

The Baloch Resistance Literature Against the British Raj

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Resistance literature is considered as an important factor in the development of political consciousness among subjugated peoples. Therefore, Balochi resistance literature against British colonialism merits evaluation. Even a cursory glance at the history of Balochi literature, manifests the pride and dignity that Baloch poets and epic writers have shown for their heroes. This literature also demonstrates anger and resentment against the intruders and ridicule against traitors. Notwithstanding historical accuracy, the Baloch self-perception as the guardian of noble values is perpetuated in their literature. They trace their origin from Arabia and show their presence in almost every great battle, which was fought for the glory of Islam or for the glorification of Baloch culture.

Long before the British occupation of Balochistan, the Baloch poets had condemned the high-handedness of the Portuguese and eulogized the bravery of a Baloch leader, Mir Hamal Junaid, who was arrested by the Portuguese and was taken to Portugal.¹ It does not mean that they were critical of only the Europeans but other invaders like the Mongols and the Arghuns also received the same treatment. However, in view of the scope of the present study, we will confine ourselves only to resistance literature produced against the British.

According to a poet as well as literary historian, Mir Gul Khan Naseer, there were clear and distinct phases of the resistance literature.

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1. Sūrat Khan Marrī, "Balochi Muzahimati Shā'iri: Aik Tā'rīkhī Jai'zah", *Balochi Lebzanak*, April 1994, p.37.

In one of his books, *Balochi Razmiyyah Sha'iri*,² he divides the Balochi resistance literature into four phases. In the first phase, he looks at the pioneers, beginning with Mir Chakar Rind and Mir Gawahram Lashari and ending with the writers in the middle of the sixteenth century. This poetry is mostly in the shape of ballads and epics, dwelling on the achievements of great Baloch leaders. The second phase covers the writings after the migration of Mir Chakar Rind and Mir Gowahram Lashari from Balochistan covering the period between the middle of the sixteenth century to the advent of the British. The third phase covers the British period up to 1930. The last phase, according to Gul Khan Naseer, is the phase of "National" poetry.

During 1930-47, the Baloch people used different methods and techniques to pursue their struggle for freedom from the British. There were not many battles fought and not many physical confrontations. Rather, they worked through constitutional and peaceful methods, principally through literature inspired by the political struggle of the Muslims in other parts of India against the colonial rule. *Anjuman-i-Ittihad-i-Balūchān* provided the platform and took the lead in disseminating diverse ideas, ranging from Communism to Khilafat movement and anti-British slogans borrowed from the Indian National Congress.

Raham 'Ali Marri (1876-1933) was one of the most prominent Baloch poets who not only composed poetry, but also actively participated in fights against the British. In one of his long epics, he addresses the "traitors" who sided with the British and says, "like a cattle herd, they followed the pagans and lost their faith both in their history and religion."³ In fact, there are numerous references to early Islamic heroes in Raham 'Ali's poetry to show that the British aggression in Balochistan and the Baloch resistance were like a war between truth and falsehood: "With the blessing of God and for the honour of Ali's⁴ horse, we will kill this serpent (the British) which has sneaked into our homes."⁵ Raham 'Ali was particularly critical of the collaborators of the British without whose help the latter would

2. Mir Gul Khan Naseer, *Balochi Razmiyyah Shā'iri* (Quetta: 1979), p.32.

3. *Ibid.*, p.194.

4. Cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who was known for his bravery and nobility both in war and peace.

5. Kāmil al-Qadiri, *Balochi Adab Ka Mutāli'ah*, (Quetta: 1976), pp.148-52.

never have been able to occupy Balochistan. He saw them as the enemies of the Baloch and Islam.⁶ He was not very happy with the state of society in Balochistan. In his opinion, “half of the people were in deep slumber on their gilded cushions and the other half, like vagabonds, spent their nights in search of a resting place.” Some, according to him, “enslaved others to enhance their status and luxury and comfort, and others starved and cried for food during the last hours of night.”⁷ In this sense, his poetry certainly went beyond the parameters of the British colonialism as he held traditional Sardari system primarily responsible for the miseries and backwardness of the Balochi people.

