

Federalism in Pakistan: A Case Study of Liaquat's Role in Punjab Politics, 1947-1951

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Throughout the freedom movement All-India Muslim League advocated for Federal form of Government in British India, with maximum provincial autonomy. Even when they demanded a separate state for the Muslims of South Asia, they clearly declared that because of the presence of diverse ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups in the provinces of future Pakistan, they would prefer Federalism, with more powers for the federating units. However, after the creation of Pakistan centralization of power became the order of the day and interference of central government in the provincial matters turned out to be the normal practice. In this paper an attempt has been made to trace the beginning of this trend by focusing on the developments that took place during the tenure of the first Prime Minister of the county, Liaquat Ali Khan. Selection of Punjab as a case study has been made as it clearly highlights all the three major factors responsible, i.e. a) internal rifts between the provincial leadership and their invitation to center for interference; b) role of the colonial mind-set, which in this case was represented by the British Governor of the province; c) both compulsions and intensions of the central leadership to dominate the affairs even at the lowest level .

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Federalism is considered to be a solution for heterogeneous societies having ethnic, linguistic and socio-cultural diversity. This system helps to create coordination and cooperation between center and the federating units, and also amongst the units; in the fields of administration, politics and economics. It safeguards national harmony by preserving the multiplicity and uniqueness of the dissimilar groups living in differ parts of the country. The term Federalism is derived from a Latin word "foedus" meaning an "agreement". So in this form of government, an agreement is signed, according to which power, resources and responsibilities are shared between center and units, and because of this distribution, advantages are available to people across the board (Rabbani, 2012: 14). In the modern era, the concept was, for the first time, introduced by the founding fathers of United States of America in late eighteenth century, when they framed their constitution. The concept went through evolution, it got matured and flourished and it was realized that decentralization of power could bond distinct people into a single nation. Apart from United States, countries like Canada, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, India, Argentina, Brazil, Australia, Malaysia etc. have not only practiced this system but also have reaped benefits of it.

Federalism in Pakistan

Pakistan is one of those countries, which were created with almost nothing in common amongst the people living in its different provinces, except for their religion: Islam and their common history of being part of the British Empire. The new state was unique in the sense that its two wings were separated by a distance of almost one thousand miles. This plural composition made Pakistan a state which had “federal society” (Ali, 1996: 7), and thus Federal system of government seemed to be the only possible option available. Furthermore, Muslim League, during the British Raj, always remained a great supporter of a Federation with maximum provincial autonomy in United India. Even when the party demanded a separate political homeland for the Muslims of South Asia, it visualized future Pakistan as a state where federal units of the National Government would “have all the autonomy” which was given in the constitutions of “United States of America, Canada and Australia” and the powers of the Central Government would be restricted to “monetary system, national defense and federal responsibilities” (Jinnah’s Interview, 8-11-1947). It was also envisaged that the center would not interfere in the internal politics of the provinces, which would be entitled to “freely and fairly choose their leader” (Jinnah’s Statement, 28-7-1947). Though Pakistan was declared a Federation, ever since its inception, yet it failed to bring about the expected unity in diversity. Half of the country decided to part away in 1971, while the remaining provinces are still fighting over the issues like provincial autonomy, division of power, NFC Awards, distribution of water, construction of dams, etc.

Problem started when the newly established dominion adopted the Act of 1935 with certain amendments as the Pakistan (Provisional Constitution) Order, 1947. The Act was devised to facilitate a colonial power to govern alien people and thus lacked the basic democratic spirit. While it provided for the Federal form of Government, yet it set the trend for the centralization of power. It gave Center the powers to manage the Provincial Governors in the process of choosing, summoning and dismissal of the provincial ministers; to over-rule the legislation done by the provincial assembly; and to give financial assistance to the provinces (Pakistan Provisional Constitution Order, 1947: Clauses 5, 76 & 142). This established a pattern, which was followed in the years to come. Most of the attempts to devise a constitutional formula in the country revolved around the idea of curtailing provincial autonomy. Decision to merge the four provinces of West-Pakistan into a single unit in November 1954, is a good reflection of this mind-set. Constitutions of 1956 and 1962 provided for the “unitary ruling set-up” (Waseem, 2015: 17). Constitution of 1973 provided for a Federal system, but the inclusion of concurrent list once again opened a window for the dominance of the Center over the provincial matters. Finally, with the passage of 18th Amendment in the constitution in April 2010, Pakistan legally adopted the essence of the Federal system for the first time. How far the system is adopted in letter and spirit during the last ten years in a separate debate?

