

A SHOT ON BURGEONING INTIMIDATIONS IN SAMI AHMED KHAN'S RED JIHAD – BATTLE FOR SOUTH ASIA

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Abstract

A War literature shows an act of creation and a verity of annihilation. It is a literature of concurrences and contradictions. It may be in the form of poetry, a one-act play, poetry, snippet or fiction which shows the reasons for bereavement, trouncing, loss, injuries, grievances, aggressions, sufferings, conflicts, gleeful, furious, squabbles for peace and also shows the altruistic approach of heroic people who did rabble-rousing deeds sometimes by sacrificing their lives. They work in an altruistic way and give their complete prop-ups to reassure the country and bring the cathartic possessions with their accomplishments.

Keywords: War literature, trouncing, rabble-rousing....

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A War literature shows an act of creation and a verity of annihilation. It is a literature of concurrences and contradictions. It may be in the form of poetry, a one-act play, poetry, snippet or fiction which shows the reasons for bereavement, trouncing, loss, injuries, grievances, aggressions, sufferings, conflicts, gleeful, furious, squabbles for peace and also shows the altruistic approach of heroic people who did rabble-raising deeds sometimes by sacrificing their lives. They work in an altruistic way and give their complete prop-ups to reassure the country and bring the cathartic possessions with their accomplishments.

Now-a-days we are seeing a series of bomb blasts in the entire world which are making the country into smolder. But, almost the defense people are protecting from different attacks and are protecting the communities and the environment. Sami Ahmed Khan's debut work "*Red-Jihad – Battle for South Asia*" is a great thriller which highlights the issues like terrorism, naxalism and jingoism. It has been accorded the "Muse India Young Writer (Runner-Up) Award" at the Hyderabad Literary Festival 2013 and has also won an award for "Excellence in Youth Fiction Writing" at the Delhi World Book Fair.

The title words of the novel i.e., 'red' and 'jihad' is intriguing and symbolic. It represents how mass-media portrays the existence of religious fundamentalism and political extremism in contemporary discourses both amounting to the same terror, the same insecurity, and the same loss of life felt amongst those who suffer. Red Jihad united these opposites. The novel depicts the labyrinths of political affairs, deceptions, infidelities, deceits, artilleries, valor's and magnificence's. The novel put in the picture that how India and Pakistan would actually react when they go to war. The novel is informative, enlightening, enthralling, gripping, transfixing, well-structured, lucid and cogent which gives a fine-touch and mature in handling the perceptive issues. It is simple and straightforward narration without any detours.

The novel "Red Jihad" is a gripping thriller which explores the most feared nexus between the jihadis and the Naxals. In the novel, Pakistan has transitioned into a full-fledged

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democracy and is reconciling with India. However, there are forces working against this fragile peace. A Pakistani jihadi leader, Yasser Basheer, travels to the Red Corridor and enlists the support of an Indian Naxalite commander, Agyaat. Their plan is to unleash Pralay, India's experimental intercontinental ballistic missile, on the subcontinent. As the missile changes course en route, it hits Pakistan and causes collateral damage. In response, Pakistan unleashes war on India. The battle for South Asia turns murkier as an Indo-Pak war threatens to embroil many other countries in the endgame.

Red Jihad illustrates a web of politics, lies, betrayal, guns, glory and guts. In the novel, the plot moves forward in a simple and straightforward narration without any digressions. The plot is woven around 3 day crisis situation which starts with Naxalites & Pakistani Terrorist group taking control of a top-secret missile program in a joint operation. It compresses the attack, coup-de-grace by the military & full-fledged war into 3 days. The military technology, warships, tanks, jets, missiles, nuclear warheads, satellites, subs & much more recent advanced technology is thrown at you in each section – creating a vivid picture of what actually is happening. For instance, in Chapter 2, Research Laboratory Alpha, NMRC where Dr.A.A.Suryakanth remembering the past by clipping it lovingly his class picture taken at the graduation day ceremony with his batch mates Wali, Bahu and Ray. His batch was one of the most politically active batches graduated from IIT after the fiery Naxalbari movement of 1969. He states that –

“Engineering education and life had no longer been the same. The people of this country deserved better than nepotism, corruption, hunger and poverty, he had realized”. (Red Jihad:21,22)

Another instance we can see in Chapter 3 at the North Gate, NMRC in 1998 at 21A, Model Road, Srinagar where the terrorists plans to clobber at the dissemination of Kashmir.