Raham ‘Ali’s poetry reveals his keen interest in ensuring that the Marri tribe, known for its valour and bravery, continued to keep the torch of freedom alive. He himself participated in the battle of *Harab* fought in 1918 between the Marri tribe and the British Indian army. He wrote several poems to inspire the tribe in their struggle against the British. In one of the poems, he said:

The brave fighters of Marri tribe gathered in the valleys at the request of Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri. May all the saints and the Holy Prophet (PBUH) bless you. They saddled their horses and their turbans flowed around their shoulders. Suddenly the British appeared along with their fighter planes. The brave Marris stood like a solid rock with their girdles and tussles tied with one another. They were martyred for protecting their honour. The clouds sent rain and they were blessed by God.⁸

Another poem, written in the same year on another front, Gumbaz, evokes even more hatred against the British:

Lo! The final hour has struck for a decisive war between the British and the Baloch. There is none who will not dance at the sound of clashing swords. Forward *Ghazis*⁹ and *Shahids*,¹⁰ decorate your horses. This humiliating slavery we are not made for. We have to leave this world one day, determined we are that we will lay down our lives for the glory of the Almighty and will be rewarded in this world and the world hereafter. We loathe the British money and glitter. Our God, He alone, is enough for us.

6. *Ibid.*, p.7.

7. ‘Abd al-Rahman Ghaur, *Naghmah-i-Kohsar* (Quetta: 1968), pp.131-32.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 130-37.

9. Those who survive in the holy war.

10. Martyrs.

No one will stay behind in this final clash and the world will always remember our daring deeds against the British.¹¹

Raham 'Ali became very popular with the tribesmen, particularly with the Marri and young and old both recited his poetry with great enthusiasm. And it always worked. After all, who else told them that: "before going out to fight the British, the Marri Baloch warrior, perfumes his beard and drenches his moustaches in scent. With velvet he covers his body and with flowers he decorates his horse."¹²

Raham 'Ali strongly condemned those Baloch leaders who accepted money from the British or supported them out of fear. In his view, they were traitors not only to their own glorious tradition of courage and bravery but also had lost their faith in Islam. Raham 'Ali had nothing but contempt and ridicule for them. He wrote: "Those people who ran away from the difficult times are now safely living in the Karachi area and are enjoying carrot and fish."¹³

Raham 'Ali stands out as the most prominent poet of his time. He participated in many campaigns against the British. His poetry therefore, is mainly autobiographical. He says, "Those nations who like comfort and peace are ultimately destroyed. Self-respect and honour are considered the deeds of real glory for nations."¹⁴ According to Raham 'Ali, not only the Baloch and Afghans but also other Muslims have bartered away their country for a very small price. Hence, slavery has saturated their bone marrow like the wine gets into one's senses. He laid great emphasis on self-respect, honour and chivalry throughout his writings.¹⁵ Like most folk poets, though he was not formally educated in any school still he had the remarkable ability of conveying his feelings in an inspiring and provocative language. He wrote more than 50,000 verses against colonialism and Sardari system. A revolutionary poet as he was, his poetry was compiled and published by Mir Mitha Khan Marri. Raham 'Ali's popularity, his glorification of the Marri culture, his hatred of the British and disparagement of the "loyal' Baloch leaders, ultimately led to his exile, but soon the people demanded his return and a delegation had to be sent to bring him back, but he was not destined

11. Naseer, *Balochi Razmiyyah Shā'iri*, *op.cit.*, p.289.

12. *Ibid.*, p.290.

13. *Ibid.*, p.196.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

to return to his native place. He died in 1933 and was buried in Musa Khel, Loralai.¹⁶

Another poet who also became very popular with the Baloch was Muhammad Khan Marri (1850-1932) who was educated on traditional Muslim lines and who, too, hated the British intensely. This hatred was further intensified because of his active participation in various battles against the British. He is reported to have defeated the British forces at Kochali. In one of these encounters, Muhammad Khan Marri was arrested and sentenced to fourteen years of rigorous imprisonment. He spent these years in Poona Jail and returned to his homeland after his release.¹⁷ He was not only a good poet but was also very fond of holding poetical sessions at his house, which used to continue beyond midnights. His poetry about the battles of Gumbaz and Kochali became quite popular and continued to influence people even after his death. A specimen of his poetry is as follows:

Early in the morning, I was sitting in the mansion and I saw a plane. I cried, O Marris! Prepare your army and pray for martyrdom, perfume your beautiful beards and say goodbye to your dear ones. The gardens of Paradise are worth your visit but only if you lay down your lives. Those killed in the battles of Gumbaz and Kochali are the flowers of Paradise. Swings are waiting for them in the dense gardens of heavens.¹⁸

Baloch poets were particularly harsh on those who sided with the British. For example, another Marri poet, Giddu Doom says:

Those who have forsaken the Baloch people in the face of the British atrocities are cheats. But we are here to stay on the same rocks to face the same aggression that we have been victim of thousand times before. Our bravery and courage have not given way but you people have lost your Baloch honour just for a few rupees that you get in serving these infidels.¹⁹

Addressing the Sardars of the Sarawan and Jhalawan tribes who had not helped Khan of Kalat, Mir Mihrab Khan, in his encounter with the British in 1839, he went on to chide:

O, the good people of Sarawan, you lost your empire because of your foolishness. But then you had already said goodbye to your honour when you started loving the life of slavery. The British took away your Kalat and

16. Ghaur, *Naghma, op.cit.*, pp. 138-39.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 189-94.

18. Sūrat Khan Marri, "Balochi", *op.cit.*, pp. 38-39.

19. Ghaur, *Naghma, op.cit.*, pp. 193-94.

took away your camel-loads of treasures through the Bazaars to Calcutta but you, for a few pennies, turned into traitors.²⁰

It must be noted here that from Jhalawan, only Wali Muhammad Khan Shahizai Mengal and Mir Abdul Karim Khan Raisani had helped the Khan of Kalat against the British. Mulla Muhammad Hasan, his contemporary poet, refers to Mir Mihrab's struggle in these words:

Like torrents of rain, your guns roared, but the palace and the fort were occupied by the enemies. When the royal battle began, the Khan roared like a lion with majesty and anger. He had the royal dress, crown in one hand and the rock-like shield and sword in the other. He unsheathed his sword and fell on his enemies invoking the power of 'Ali.²¹

Giddu Doom likened the allies of the British to the party of Yazid, the Umayyad ruler who had ordered the extermination of the Prophet's grandson, Imam Husain and his family. That is how the Muslim poets drew inspiration from different phases of Islamic history.²² Raham 'Ali also commented on the death of Mir Mihrab Khan (1839), in these words:

Did you see how he struck the pagans when the world saw his electrifying sword. Like a lion he fell, his face shining like silver. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) welcomed him at the fountain of Kausar, the channel of pure and heavenly water in Paradise. The way he embraced the martyrdom is without parallel. May God bless him.²³

This type of poetry inspired not only the Marri tribesmen but also other Baloch freedom fighters throughout the British period. However, it was Mulla Mazar Bangalzai who composed a poem, *Lat Sahib ki Bagghi*, i.e., "The Chariot of the AGG (Agent to the Governor-General)", which moved the hearts and minds of the people and came to be treated as a national anthem. The background to the epic was coronation of king George V in 1911. The Delhi Darbar, which was held to honour the King-Emperor, became a grand event in the political history of the subcontinent. All the Nawabs, rulers, and Rajas of the Princely states in the British India were invited and were told about the special way of salutation while passing before the throne of the Emperor. The Khan of Kalat, Mir Mahmud Khan II, however,

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 196-98.

21. Naseer, *Balochi Razmiyyah Sha'iri*, *op.cit.*, pp. 290-94.

22. Gaur, *Naghma*, *op.cit.*, p.260.

23. *Ibid.*, p.218.

disregarded this special salute and decided to welcome the King-Emperor in his own way, by brandishing his sword. The Government of India considered it a discourtesy and decided to humble the Baloch Sardars in their own backyard. Consequently, all the prominent Sardars of different tribes were invited to the Residency at Sibi and were asked to pull the chariot of the AGG from Sibi Residency to the Railway Station. Except for Sardar Khair Bakhsh Marri, all the Sardars participated in this disgraceful act.

Mulla Mazar witnessed this disgraceful event and composed a stirring poem, which ridiculed the Baloch leaders except Nawab Khair Baksh Marri whose sense of honour and dignity was deeply appreciated. Mulla Mazar, in fact, called it the curse of God on the Sardars who, like the beasts of burden were obliged to pull the carriage of an “infidel” without any sense of dignity and self-respect. He described at length the whole event depicting the Englishman’s carriage being pulled through mud and rain by Baloch Sardars losing grip on their turbans and leaving their sandals stuck in the mud. According to him, these tribal leaders were good only in looting the poor and betraying their own folks. While, “pulling this carriage, these leaders parted with the honour of their country. Neither had they cared for their own dignity nor for that of their people. What a spectacle it was! Every low and high watched them blackening their own faces and those of their people.” He was convinced that “on the Day of Judgment, God will throw these Sardars in the Hell.”²⁴ This was indeed a tirade both against the tribal leaders as well as the people who were their subjects.