Pre-Independence

Liaquat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan, was to set the tune for the future governments to come. He was born in Karnal, Punjab, where his family owned huge land, yet he is commonly known for being from Muzafarnagar in UP. He contested his first election in 1926 from Karnal for the Punjab Legislative Council, but after his defeat (Kazmi, 2003: 9) he left Punjab politics and always concentrated on the affairs in UP. It is interesting to note that, from then onwards, he hardly ever took interest in domestic politics of Punjab. Even when Muslim League tried to establish its root in the province, it was Mohammad Ali Jinnah who led the campaign and Liaquat was visibly absent from the scene. However, in the last phase of the freedom movement he interfered in Punjab matters, but only those which had direct impact on the national discourse. He opposed the decision to ban League’s National Guards and declared that Tiwana ministry was “clearly out to suppress the Muslim League in the Punjab”. He claimed that the National Guards were never involved in “violence or lawlessness” and that an attack on it would be considered as “an attack on the Muslim League as such” (Liaquat’s Statement, 25-1-1947).

He also, time and again, drew the attention of the viceroy to the Sikh's conspiracy to create unrest in the province at the time of partition and demanded the arrest of the Sikh leaders (Campbell-Johnson, 1972: 149). In spite of this, after the creation of Pakistan, Liaquat as Prime Minister followed the colonial tradition of centralization of power and hardly missed any opportunity to intervene in the internal matters of Punjab.

Post-Independence

Independence of Pakistan was surrounded by violence and migration. Millions of refugees, who have arrived in Pakistan, in the words of Liaquat, only had "Heaven above and earth below" (Liaquat's Speech, 20-2-1949). So as head of the government, his first and the foremost concerns were to bring back law and order and to get the refugees settled in. Since the hub of activities was Punjab, on Jinnah's advice, Liaquat and his important cabinet colleagues set-up their temporary headquarters in Lahore with the aim to supervise and assist the provincial administration in solving the problem (Salamat, 1992: 71). While in the Punjab's capital, he tried to convince his people that it was in "the interest of a newly-born State that it should have peace within and peace without" and thus his Government would "not hesitate to take strongest measures" and would not allow his countrymen "to suffer at the hands of the peace-breakers" (Liaquat's Speech, 7-10-1947). He regularly visited boarder areas and tried not only to boost the morale of the people who had suffered due to the unrest but also advised them not to retaliate. Liaquat's measures, in addition to overcoming the issue of refugees, also helped in reducing the loss of human life, dignity and property. Yet, his presence in Lahore had enhanced the interference of Center in the provincial matters. Pakistan-Punjab Refugee Council, which was a joint project of central and provincial governments, was dominated by the Federal Cabinet. Punjab's Chief Minister considered Liaquat and his cabinet's intervention as an attack against the provincial autonomy, as legally rehabilitation of refugees was a provincial subject (Mudie to Nazimuddin, n.d.). Liaquat's stay in Lahore also brought him closer to Francis Mudie, the British Governor of the province, who was a great advocate of the centralization of power.

After the emergence of Pakistan, a four member first West Punjab ministry, including Chief Minister Iftikhar Hussain Mamdot, Mian Mumtaz Daultana, Shaukat Hyat and Sheikh Karamat Ali, took oath on August 16 (Pakistan Times, 17-8-1947). All of them were young and belonged to those feudal families which had their origins in the Unionist Party and had obliged British pursuits in the past. It was anticipated that the new cohort of leadership would work to find the solution of the problems of the riots effected province. However, they failed to grow beyond tiny regional issues and started fighting amongst them. First conflict surfaced, when Mian Iftikharuddin, who was inducted in the cabinet few weeks after independence, as Minister for Refugees, advocated the idea of confiscating land from the feudals and distributing it amongst displaced persons. The proposal was unanimously rejected by the other members of the cabinet and thus Iftikharuddin resigned on November 15 (UKHC to CWRO, 19-12-1947). Only two days later, in the session of Punjab Muslim League Council, Iftikharuddin managed to defeat the government's backed candidate and thus replaced Mamdot as the President of the provincial chapter of the party. With this an open clash started between the province's government and the provincial League (Pakistan Times, 2-12-1947). Liaquat, in spite of his socialistic affinity with Iftikharuddin, remained silent during this tussle (Kazmi, 2003: 320).

In December, matters further complicated in Punjab with the start of a conflict between Mamdot and Daultana, each trying to push the other out of power. On one hand, Mamdot wanted least interference from his cabinet colleagues and started relying mainly on a shadow cabinet encompassing his personal friends; Hamid Nizami, editor of *Nawa-i-Waqt*, and a couple of bureaucrats (Afzal, 1998: 93). On the other, Daultana believed that he was a better choice for the office of Chief Minister as he considered himself more qualified and intelligent than Mamdot. Moreover, he thought that Mamdot being from the

