*, vol. 24, nos. 3-4 (May-August 1981), 46-62.

Akhtar Husain Raipur was born in Raipur, Central Provinces, in 1912. He received a bachelor's and master's degree from Aligarh Muslim University, and a Ph.D. in Sanskrit from the University of Paris in 1940; his dissertation, "La Société dans le drama sanskrit," was supervised by the eminent French Sanskritist, Louis Renou; returning to India, he taught history and political science at Mohammeden Anglo-Oriental College, Amritsar, until 1945. After 1947 he worked in the Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan; from 1956 until 1972 he served in a number of positions with UNECSO, including head of the Division of Cultural Development of Communities.

Khwaja Ahmad Abbas was born in Panipat in 1914; in addition to being a short-story writer and novelist in Urdu and English, he is a successful film producer and script writer. His early Urdu collections of short stories include *Ek larkī* (A Girl) (Lahore: Maktabah-e-Urdu, 1948), *Z'āfaran ke phūl* (Saffron Flowers) (Bombay: Kitab Publishers, 1948), and *Main kaun hūn* (Who Am I) (Bombay: Navhind Publishers, 1949). English works include *Rice and Other Stories* (Bombay: Kutub Publishers, 1947), *A Thousand and One Nights on a Bed of Stones* (Bombay, Jaico Publishing House, 1957), and his most important novel, *Inqilab* (Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1955).

Shahid Latif was educated at Aligarh Muslim University. He was married to Urdu author Ismat Chughtai with whom he wrote a large number of highly successful film scripts in Bombay. He also produced and directed films. Additional biographical data are unavailable.

11. Hirendranath Mukherjee was born in Calcutta in 1907 and was educated at Calcutta and Oxford universities and the University of London. Primarily an essayist and translator, he has written an important study, *Himself a True Poem: A Study of Rabindranath Tagore* (Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1961). A founding member of the AIPWA, he also organized the Friends of the Soviet Union in 1941 and the Indian People's Theatre Association. He was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1952 and again in 1957 and served as deputy leader of the Communist Party in Parliament. For a reminiscence about Premchand and the first AIPWA meeting, see his "A Homage," *Prem Chand: A Tribute*, ed. Qamar Rais (New Delhi: World Peace Council, 1980), pp. 3-6. For a discussion of the Indian People's Theatre Association, see Sachin Sen Gupta, "People's Theatre in India," trans. Subrata Banerjee, *Unity*, vol. 2, no. 5 (December 1952-January 1953), 8-17, and Michael L. Waltz, "The Indian People's Theatre Association: Its Development and Influences," *Journal of South Asian Literature* vol. 13, nos. 1-4 (1977-1978), 31-37.

Sibte Hasan was born in 1916 in Azimgarh District, United Provinces, and educated at both Allahabad and Aligarh universities. In 1936, while on the staff of the Urdu daily *Payām* (Message), he helped found the Hyderabad (Deccan) branch of the AIPWA. After serving on the editorial board of *Nayā adab* (New Literature), he came to the United States as a special correspondent for *People's Age* and *Qaumī āvāz* (National Voice; Bombay); while in New York, he took an M.A. from Columbia University. He migrated to Pakistan in 1948 and edited *Lail-o-nahār* (Night and Day), a progressive journal from Lahore, which was taken over by the Government of Pakistan after General Ayub Khan came to power in 1958, from which Hasan immediately resigned. He was, prior to his death in the late 1970s, employed with the Eastern Federal Union Insurance Co., Ltd., Karachi.

Qazi Abdul Ghaffar (1887-1956) is known for his editorial work with the Urdu daily *Payām* (Message; Hyderabad), but also as a short-story writer and author of two important works, *Majnūn kī dairī* (Majnun's Diary) (Lahore: Alamgir Press, 1936) and *Lailā ke khaṭūṭ* (Laila's Letters) (Lahore: Urdu Academy, 1947), in which he relates the tale of the classic Arabic lovers, Laila and Majnun, in a contemporary context. He has also written several biographies.

12. Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1912?-1984) was born in Sialkot. Considered the foremost living Urdu poet, he has published a total of nine volumes of poetry, the most recent being *Sāre sukhan hamāre: kulliyāt-e-faiṣ* (All Our Works: The Collected Poems of Faiz) (London: Urdu Markaz, 1983); see *Poems by Faiz*, trans. Victor G. Kiernan (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971). He was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982. See my *Faiz Ahmed Faiz: Freedom Writer, Freedom Fighter* (forthcoming).

