



## **Allama Iqbal: A Critic of Capitalism & Globalization**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Allama Iqbal & globalization! Iqbal's denunciation of capitalism and his profectious of the maladies which this system of economics makes him a real visionary. Globalization is in the final analysis, a sparkly exploitative system in the era of corporate capitalism with a substantial percentage of international trade in the hands of MNC's much of Iqbal's fears have proved themselves to be true. Iqbal is the first Urdu poet to have a book of Economics, entitled *Ilm-ul-Iqtisad* to his credit hence his views on capitalism one not only a portic expression but a viewpoint based on an intimate knowledge of the subject.

**Keywords :** Allama Iqbal, Globalization, Economic, Capitalism

### **INTRODUCTION**

Globalization is not as simple as it looks. It is the most intensive form of global exploitation by the forces which govern corporate imperialism in the name of democracy.

Allama Iqbal, as we know, was against the exploitative tendency of capitalism. We would like to trace the development of corporate capitalism in order to see what Allama Iqbal had to comment on this cancerous development. Globalization means shutting out possibilities of economic growth for the third world. It has been creating virtual fences to shut our people of schools, hospitals, workplace, farms even houses & communities. Mass privatization and deregulation have bred armies of locked out people, whose service are no longer needed, whose life style are written off as "backward" whose basic needs must go unmet. These fences of social exclusion can discard an entire industry, and they can write off an entire country "as happened in Argentina", some time ago and now being reversed by new coalition government headed by Chavas. Take the example of Africa where we find that a whole continent finds itself exited to the global shadow world, off the map off the news.(Klein, 2002, pp. XXI)

Lenin was quite right when he classified imperialism in his theory of imperialism, as a special stage in the development of capitalism, arising towards the end of the 19th century (Magdoff, 1969, pp. 27). It is true that the urge to dominate is integral to business. "Risks abound in the business world. Internal and external competition, rapid technological changes, depressions, to name but a few, threaten not only the profit but the capital investment"(Magdoff, 1969, pp. 35).

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According to Harry Magdoff, the most obvious first requirement to assure safety and control in a world of tough antagonists is to gain control over as much of the sources of raw material as possible. The next requirement is the conquest of foreign markets and the requirement of foreign investment and the giant multi-national, corporations are achieving the last cited goal quite effectively.

To achieve the above cited essential requirements the United States after achieving the hegemonistic role of unipolar power, has unleashed globalization, the latest form of unbridled imperialism. It began in 1945 and now after the dismantlement of Soviet Russia and end of the cold war, the new phase of the development in imperialism doesn't admit of any barrier – even the barrier of opposition of its poor sections of population.

The new phase of imperialism is busy dismantling its own traditional industries, thus throwing millions of its own working population out of work, and is going for more sophisticated industries such as micro electronic industries.

The globalization is, therefore, imposing the West's corporate interest upon other nations.

The Secretary of State had ruled out criticism against the US in the following words: "This criticism (imposing international interest upon other nations) is, "I think a sign of strength - of our strength and the strength of international law", he continued.

"But we know we can no longer find security and well- being in defense and politics which are confined to North America, the Western Hemisphere, or the North Atlantic community. This has become a very small planet. We have to be concerned with all of it – with all of its land, water, atmosphere, and with surrounding space" (The Age of Imperialism, 1969). he said.

The globalization is, therefore the outcome of the above declaration of intent. It has resulted in the very rich of the United States becoming better off than ever before: "In 1980 the top managers of the 300 bigger U.S Companies had incomes 29 times larger than that of the average manufacturing workers, by 1990 their incomes were 93 times greater (Harman, pp. 9). In the year 2000 this figure was more than 110 times, according to a newspaper report.

The Financial times had reported in 1995. " Rich people in Europe and the Middle East are estimated by Chase Manhattan, to have some 1,000 billion pounds in cash or liquid assets- Latin America & Asia accounts for a further 1,000 billion of private wealth, a figure which is growing fast".

Now I come to Allama Iqbal. Throughout his book *Ilm- ul-Iqtisad* the first ever effort by an Urdu poet to understand the basic roots of Adam Smith, Ricardo & Marshal who could be called fathers of international capitalism, we come across a basic disagreement of Iqbal towards an economic philosophy which believes in exploitation of weaker sections of the society. He believes that nothing good could come out of a morally bankrupt view of thriving on an economically weak people battling with scarcities of life.

His article *National Life & view of Millat i Baiza* (A view of the Muslims community) and his *Introduction to Asrar-i-Khudi* (Secrets of the Self), his first collection of Persian poetry, Allama seems to be concerned with the cause of economic rise of Japan & the West- and the causes of the decline of Muslim society. He thought that the world's view of mystical poetry was mainly responsible for the decline of the *élan vitale* (soul-energy) which was necessary for the spiritual & material development of a society.