“Reports indicate that heavily armed terrorists planning to strike at Radio Kashmir, had holed themselves up in that house, shooting everything that moved. The Kilo Force of the Rashtriya Rifles which is a counter insurgency force in India had been ordered to sanitize the area”.(29)

Another instance we can see in Chapter 5 in the Research Laboratory Alpha, NMRC on 23rd April, 2014 when the terrorists attacked by back firing the research laboratory. The

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terrorists' guns kept firing continuously and their hands were aching by now because of changing magazines continuously. They left firing confirming that no one has alive.

“Researchers, security personnel and maintenance workers, all lay dead, blissfully ignorant of the impending doom. Finally, when all proof of life had been eliminated, they stopped firing”. (51)

The main attribute of the novel which struck to our triad which is different from other novels where there are no characters, there are only situations and how people responded to it. It is an unfeigned war novel where there are neither protagonists nor tremendous characters only the survivors will be present and act according to the situation. “War” is represented as a character. It is a thriller that talks about a war on a macro-scale. In other words the novel is a real war. “A war that has no heroes. No victors. No memorable characters. Only survivors”. For instance in Chapter 3, nears the North Gate of NMRC Captain Yadav reacting to the situation when the terrorists attacked the Radio Kashmir. He is a fine commander walked straight into an enemy trap. Even though two APCs and RPGs were on fire, caught fully unaware; screaming and barking soldiers ran helter-skelter trying to be heard over the din of moans. Even though a stench of charred flesh was all around him and when suddenly his AK-47 got jammed also he didn't capitulate his audacity and ensues by taking another weapon and made a counter-attack with his squad but suddenly a bullet was shot and he tumbles on the ground and he felt that he was in a Venus flytrap but he lunged out of his lair and cut three attackers down before he was shot in the head.

The novel is hailed as one of the first novels to fictionalize the Maoist-Mujahedeen nexus in the Indian Red Corridor which refers to the region in the east of India that experiences considerable Naxalite-Maoist militant activity. It can be said to roughly run from Pashupati (Nepal) to Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh). For instance, When Basheer and Agyaat were discussing on democratic revolution and how they are defending themselves by started targeting the people” and where Agyaat says, *“From Pashupati to Tirupati, our cadres have been under constant attack by the capitalist state.”(39)*

Red Jihad is a political thriller/military fiction set in 2014 which describes and demarcates an India-Pak war and the precariousness in the country which is a main perspective on global political scenario. For instance in Part – I Ignition, Chapter 4, Basheer and Agyaat met at Kalaiya, Bara District, Nepal and discusses about the constant attack on the capitalist state. They also discusses about the “ISI officials, Changes in the policies, 26/11 kid, the war in Khyber and Pakistan’s internal disturbances and how they have to be more cautious for the time being”. And when the negotiations are going on between Basheer and Agyaat, Agyaat realises that the man he was talking to could not take any denials of the existence of god. Even Basheer also realises in the same manner about Agyaat and imagined that along with all his comrades, being roasted over a pit of fire in hell and screaming. *“A spectre is haunting us – the spectre of sin!” Basheer smiled at the image.*” (44)

Basheer and Agyaat have similar thoughts; both did not like these godless, wretched automations. Once Basheer had beaten the Afghan Communists and he could do it again but he was forged with a common bond of trust and respect but not an antagonism.

The novel also dramatizes the links between religious fundamentalism and political terrorism in India. For instance, Part – I Ignition, Chapter 4, Basheer want to make a political gain like Mandal’s temple caked with blood, revolutionaries, betrayed to the police, exploitation of New Delhi.

“What! Political gains? Shouted Agyaat, The only gain we want is to make New Delhi hear the voices of the exploited... a sigh that has been suppressed since time immemorial by the feudal and now capitalistic world orders.” (40)

In the novel, the writer portrays that how India reacts to threats of terror and how decisions are made on a war-footing by the zenith triumvirate of officialdom, armed forces and political executive in an intellectual, mature and decorous manner. The concept and contemplations in the novel has been taken from the authentic endeavors is duly fictionalized which crafts the novel in a gorgeous, striking, accord, temp and consistency. The novel is the best example for Indian Military Fictions. Its pros can be easily outweighed because of its fast-paced, realistic, very well-researched, and chillingly plausible. For instance, in Chapter 10, when General Malhotra wants to make a temporary shift from the routine i.e., a military should interfered in the political affairs of the country only to make the politicians understand about the value of what they have got so that it might use it wisely. He expects neutrality from the public