Akhtar Shirani, pseudonym of Mahmud Daud Khan, was born in 1905 in the princely state of Tonk, Rajasthan; his father was the well-known Persianist Mahmud Khan Shirani. Akhtar Shirani graduate in 1921 from Oriental College, Lahore; in 1928 he founded the short-lived journal *Khāyālīstān* (Land of Ideas); in 1931 he started *Romān* (Romance) and in 1941 *Shāhkār* (Masterpiece). He has written over eight volumes of poetry and is attributed with starting a trend of romantic love poetry in Urdu; his best poems are collected in *Akhtar shīrānī aur uskī shā'irī* (Akhtar Shirani and His Poetry) (Lahore: 'Ain-e-Adab [1964]).

Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum was born in Amritsar in 1899 and has spent most of his life in Lahore. After receiving his B.A. and the degree of Bachelor of Teaching, he taught at Government College, Lahore; after taking his M.A. in Persian, he taught at both Central Training College, Lahore, and at Government College in the Oriental Studies Department of Urdu, respectively. He has written poetry in both Urdu and Persian.

13. Daya Narayan Nigam was born in Kanpur and was for many years the editor of the Urdu journal *Zamānah* (The Age; Kanpur), in which he published Premchand's first short story ("Dunyā kā sab se anmol ratna" [The Most Precious Jewel in the World]) in 1907; he also published Premchand's first collection of five stories, *Soz-e-vaṭan* (Passion of the Fatherland) in 1909, which caused both Nigam and Premchand (then writing under the pseudonym of Navabrai) to be fined by the authorities. Afterwards Nigam suggested the pen name Premchand. The first volume of Premchand's *Citṭhī patrī*, ed. Amrit Rai (Allahabad: Hans Prakashan, 1962) contains over 280 letters to Nigam in the course of their life-long friendship.

14. Quoted in Madan Gopal, *Munshi Premchand: A Literary Biography* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1964), p. 413.

15. Premchand to Sajjad Zaheer, *Nayā adab* (New Literature), January-February-March 1940.



Kanaifalal M. Munshi (1887-1971) was born in Broach, Gujarat. He was co-editor with Gandhi of *Young India* and active in both Gujarati literature and Indian politics, and served as president of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (All-India House of Learning). He himself has written over seventy volumes in both English and Gujarati, including novels and short fiction.

Dr. Zakir Husain (1898-1969) was born in Hyderabad, Deccan; he received his Ph.D. in economics from the University of Berlin. He served held a number of important academic and political posts, including the office of President of India from 1967 to 1969; he has translated several works into Urdu, including Plato's *Republic*; his writings in English include *Ethics and the State*: (Ahmedabad: Harold Laski Institute of Political Science, 1960). See A. G. Noorani, *President Zakir Husain* (Delhi: Hind Pocket Books, 1967).

16. Jainendra Kumar (b. 1905) became friends when Premchand starting in 1929 when he sent a story to the journal *Mādhurī* (Sweetness; Lucknow), of which Premchand was an associate editor, for publication. Premchand rejected it, but the two struck up a close friendship until Premchand's death in 1936. In fact, he was with Premchand when he died. Jainendra is known as a short-story writer and novelist whose works explore his characters' conscious and subconscious mental processes with subtle psychological analysis. His novel *Tyāgpatr* (The Resignation) has been translated into English as *The Resignation*, trans. S. H. Vatsyayan (Delhi: Jaico, 1950). See Stanley Orman, "The Resignation: A Fully Indian Novel," *Mahfil, A Quarterly of South Asian Literature*, vol. 6, no. 4 (1970), 61-72.

17. Hafeez Malik incorrectly states in his "The Marxist Literary Movement in India and Pakistan" that "of all the twenty-five Uttar Pradesh delegates not one represented Hindi writers," and also speaks of the "absence of Hindi writers" at this meeting (p. 650). See *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 26, no. 4 (August 1967), 649-64. Indeed, Premchand and Jainendra Kumar were the only two Hindi writers present (keeping in mind, of course, Premchand's unique position as a writer in both Urdu and Hindi). Hindi writers boycotted this meeting primarily because of the tensions generated by the question of a "national language" for India: Hindi, Hindustani, or Urdu.

18. *Roshnā'ī* (Illuminations) (Delhi: Azad Kitab Ghar, 1959), p. 115.

19. Chaudhuri Muhammad Ali Rodolvi was born in Rodoli, Barabanki District, United Provinces, of a *t'aluqdar* family. He received no systematic education beyond high school; however, he became one of the most high respected traditional Urdu poets of the twentieth century. An excellent sketch of him by Begum Akhlaq Husain appears in *Nuqoosh* (*nuqūsh*; Designs), Personalities Number (January 1956), pp. 323-38.