Mulla Mazar soon became a legend. The writers, poets and historians of Balochistan consider their compositions incomplete without paying their respect to this man. Since he had condemned all the Baloch leaders by name, the Sardars asked the government of the British Balochistan to punish him. Consequently, he was exiled from Balochistan to Sindh. He died there and was buried at Jacobabad.²⁵

Recalling the shameful episode at the Residency, Raham ‘Ali also paid rich tributes to Sardar Khair Bakhsh Marri and commented: “O Sardar Khair Bakhsh! A million greetings to you because you still have the honour of the Baloch in your eyes. You have proved true to

24. *Ibid.*

25. Mir Naseer Khan Baloch Ahmadzai, *Tarikh-i-Baloch wa Balochistan* (Quetta: 2000), Vol. III, pp. 218-42.

your mother's wish. May God give you a life as long as the Jhulgari Mountain."²⁶ In another poem, Raham 'Ali exclaimed:

Sardar Bihram Khan Mazari gave the British one hundred men in the First World War. The Buzdars of Highlands gave fifty, Dareshaks eighteen and Misri Khan went along with ten horses. But we are Marrīs and with our leader Khair Bakhsh, we will fight against the British and our Lord Hazrat Ali, on his horse, will come to our help and we will crush the heads of the British like we do with the snakes.²⁷

This poem became a source of inspiration for many poets and a mark of humiliation for the Sardars who had released the horses from the Resident's chariot and pulled it themselves as a sign of loyalty to the British crown.

Balochistan has a long tradition of maintaining its identity, dignity and pride. The Baloch always take pride in two things: being Baloch in the true sense of the word and showing bravery against the enemy.²⁸ Even the lullabies of Balochistan convey these feelings: "I sing to my dear son this lullaby so that he sleeps. I pray that my son becomes a young man, has good friends and wears all the six Balochi arms on his dress."²⁹ Another lullaby that comes from the heart of a mother, says that "when there is a battle in the deserts, my son will be standing under shade of the swords."³⁰ Yet in another lullaby, which is known as the '*Lullaby of Mir Qambar*, a mother is made to say:

O, my son, the light of my eyes, if you embrace death and become a martyr for national honour and prestige, I will not weep or cry but would come to your grave with pomp and show, and will sing the song of celebration and happiness, and for each son who is killed for the honour of my land, I will produce another son.³¹

Another lullaby addressed Sibi as follows:

O Sibi! you are hidden in the dust of horse riders. You have lost many priceless lives of those seven hundred handsome and youthful men who used to wear their turbans with grace and would ride horses without reins.

26. Qadiri, *Balochi Adab*, *op.cit.*, p.274.

27. *Ibid.*, p.286.

28. Mir Khuda Bakhsh Bijrani Marri, *The Baluchis Through Centuries, History Versus Legend* (Quetta: 1964), Vol. II, p.7.

29. Marri, *The Balochis*, *op.cit.*, p.7.

30. *Ibid.*

31. Sūrāt Marri, "Balochi", *op.cit.*, pp. 36-37.

There is no one left today. All of them have been swallowed by the Indian swords.³²

In fact, the Balochi literature is full of references against the foreign invaders, that is, the Portuguese, the Mongols, the Arghuns, and the British. They are condemned for attacking the freedom and honour of the Baloch people. The British were particularly a target of this criticism. To quote a poet, Yusuf Nami Baloch, “if God grants me an opportunity, I would show you how a battle for freedom is fought.”³³

Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd (1904-1979), an important literary figure started a political movement called the “Young Baloch” in the 1920s. He was inspired by the “Young Turks” and wrote extensively in newspapers, magazines and pamphlets about the Baloch identity as well as an independent state of Balochistan. He published the first map of Greater Balochistan and in 1930 joined the Anjuman-i-Ittihad-i-Balūchān. What made Abdul Aziz Kurd famous was *Shamsgardī* a critique of the rule of Sir Shams Shah, a British loyalist and the Prime Minister of Kalat, which was published from Lahore in 1931. Nawab Yusuf Aziz Magsi (1908-1935) wrote the preface to the book in which he said:

This is the tale of a destroyed and forsaken people. It is aimed at their awakening. It should act like Moses’s staff against a Pharaoh of the twentieth century. It is a clarion’s call for our inactive and indifferent brethren in Balochistan. It calls the British Government to honour the right of people in the choice of their rulers.³⁴

Aziz Magsi was an important literary and political figure. He entered into politics in 1920. He was one of the founding members of the Anjuman-i-Ittihad-i-Balūchān and became its first President in 1930. In 1932 and 1933 he organized two Baloch conferences at Jacobabad and Hyderabad, respectively. His poetry not only showed great literary merit but also conveyed a deep commitment to the freedom of his motherland, Balochistan. As he put it: “I swear by the brave blood of the Baloch that I will wipe out the mark of slavery from the face of my country and my motherland and will drink the wine of liberty.”³⁵

Unfortunately, Magsi has been depicted less as a Muslim and more as a Communist and Congressite by certain nationalist Baloch elements. The sweeping statements of his detractors, unfortunately, do not take into

32. *Ibid.*, p.38.

