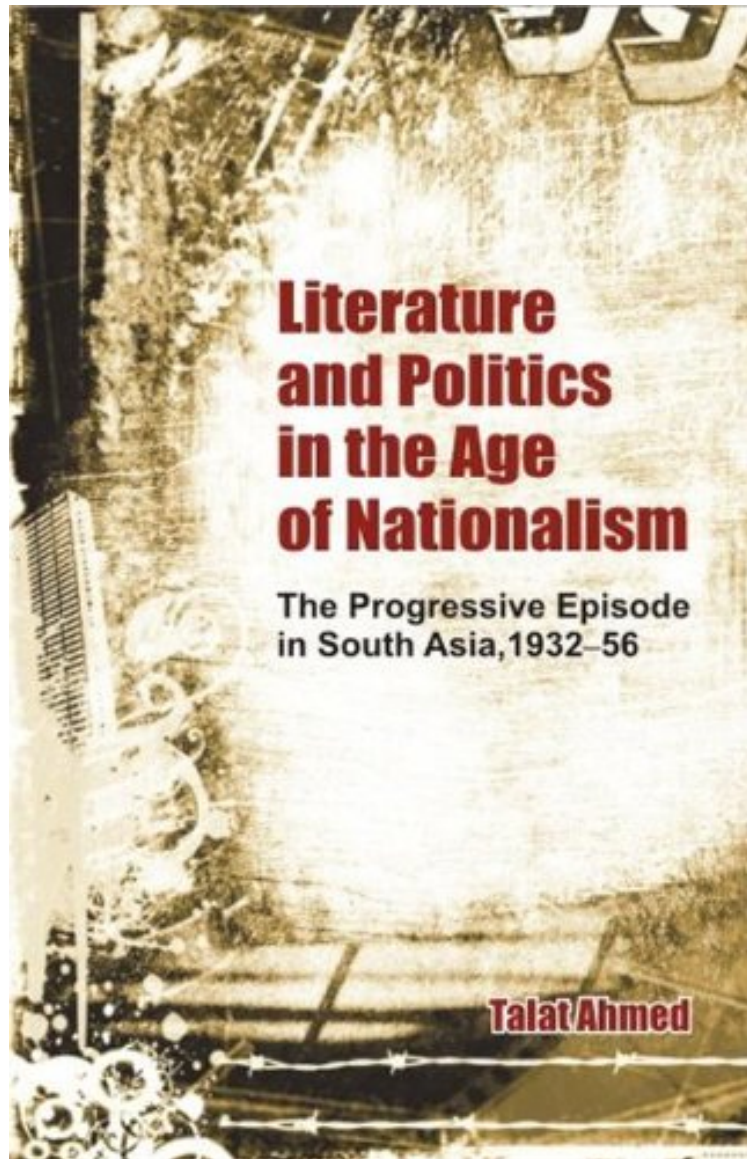


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Literature and Politics in the Age of Nationalism: The Progressive Episode in South Asia, 1932-56

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Politics in the Age of Nationalism: The Progressive Episode in South Asia, 1932-56:

This book aims to provide a historical account of the All-India Progressive Writers Association (AIPWA). In a structured narrative, it focuses on the political processes inside India, events and circumstances in South Asia and the debates and literary movements in Europe and the United States to demonstrate how the literary project was specifically informed by literary-political movements. It explores the theorisation of literature and politics that informed progressive writing and argues that the progressive conception of literature, art and politics was closer to the theorisation of two thinkers of whom the writers themselves knew very little Leon Trotsky and Antonio Gramsci. The book charts the progressive movements extension into the cultural arena through the Indian Peoples Theatre Association (IPTA) and the deepening of its nation-wide character through a progressive nationalism instilled with left-wing ideology. One of the important aims of the AIPWA project was to advance the development of a popular vernacular based on the demotic language of north India Hindustani. The book locates this issue within the broader nationalist discussion on the national language. Contrary to what is implied by much of the previous scholarship, the book argues that the progressive movement did survive the ravages of partition and that the progressives maintained organisations in both India and Pakistan. It looks at the short-lived but very colourful history of the PWA in Pakistan, using PWA documents, government records and personal testimonies. Arguing that literary output and cultural production cannot be understood, let alone interpreted, outside the context of the nationalist movement, war, independence and partition, the book presents a narrative that necessarily transcends disciplinary boundaries between literature, politics and history. Supplemented with literary and archival sources and oral testimonies from the members of the movement, it provides the readers with a balanced and considered assessment of one of the twentieth century's most influential and most interesting literary-political movements.

About the Author Talat Ahmed teaches at the Department of History, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK and is also a member of the British Association for South Asian Studies and the Royal Asiatic Society, London. Her current research is focused on intellectual and cultural history of modern South Asia and radical literary and cultural projects in twentieth-century South Asia. She has published articles and reviews in a number of academic journals and other publications across the world.