areas left behind in India, had no constancy in West Punjab and thus had no right to rule the province (Adeeb, 1987: 330). Other leaders including Shaukat also joined Daultana and within no time the divide spread to the district level of the party organization. Since Liaquat was busy dealing with the teething problems of Pakistan, he tried not to interfere in the Punjab politics and desired that the matter be resolved by the local stake holders. However, when the trouble continued multiplying, it became difficult for the Central Government to sit back and watch the drama. This would have resulted in political destabilization of one of the most important provinces of Pakistan. But the more important cause for Liaquat's change of mind was the negative reporting of the events to him by Mudie, who kept feeding him that Mamdot was incompetent, unpopular and corrupt and thus should be removed.¹ Mudie's opinion was not unbiased as he considered Mamdot as an obstacle in his way of enjoying absolute executive powers in the province. Though he wanted to get rid of Mamdot but he was not interested in replacing him with Daultana (Mudie to Jinnah, 23-2-1948)² and the reason for this was that he knew that even Daultana would not give him a free hand.

Irony was that Liaquat, when decided to resolve the factionalism in Punjab, asked Mudie to undertake the mission. The obvious result was a failure. Liaquat then wanted Jinnah to settle the problem and for the next couple of months Jinnah tried his utmost to tie the differences between Mamdot and Daultana. Jinnah first visited Lahore and then in March 1948 invited Mamdot, Daultana and Shaukat to Karachi. They, on Jinnah's face, agreed to work together but on their return to Lahore reverted back to their old stance. Mudie informed Liaquat that the situation in Punjab was worsening and Daultana might resign before April 1 (Mudie to Liaquat, 26-3-1948). Liaquat rushed to Lahore and tried to convince Daultana, but could only delay the latter's resignation till April 12 (Mudie to Jinnah, 13-4-1948). Mudie, by that time was openly convincing both Jinnah and Liaquat that Mamdot should immediately be removed from the office and was warning that otherwise the things would "degenerate even further" (Mudie to Jinnah, 19-4-1948). Jinnah and Liaquat, on the other hand, were still looking for a political formula to solve the issue. Liaquat suggested that Mamdot should be elevated to Federal Cabinet and Daultana should be given the charge of Punjab. Jinnah first discussed this proposal with Mudie (Jinnah to Mudie, 14-4-1948) and then called him and the three Punjab ministers to Karachi for a meeting on April 24. To Jinnah's surprise, neither Mamdot nor Daultana agreed to the proposal. Daultana's argument was that if he would accept this, general public would get the impression that he tendered his resignation only to gain power (Wolpert, 1993: 361).³ Yet, Daultana and Shaukat agreed to take their resignations back, and on the return to Lahore, they alongside Mamdot, issued a joint statement declaring that they would follow Jinnah's instruction and would continue to work as a team (Ahmad, 1965: 361).

The cease-fire continued for a short period and the fight between the Punjab ministers soon resumed. Jinnah once again invited the Governor and the trouble making trio of the Punjab cabinet to Karachi and conducted a marathon meeting on May 12, which was also attended by Liaquat. Different possible solutions of the Punjab problem including giving Liaquat an additional charge of the province, or enforcing Governor Rule in Punjab were discussed. Jinnah, however, rejected both these proposals (Beg, 1986: 840). He advised the Punjab ministers to resolve their disputes and to function as a team in the best

¹ For details see Mudie-Liaquat Correspondence during February and March 1948, IOR. MSS. EUR. F. 164/49.

² Mudie in a letter to Jinnah suggested that if Mamdot was to be removed from office he should either be replaced by Ghanzafar Ali Khan or Feroz Khan Noon, with Ghanzafar as his first preference. He also suggested the name of Jamal Khan Laghari but to him Laghari would be a bad choice.

³ The basic reason for Daultana's refusal was that he knew that the majority of the members in the assembly were with Mamdot and not with him.

interest of the nation. But this time not even a temporary consensus was reached and the ministers went back to Lahore without Jinnah's permission. On his return, Mamdot called a meeting of the League members of the Punjab Assembly on May 20 and took vote of confidence. This irritated Daultana and Shaukat, both of whom resigned from the cabinet on May 27. Mamdot saved his ministry by inducting Main Nurullah, Abdul Hamid Dasti and Sayyid Mubarrak Ali Shah as their replacement. All this annoyed Jinnah, who decided to pull himself out of the Punjab affairs and left the matter to Mudie for suitable action (UKHC's Memorandum, 26-5-1948). Liaquat also issued a statement in which he assured that the Central Government was no more "interested in the Provincial tangle" (Nawa-i-Waqt, 29-5-1948). When Mamdot and Daultana came to know that Jinnah was annoyed, both of them asked Mudie to present their unconditional apologies before him (Daultana to Mudie, 18-5-1948). However, there is hardly any record that shows that their admission of guilt was ever conveyed to Jinnah. So it is true that Jinnah failed to crack the Punjab problem mainly because of the lust for power amongst the Punjab politicians. Yet, one cannot ignore the fact that the failure was also because of the over reliance of Jinnah on Mudie, who because of his colonial mind-set and personal motives, was never interested in solving the problem.