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but at the same time the politicians of civil society are opposing his move vehemently. Even some corps commanders also did not agree with the decisions of their GOC-in-C (General Officer Commanding-in-Chief) to support General Malhotra because the Central paramilitary organizations which were headed by IPS officers adopt an approach called wait-and-watch. General Malhotra reminds the politicians that they have forgotten the ideals of our founding fathers fought for independence. They are not cherishing the noble ideals that are inspired our national struggle for freedom. They are not defending the country and rendering the national service and not promoting harmony, spirit of brotherhood amongst all the people of India. But they are persuading and surpassing religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities. He chokes in anger, “You and your politics. It ends.... Here”. The politicians reacted in a furious way by the words of General Malhotra and a corrupted MP had slapped General Malhotra. It shows how the political terrorism is growing in India where a General who is serving the country for thirty years long combat career had been slapped like that. He had been fired upon, mortared, shelled, punched, pushed, shot at, bayoneted, thrown, kicked but never ever slapped in this way. He became silent and took this in a challenging way and he knew that the Indian public had an uncanny way of adapting to the changing circumstances. He addressed to the nation so that would get the support of the people of India and at last his address to the nation was upfront and measured and for the first time in independent India’s history, the military had come to the political centre stage.

“The military had seized power temporarily until the country was ready for another election, which would be held soon, though civil liberties would, of course, not be curtailed.” (90)

In the novel, we can see the Islamic fundamentalists uniting with Maoists in the Indian Red Corridor, and has, among other things, an Indo-Pak military conflict. In the novel, the writer painted the different scenarios which are completely believable and plausible. He weaves a web of politics, deceit and treachery, and describes war room strategy meetings in India and Pakistan. For instance in Part 3 - Impact, Chapter 15, there is a final conversation at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Pakistan between President Abbasi, red-faced Lieutenant General Akram and military secretary General Asif Chowdhury to deploy the tactical nuclear device which has to be worked out and special units were on stand-by to initiate the mechanism. At the end of the meeting, President

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Abbasi and General Akram shocked to hear the true incredible words of General Asif saying that *“India did not attack us. A missile was fired at us, but it was not done by India.”*(207)

The story moves at a fairly good pace throughout across nations. The narrative is quite coherent and keeps the viewer engaged fairly well. There are quite a few sequences which are gripping and are very important in taking the story forward. For instance, at the end of the meeting, General Asif admits that it was an attack made by themselves only based on the enthuse words of an army officer, Yasser Basheer who was court-martialled as they both are unhappy with the army killing their own people in FATA and NWFP. He continued by saying that they did this with the help of Taliban’s and Indian anti-state groups as they wanted to take over an Indian military base and launch a missile at India so that its own missile strike and fired in New Delhi, India and no one will be blamed except her own self and the entire Indian weapons find their way into the hands of terrorists and finally the country will destroy its stability and security but unfortunately it deviated and hit Lahore and India had nothing to do with it. All this bloodshed caused not by their mortal enemy but by their own defender. *“So according to the plan the missile was to strike at Delhi but it deviated and hit Lahore? And India had nothing to do with it.”* (209)

The writer described about the warfare weapons, missiles, war planes, etc. and what goes on behind the scenes during peace and war times is displayed in a dexterous way. The author has made the viewers to read till the end keeping them engaged and waiting to know for what will happen next which is a hallmark thing of the novel. For instance, both the countries have internal problems such as Pakistan has a problem with Taliban’s and Baloch Separatists and other insurgents at the same time India too has similar problems like Separatism, Naxalism, etc. At the end Shahid Abbasi says *“the war-mongers”* receiving the end of this sudden self-introspection by the two nations. *“We ignore terrorism in our own country..... we fund terrorist activities on the soil of the other country.... Our policy is to make India bleed from a thousand cuts..... Who is receiving end “The War-Mongers”* (211)

Even Shahid says, India did not respond to the 26/11 Mumbai attacks because the country is candid and simple and they know they can absorb such blows and always stick on to the point *“No war still”*. (213)

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In the novel, the author represents various ideologies in a sensitive manner. It was crystal gazing into the future war of India and Pakistan with an inbuilt message of peace. The novel is a fast-paced, engrossing, gripping thriller that crystal gazes into the future of Indo-Pak relations. It brings alive our worst fears- Naxalites uniting with the Jihadis to subvert an India-Pakistan peace process which we can see at the end of the novel where India and Pakistan have finally begun to cooperate economically and politically. India and Pakistan have conferred the MFN status on each other and are trying to create a free trade area that comprises of all the SAARC countries.

Red Jihad is a figment of Sami's imagination, is a work of fiction, and has its heart in the right place which indicts the scourge of terrorism, violence, hypocrisy, universal brotherhood, peace, etc. He targeted on different campaigns against social evil. He gave a message that "Violence can never be a solution to anything". The novel has an ultimate message which represents "peace, mutual brotherhood, and tolerance in the spirit of *vasudeva kutumbkam*", apart from a pro-active desire to nip terrorism in the bud.

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