33. Bashir Ahmad Warisi, *Tazkirah-i-Magsi*, Sukkur, 1958, p.68.

34. *Ibid.*

35. Mir Mitha Khan Marri, “Yusuf ‘Aziz Magsi ki Shā‘iri par Iqbāl ke Asarat,” *Balochi Dunya*, November, 1979, pp. 14-15.

consideration his own views. In one of his poems, Magsi said: “The voices of Gandhi and Jaikar could not do much. Now we need someone like Kamal (Ataturk) to put the life in this dead body.”³⁶ Thus, in politics, his ideal was neither Gandhi nor anyone else but the leader of Turkey who had changed the destiny of his country and had emerged as the hero of the whole Muslim world. So far as Aziz Magsi’s intellectual outlook was concerned, he claimed:

I intend to convert afresh the whole world to Islam. This is possible only if I myself become a true servant of Islam, could remind everybody the forgotten lessons and turn every Baloch into a preacher of the Holy Quran. The sermons of Gandhi and Malviya will disappear into oblivion if I show the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).³⁷

The fact of the matter is that Aziz Magsi was as good a Muslim as any other Muslim Baloch. All he sought for the Baloch and Balochistan was freedom. He dwelt at length on this theme in one of his poems, addressed to a singer:

Keep singing, keep singing,
Let your melodies warm our blood.
Let the people of Balochistan feel ashamed.
What is slavery? Whenever it descends on any nation; it is misery and humiliation.
Wake up, the World Revolution!
Let the genie be out of the bottle.
The rich savour chicken and the poor grass.
Destiny changes our fate;
Crush those leaders, who betray their people.
O beautiful singer! listen to this song of Freedom.
You, too, O Baloch listen!
Rise and open your eyes.
Eliminate this instant, eliminate,
Whoever is following the footprints of Changez?
Whether it is a Baloch Sardar or the Englishman,
Both represent the powers of the Devil.³⁸

36. *Ibid.*, p.15.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

38. Mitha Marri, “Yousuf Aziz Magsi”, *op.cit.*, p.18.

Nawabzada Abdur Rahaman Bugti (1907-1958), the elder brother of Nawab Akbar Bugti (1927-2006), was also a prominent writer of resistance literature. He started his career as Tehsildar in Baloch tribal areas, but, before long, he gave up the employment and joined the Anjuman-i-Ittihad-i-Balūchān in 1931 and was elected President of Quetta and Sibi district branches of the party in 1931-1934 and 1934-1938, respectively. He also practically led the popular Baloch uprising against the Sardari system in Bugti area. In one of his poems, he said:

The irony of fate produced such Baloch whose heads should be severed. They give their blood in making God out of Devil-like sharks. They burn the harvest of truth. They fight against the truth day and night and they protect the evil. They let the hurricane sink boat of justice and bring to shore oppression and injustice. Strange suns and moons they are which banish light at the order of their masters and lengthen the shadow of the darkness.³⁹

This kind of protest and resistance targeted not only the British but also the ease-loving and status-conscious Sardars of Balochistan. In some instances, the sons revolted against their fathers for their docility and subservience to the British. Bugti, for instance, wrote a pamphlet against his father who was amongst those who had pulled the carriage of the Agent to the Governor-General at the Sibi Residency. After condemning his father, the ruling chief of the Bugti tribe, in this pamphlet called *Mihrabgardi*, he appealed to the Muslims of India in the name of Islam and the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to help the Baloch in their fight against the Sardari system. Quoting the verse of the famous poet-journalist, Zafar Ali Khan, “If you no longer have the fear of God, still beware of the angry looks of the Holy Prophet (PBUH),” Bugti wrote:

I appeal to the Muslims to look at our condition before it is too late... Help us, the oppressed people of Balochistan, through the columns of your paper and we pray to the members of Assembly and the Council, the saints and *pirs* that the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) is not happy at the oppression of the people of Balochistan at the hands of Sardari system.⁴⁰

Consequently, Bugti was arrested and exiled to Ranchi in Bihar province. After his release, he lived in abject poverty and died at Jacobabad in 1958.⁴¹

Mir Muhammad Husain ‘Anqa (1907-1977) who subsequently worked as editor for some of Aziz Magsi’s newspapers, in 1932,

39. Sūrat Marri, “Balochi”, *op.cit.*, p.34.

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*

resigned his job as a school teacher in order to actively join the Baloch 'nationalist' movement. He was one of the founders of the Baloch national press. He served, from time to time, as editor of several newspapers of Baloch nationalist movement (1933-1948). He composed the first Balochi national anthem and wrote several books and articles against the British and was imprisoned several times. He was also one of the founders of the Communist Party of Balochistan and spent much of his life in prison due to his political activities. 'Anqa was one of the pioneer Balochi writers to employ the Arabic-Urdu script for Balochi language in 1920.⁴² His poems were published in the newspapers he edited. After his death a number of his poems in Balochi were compiled and published in an anthology entitled *Tawar*.⁴³ 'Anqa's life was devoted to political struggle. He tried to reach the people of Balochistan through his columns and resistance poetry. In one of his poems, he wrote:

Now that we have put our boat in the ocean, let the waves roar, let the nights be dark, we will find our destination. Every oppressor is defeated by the oppressed that is the verdict of history. I know the Baloch sword is broken but let the enemy not be jubilant, we have the determination. We are weak, but still no doubt, we have hands (with which we will fight against our enemies).⁴⁴

'Anqa's poetry inspired other poets like Gul Khan Naseer and Azat Jamaldini (Abdul Wahid). 'Anqa glorified the Baloch and Balochi lifestyle, though he does not sound as fervent a revolutionary as some of his contemporaries. In his youth, he was one of the founders of the Communist Party of Balochistan, but subsequently, he revised some of his Communistic ideas. Nevertheless, 'Anqa remained committed to his people and their national struggle throughout his life. In one of his poems he asks the Baloch:

Stand up, make yourself aware.
Stand up, Balochi tribes.
You are Chakar, you are Taimur.
To be without a country is not good.
Looking for the desire of Yusuf Ali's (Magsi) spirit,
Searching for a new life for the new Baloch,
Stand up, O Baloch,

42. Paul Titus, ed., *Marginality And Modernity, Ethnicity anti-Change in Post-Colonial Balochistan* (Karachi: 1996), p.128.

43. *Ibid.*, p.128.

44. *Ibid.*, p.129.

So that all the people become one.
 Now, they look like separate individuals.
 May their blood be one.⁴⁵

Abdul Wahid (Azat) Jamaldini (1918-1982) was a famous Balochi poet and short story writer. He was the editor of the monthly *Balochi*, which was published from Karachi and Quetta. He is counted among the founders of progressive literature in Balochi. In his first poem, *Owl*, he condemned the Sardars and the Sardari system in clear, unambiguous terms. In fact, this feature remained the hallmark of his poetry. The pungent tone of his poetry comes out quite clearly in his following composition:

We will pull the Sardars out of the community,
 These wolves and Nawabs, the bloodsuckers,
 These biting black snakes,
 These traitors to the Baloch nation.⁴⁶

During the last decade of the freedom movement from 1937 to 1947, Mir Gul Khan Naseer (1914-1983), in particular, emerged as a political activist and Urdu and Balochi poet and writer of considerable impact. His writing career began in his school days at Quetta when he started expressing himself in inflammatory essays in Urdu. During his university days at Lahore (in 1934), he excelled in Urdu and Persian and studied history and English. Like most young educated people of his time, he was also inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. He joined the Anjuman-i-Ittihad-i-Balūchān in 1929, and started advocating radical social, economic, and political changes in Balochistan. After graduating from the University of the Punjab in 1937, he returned to Kalat and joined the Kalat State National Party which was the successor to the now-defunct Anjuman-i-Watan. Soon, he rose to be its Vice-President. He was arrested and imprisoned many times, and was finally banished from Quetta and the British Balochistan. He also remained under house arrest for sometime. In 1940, he made peace with the authorities and accepted the office of Tehsildar in Jiwani, a small town at the Makran coast, “sufficiently remote to preclude much political activity.”⁴⁷ During

45. *Ibid.*

46. *Ibid.*, p.124.

47. Carina Jahani, *Language in Society-Eight Sociologicistic Essays on Balochi* (Upsala, Sweden, 2000), pp. 80-82 Jones Elfenbien, *Unofficial and Official Efforts to Promote Balochi in Roman Script*. Elfenbien has edited several of Gul Khan Naseer’s published and unpublished poems, most of which carry political, social

the period under review he wrote primarily in Urdu. His works have been published in nine volumes. A critical review of his verses reveals that he was a nationalist Baloch, deadly opposed to the Sardari system and critical of the laxity and indifference of his fellow countrymen towards the oppressive policies of the British. In one of his early Balochi poem, *Bayu-o-Baloch*, he said:

Come, O, Baloch; Come O Baloch,
 I tell (you) something today.
 Come, O homeless Baloch, you have lost your way.
 A gang of robbers has attacked your land.
 They have set afire your houses.
 They have carried away your possessions,
 But you are not aware.
 Overpowered by a heavy sleep you have become unaware.
 Yours hands and tongue have ceased to function.
 It has fettered the manly lion.⁴⁸

In another poem, *Faryad*, he invokes the memories of the Baloch pride and instigates his compatriots to rise and fight against the British usurpers. He wrote:

Where are the skilled Mughal riders today?
 Where are the brave (and) famous ones today?
 Where are the heroes and Indian tigers?
 Where are the fighters with Afghan daggers?
 Where are the green scimitars of the Baloch?
 Where are the Turks and the swift Tartars?
 Let them come today to the fatherland,
 For the name and sign of the Mughals, have been lost.
 The bitter infidels have taken our pure land.
 Let them come, let them see, let them be ashamed.⁴⁹

and nationalistic messages, entitled as: *An Anthology of Classical and Modern Balochi Literature*, 2 vols., (Wiesbaden, Otto, Harrassowitz, 1990).