20. This speech was reproduced in *Hans*, July 1936, in a Hindi translation from either an English or Urdu original (according to Ahmed Ali, the manifesto passed at the first AIPWA meeting was in English; I am grateful to Mr. Ali for providing me with a copy of that version of the document). This Hindi version appears as the title article in Premchand, *Sāhity kā uddeśy* (The Purpose of Literature) (Allahabad: Hans Prakashan, 1967), pp. 9-26. The Urdu version first appeared in *Nayā adab* (January-February 1941) and is reproduced in Premchand, "Adab kī gharāz-o-ghāyat" (The Purpose of Literature), in *Mazāmīn-e-premchand* (Essays of Premchand), ed. Dr. Qamar Rais (General Secretary of the AIPWA), (Aligarh: University Publishers, 1960), pp. 234-53. A less-than-adequate English translation appears in Hans Raj Rahbar, *Premchand, His Life and Work* (Delhi: Atma Ram & Sons, 1957), pp. 165-82.

For this paper I have used the Urdu version, "Adab kī gharāz-o-ghāyat," p. 234. Subsequent quotes will be cited in the text.

21. "Urdū adab ke jadīd rujhānāt, 1933-1943" (Modern Tendencies of Urdu Literature, 1933-1943), *Adab aur inqilāb* (Literature and Revolution) (Bombay: National Information & Publishers Ltd., n.d.), p. 188.

For another discussion of this address suggesting a novel interpretation, see Elizabeth Röttger-Hogan, "Rasā, Idealism, and Realism: Premchand's Literary Essays," pp. 79-88 in this volume.

22. *Roshnā'ī*, p. 123.

23. For example, the seminal critical essay, "Upanyās" (The Novel) (*Vividh prasāṅg* [Miscellaneous Topics], 3 vols., ed. Amritrai [Allahabad: Hans Prakashan, 1962], 3:34-38), first published in *Samālocak* (The Critic; Jaipur) in January 1925, a full decade before this AIPWA speech, articulates Premchand's views on the nature and function of literature, which are similarly treated in the AIPWA address. In addition, the important essay "Sāhity kī pragti" (The Progress of Literature) (*Vividh prasāṅg*, 3:48-55), which first appeared in *Haṅs* in March 1933, similarly reflects Premchand's views on the emergent "progressive literature."

24. Prince Alexander Kropotkin (1842-1921) was one of Russia's leading pre-czarist social philosophers, critics, and theorists of anarchism; as a result of his anti-czarist activities during the 1870s, he emigrated to England in 1876; he returned to Russia in 1917 but was coldly received by the new regime. His most famous book is *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (1899).

25. "Adab aur zindagī," *Adab aur inqilāb*, p. 24. Subsequent quotes will be cited in the text.

26. Bankimchandra Chatterjee (1839-1894) was born in Katalpara, Bengal; a major novelist of the nineteenth century, he does exhibit a certain anti-Muslim sentiment in a number of his novels, most notably *Anandmath* (Monastery of the Anandas, 1882). See Subodh Chandra Sengupta, *Bankimchandra Chatterjee, Makers of Indian Literature Series* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1977).

Abdul Halim Sharar (1860-1936) was born in Lucknow; his major works include numerous romantic novels such as *Hasan aur Anjalīnā* (Hasan and Angelina, 1889) and *Florā florindā* (Flora and Florinda, 1897), in which he sought "to combine instruction with amusement, by unfolding the greatness that was Islam for our admiration and emulation" (Muhammad Sadiq, *A History of Urdu Literature*, 1st ed. [London: Oxford University Press, 1964], p. 340).

27. "The Contemporary Relevance of Prem Chand," *Premchand: A Tribute*, p. 65.

28. I first noticed the similarity between Husain's essay and Premchand's address when I was reading the former in 1965 while a graduate student. I have also discussed the similarities between these two documents and suggest a possible connection between them in my "Urdu Poetry, 1935-1970: The Progressive Episode," 1:153-55.

29. For example, Gopal, p. 417.

30. For a discussion of Hindi writers' reluctance to participate in the first AIPWA meeting, see Anjani Kumar Sinha, "Socialist Realism and Modern Hindi Poetry," *Socialist Realism and South Asian Literature*, 1:179-80.

31. *Nayā adab*, January-February-March, 1940.

32. Azmi, p. 348.