Throughout his poetry Iqbal has hit out western imperialism. In his poem "Gift of Hijaz", he describes, according to Jagan Nath Azad, an Indian scholar of iqbaeen studies, western imperialism "as an idol which must be thrown down the arch of mind, he says:

“You have bowed before Darius and Jamshed; the ignored one,  
Don’t bring a bad name  
to Harern don’t go to western imperialism  
For the fulfillment of your desire;  
Fell this idol down the arch of your mind,  
You have dedicated your self to European idols;  
Very unmanly, you have expired in the idol-house  
Your intellect is far away from your heart, your heart from warmth.  
As you have not tasted wine from the vine of ancestor.

G.P Polinskaya, in her paper, Iqbal and Social Justice, has taken full cognizance of Iqbal’s exposure of the evils of social oppression & social injustice. Iqbal wanted to liberate his country from colonial hegemony. He was greatly influenced by the Great October Revolution. He composed these lines (Azad, 1977, pp. 145-146):

Let us give new regulations to the magicians & their temples,  
Let us overturn the feudatory of strong old tavern.

He went on:

“Now is the time for establishing a new order  
Let us wipe the heart’s slate clean & begin every thing anew  
The imperial crown is tarnished it has been cast away  
Kuhkun carver came with a chipping hammer in his hands,  
And demanded for himself the estate of Parvaiz”.

Iqbal thinks that the Quran is a message of death for the capitalist & ofcourse for the destitutes. It forbids accumulation of capital and is opposed to usury & speculation. It stands for the abolition of feudalism in all its forms, because, according to its principles, land is God’s state (Polinskaya, G.P, 1977, pp. 149).

Jan Marek, a Czech scholar of Iqbalean studies, in his paper “Muhammad Iqbal & Pablo Neruda” compares Iqbal with Neruda in his denunciation of capitalism and says: “Both Iqbal and Neruda wrote their poetry at a time when imperialism was losing its position one after another. It was a transitional period when the general crisis of capitalism in the developed countries of Europe and America was deepening & the crisis of the world colonial system inevitably began” (Marek, 1977, pp. 304).

Iqbal, according to Jan Marek, criticized the existing capitalist society and its short comings essentially from the stand point of a Utopian whereas Neruda took a much more realistic attitude.

All of it boils down to the act that Iqbal didn’t agree with the Western view of the progress in knowledge and its matchless scientific development if it doesn’t contribute to the general well being of the world as a whole.

He said in the New Year message broadcast from the All India Radio Lahore on January 1, 1938, four months before his death:

“Inspite of all these development, the tyranny of imperialism struts, covering its forces in the mask of Democracy, Nationalism, Communism, Fascism and heaven knows what else besides. Under these masks in every corner of the earth, the spirit of freedom and dignity of man are being trampled underfoot in a way of which not even the darkest period of human history presents a parallel...”

So long as this socalled democracy this accursed nationalism and this degraded imperialism are not shattered, so long as men do not demonstrate by their actions hat they believe that the whole world is the family of God, as long as the distinction of the race, color and

geographical nationalities are not wiped out completely, they will never be able to lead a happy & contented life and the beautiful ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity will never (Jawed, 1996, pp. 153-154).

Allama Iqbal believed that man can be maintained on this earth by honoring mankind, and this world will remain a battleground of ferocious beasts of prey unless and until the educational forces of the whole world are directed to inculcating in man respect for mankind (Jawed, 1996, pp. 163).

So isn't it what Allama Iqbal imagined the latest phase of imperialism to be: shutting out of all humanistic values from the human life under it and building the edifice of imperialism on the annihilation of all scope of socio-economic-political development of the societies being trampled underfoot by it.

The public demonstrations against the rich and developed nations in, Washington D.C, Los Angeles, Toronto, Port Alegre and other centres of Asia & Africa in recent years only prove that the protests from the platforms of World Social Forums are against the philosophy of globalization.

The way barriers between public and private spaces are being levelled shows that not even agriculture is being left to the peasant proprietors of the third world. This public interest barrier is also under the serious threat. Barriers between the genetically modified crops are threatening traditional ways of growing crops. Even traditional herbal plants, water and human stem cells are also under threat and there is a prospect of copyright becoming the U.S single largest export. Barriers around knowledge, technology and newly privatized resources are going to snatch the basic human right so lead one's life according to one's own vision of life.

This is what capitalism is. I wonder what else Allama Iqbal could say, if he were alive today, except that he could not countenance with this upsurge of degradation of human life because the world's most developed economies and capitalistic system don't believe in sharing the fruits of their progress- rather they are ensuring that the present quantum of world resources 20:80 to be further squeezed to the ratio of 10:90 in favor of the developed world.

Allama Iqbal has called it barbarous & unacceptable leaving us to opt for still more bitter adjectives.

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