48. Titus, *Marginality*, *op.cit.*, pp. 115-16.

49. *Ibid.*, pp.116-17.

Similarly in *Swagat*, he complains that the Baloch have lost their former glory. He asks them to stand up for their fatherland, as other Muslim nations had done.

Stand up, stand up, young man, stand up!
 How long will you sleep drunk on the bedding?
 You see the Turks with curled moustaches.
 They have tied swords and guns to their bodies.
 And are going forward for dignity and fame.
 On the other side, the Arabs with cloaks and turbans.
 The soldiers of the holy war have taken up weapons.
 The state of Iran is in dust-storm,
 See what the glory of Iran is like.
 The sleeping Afghans are now alert,
 They are sitting ready with girded loins.⁵⁰

In another poem called *Grand*, he gives full expression to his feelings of patriotism and revolutionary zeal. He glorified Balochistan, but at the same time, poses the question; “Is it a crime to be born as a Baloch”? He continues: “I uproar. I drive away oppression; I make the motherland a new bride; I make it free, I am a rebel! I am a rebel! I am a rebel.” He ended his poem anticipating a revolution.⁵¹

In *Nawjawan Gon*, he urges the young and brave Baloch freedom fighters to bring the old Sardari system to an end. “Throw a heavy stone on the Sardari system.” He calls for driving out the foreign oppressors and says, “deliver the people from the foreign rule and in this way save the Baloch honour and dignity.”⁵²

In another poem, *Balot-a-Sair*, Naseer saw it as his duty to make the Baloch aware of their slavery: “Your plain and open fields are subjugated; The barren plains and deserts are enslaved; Your hearts and your souls are in chains. You are worse than slaves.⁵³ However, Gul Khan Naseer was hopeful that the brave and heroic Baloch will be able to shake off the yoke of slavery of the foreign masters and that of their oppressive Sardars. In *Dil Mazan Kan*, again, he paints an

50. *Ibid.*, pp.117-18.

51. *Ibid.*, p.122.

52. *Ibid.*, p.118.

53. *Ibid.*, pp.118-19.

optimistic picture of future when he says: “The oppressive government of the infidels will come to an end, suffering and trouble and affliction will come to an end. Light will come and darkness will come to an end.”⁵⁴

Gul Khan Naseer was extremely unhappy with the way the British had ruled over Balochistan. But, in the end, he blamed the Sardari system for the slavery of the Baloch. In a poem entitled “Prayer”, he says:

O my Creator! Give me courage to awaken
The Baloch from their deep slumber.
The Sardars have darkened the faces of the Baloch people.
Let me put them one by one on the gallows.⁵⁵

Addressing the tribal leaders in 1940 in his poem, *Qabā'ili Sardārōn Say*, he warned them:

Look at the horizon. Look at the thunderstorm.
The lightening has struck your boat.
Now you will reap the harvest of what you had sown.
Remember the old saying that you receive what you give.
The Raj that you have served is now going to be over.
Your sustainer had sailed from thousand of miles.
His ship is sunk and anchor is lost.
Your lord, Your master, whom you served,
Is leaving now and you better accompany him.
Don't lure us into new cobwebs of your words.
We are fed up with your presence.
Listen carefully; the British Sarkar is doomed for good.
It will never return, now the people will rule,
Before you fool,
No leader, no ruler, no chief, we will allow.
None will starve; none will remain in fetters,

54. *Ibid.*, p.119.

55. *Balochi Dunya*, Mir Gul Khan Naseer Number, December 1984, p.2.

No capitalist will you see now.
This pure land will be ruled by the people.
None to prostrate, none to take the throne.
The lightening strikes again,
Do you hear the thunder, worry not,
You sowed the poison Ivy, now taste its fruit.⁵⁶

In another poem, Gul Khan Naseer attacked the Sardars and the Sardari system for all its excesses in these words:

I am chained without any fault,
Imprisoned without any conviction,
But listen Sardar! I am a son of Islam and

I will burn to ashes your mansions and your soft and gilded chairs.

