

Manifesto of the Progressive Writer's Association, 1936

Radical changes are taking place in Indian Society. The spirit of reaction, however, though moribund and doomed to ultimate decay, is still operative and is making desperate efforts to prolong it. Indian literature, since the breakdown of classical culture, has had the fatal tendency to escape from the actualities of life. It has tried to find a refuge from reality in baseless spiritualism and ideality. The result is that it has become anemic in body and mind and has adopted a rigid formalism and a banal and perverse ideology. It is the duty of Indian writers to give expression to the changes taking place in Indian life and to assist spirit of progress in the country by introducing scientific rationalism in literature. They should undertake to develop an attitude of literary criticism that will discourage the general reactionary and revivalist tendencies on questions like family, religion, sex, war and society. They should combat literary trends reflecting communalism, racial antagonism and exploitation of man by man.

It is the object of our Association to rescue literature and other arts from the conservative classes in whose hands they have been degenerating so long to bring arts in the closest touch with the people and to make them the vital organs which will register the actualities of life, as well as lead us to the future we envisage.

While claiming to be the inheritors of the best traditions of Indian civilization, we shall criticize in all its aspects, the spirit of reaction in our country and we shall foster through interpretative and creative work (with both Indian and foreign resources), everything that will lead our country to the new life for which it is striving. We believe that the new literature of India must deal with the basic problems of hunger and poverty, social backwardness and political subjection. All that drags us down to passivity, inaction and un-reason, we reject as reactionary.

All that arouses in us the critical spirit that examines institutions and customs in the light of reason, which helps us to act, to organize ourselves, to transform, we accept as progressive. The aims and objectives of our Association are as follow:

- 1) To establish organization of writers to correspond to the various linguistic zones of India; to co-ordinate these organizations by holding conferences and by publishing literature; to establish a close connection between the central organizations and to co-operate with those literary organizations whose aims do not conflict with the basic aims of the Association.
- 2) To form branches of the Association in all the important towns of India.
- 3) To produce and to translate literatures of a progressive nature, to fight cultural reaction, and in this way to further the cause of India's freedom and social regeneration.
- 4) To protect the interests of progressive authors.

- 5) To fight for the right of free expression of thought and opinion.