I am intoxicated by the message of Islam and *Shari'ah*.
I will not rest until I implement the true spirit of Islam.
What amazing system you have given us,
You sodomize, you rape, but no blemish on you.
You hide all the crimes under the title of Sardar.⁵⁷

The institution of 'Jirga' was strengthened by the British and was used in collaboration with the Sardars to punish the freedom fighters and those who refused to tow the British line. In one of his poems called *Jirga*, Gul Khan Naseer criticizes the system in such strong words:

The irony of fate with the Baloch,
Because of *Jirga*, eliminate the Baloch,
Strengthen *Jirga*, "Allah-o-Akhar",
Has no place in Sardari system,
Disbelief and paganism shows its face in *Jirga*,
Patriotism and love for land becomes a crime,
Heads of these lovers roll through the sword of *Jirga*.

56. *Ibid.*, p.48.

57. *Ibid.*, p.42.

If we stop, the hammer of Sardar crushes us.
 Escape one cannot,
 We are chained by *Jirga*,
 Those who want the flowers to blossom in our desert,
 Their hearts are pierced by the arrows of *Jirga*,
 It is nothing but the enemy of laws, principles and *Shari'ah* for us,
 Straight from the Hell has come the penal code,
 That is *Jirga*.
 Naseer! worry not; it is bound to be eliminated,
 Absurd, absurd, those who say that,
 God has decreed *Jirga*.⁵⁸

Both the breadth as well as the depth of Gul Khan Naseer's poetry are amazing. He addresses his people in the form of a prayer, inspires his listeners through history and the dynamic spirit of Islam. At times, he uses Altaf Husain Hali's verses from the *Musaddas*. Likewise, in many of his poems, Iqbal's ideas are also clearly discernible. Iqbal's concept of "Mard-i-Momin" is evident in many of Naseer's poems. One of his poems, *The Sleeping Youth of My Country*,⁵⁹ is written on the pattern of Hali's epic and begins with a verse of Hali with the same style and same tone. For the most part, however, Gul Khan Naseer remains preoccupied with the plight of the Baloch and the cruel treatment meted out to them by the Sardars and the Sardari system. For example, in one of his poems, *Raj Karay Sardar*, specifically addressed to the Sardars, he says:

The children cry of hunger,
 The old men are homeless,
 The mothers weep in hidden corners,
 There is nobody even to borrow money from,
 But Sardar is our ruler.
 There is no end to cries of infants,
 Lovers go to bed without food,
 The beloved are selling even their beauties but,

58. *ibid.*, p.43.

59. *ibid.*, pp.44-45.

O brother! The Capitalist is still hungry,
 And my Sardar rules over us.
 Without food, without clothes are the miserable people,
 Wailing and crying is heard from every house,
 But Sardar wants work without wages,
 Be it a Gardner or a Bijjar.
 Our Sardar rules us, cuts throat, picks pockets, sucks blood.
 Leachy creature,
 Bones of ribs and skulls are his victims.
 O brother! Through the instrument of *Jirga*.
 Our Sardar rules us.
 He creates feuds, banishes brotherhood,
 Puts brother against brother,
 And with both hands sweeps wealth through bribery.
 O brother! He is our lord,
 Amazing are the ways of my beloved land.
 The people go hungry and naked,
 But the jingle of money makes those parasites dance.
 O brother! Sardar rules over us,
 Our lords, these darlings of Crown,
 Intoxicated with their power and wealth,
 Why should they listen to our cries?
 O brother! They are gods of this earth,
 These Sardars rule us.⁶⁰

Last but not the least, two more names are noteworthy in the long list of Baloch freedom fighters. These are Maulana Muhammad Fazil Durkhani and Abdul Karim Shorish. Maulana Fazil, a religious scholar, was born in the 19th century at Durkhan near Kalat. He founded the Durkhani Madrasah. He worked against Christian missionaries and Western culture. He translated the Holy Quran into Balochi and Brahvi to counter the Christian missionaries' translation

60. *Ibid.*, pp.54-55.

of Bible into Balochi and its distribution in Balochistan. He wrote more than 600 tracts, in Balochi, on religious topics. He died in 1892.

Abdul Karim Shorish was born in 1912 at Mastung. He was a founding member of the Baloch Young Party, Anjuman-i-Watan, Kalat State National Party and Ustaman Gal. He was also editor of monthly *Naukan Daur*, Quetta, and many other contemporary journals and wrote frequently in Balochi, Brahvi and Urdu.⁶¹

The resistance literature, thus, manifested not only the anger and the frustration of the Baloch writers against colonialism but also identified social and economic problems of Balochistan. Education for boys and girls, end of the Sardari system, political and economic reforms were some of its most frequently emphasized subjects.

61. Qadiri, *Balochi Adab*, *op.cit.*, pp.250-59.