Post-Jinnah

After the death of Jinnah, Liaquat became the most powerful person at the Center and with this, his interferences in the Punjab affairs further increased. In the last week of September, he started a tour of the province, apparently with the objective of lifting the people's morale, which had fallen due to the death of the father of the nation. However, the real purpose behind this trip was to read the pulse of the Punjab politics. This was the time when Liaquat developed soft corner for Daultana, something which was quite visible in the developments which took place in the following months. He started convincing Mamdot that, in the better interests of the province, he should take Daultana back in the cabinet. Mamdot agreed and in a meeting with Liaquat at Karachi on October 6, it was decided that former would enlarge his cabinet by inducting Daultana and Feroze Khan Noon (Liaquat to Mudie, 10-10-1948). Few days later, Mamdot reconfirmed his stance during Liaquat's visit to Lahore. On November 5, both Mamdot and Daultana met under the supervision of Governor-General Khawaja Nazimuddin and finalize the formula of reconciliation (Mudie to Liaquat, 5-11-1948). The news of Daultana's return to the cabinet was made public and was published in the press. Date for the swearing-in ceremony was finalized but just at the eleventh hour, Mamdot backed out from his commitment and declared that he was not ready to take dictation from the Central Government (Afzal, 1998: 94). The main reason for the Mamdot's change of mind was the feedback he received from his personal advisors. They convinced him that the man behind the idea was Mudie and thus having Daultana back in the cabinet would mean more authority for the Governor (Ahmad, 1965: 374-5). Mamdot announced a new cabinet consisting of Dasti, Shah, Nasarullah Khan and Fazal Ilahi and tried to prolong his rule in the province.

Daultana felt offended and humiliated and thus decided to take revenge. In retaliation he first challenged Mamdot's power in the Punjab Muslim League Council. In the election for President of the Council, held on November 25, 1948, he defeated Mamdot's candidate, Alaluddin Siddiqui, by the difference of 22 votes. The important thing to be noted related to these elections was that Daultana's candidate for the post of General Secretary was Liaquat's son, Wilayat Ali Khan. This further proves that Daultana had the blessings of Liaquat. In his speech after being elected as President, Daultana defied Mamdot's authority and declared that his ministry was answerable to the party (Pakistan Times, 30-11-1948). Now Daultana's main target was to remove Mamdot from the office of Chief Minister. He started winning over Mamdot's supporters in the parliamentary party with various promises and thus the gulf between the two leaders further enhanced. Meeting of the Punjab League Council held on December 26 was disrupted by some gangsters and Daultana alleged that they were sponsored by Mamdot. Daultana now openly started advising Central Government to dissolve Mamdot's ministry. Liaquat called both of

them to Karachi but the meeting ended without any positive result (CMG, 31-12-1948). When Liaquat visited Lahore in January, Daultana claimed that he had won the backing of majority in the assembly as 42 out of 81 members were behind him. On the contrary Mamdot claimed that had had the support of 44 members in the house. Seven members of the assembly had actually signed both the lists (Aziz, 1976: 3).

Liaquat could have asked Mudie to call the meeting of the assembly to know who actually enjoyed the majority in the house. But instead of this, he advised the Governor-General to use his powers under Section 92-A of the Provisional Constitution and dissolved not only Mamdot's ministry but also Punjab Assembly. The fact of the matter is that Nazimuddin personally was against any move which would "jockeyed" Mamdot "out of office" as he believed that such a move would result in the suffering of the provincial "administration" and increase in ills like "nepotism and favoritism". He wanted the Central Government to learn from the "not very successful... experiment" already "tried in Sindh" (Nazimuddin to Mudie, n.d.). Liaquat, still made Daultana's complaint; that there was "decay in civic responsibility and integrity in the Province" and if "strong measures" were not taken, "the very fabric of Government and society in the Province" would "perish" (Liaquat's Statement, 24-5-1949), as an excuse to continue with his decision. Liaquat claimed that the civil society, especially the educated people of Punjab, wanted the same. However, a good look at the correspondence between Liaquat and Mudie unveils that the basic reason behind enforcing Governor's Rule was the conspiracy that was cooking between the two for the last six months. Mudie kept on trying to convince Liaquat that he was the only one in Punjab on whom the latter could blindly trust and thus with the enforcement of Governor Raj in the province, Liaquat could run the province according to his own free will. Punjab Assembly was dissolved on the charges of corruption and Governor's Rule was enforced in the province on January 24, 1949. Liaquat's interest in the development can be judged from the fact that he himself was present in Lahore to personally monitor the incident (McGrath, 1996: 57-9).

There was hardly any immediate reaction in the province against the dissolution of Punjab Assembly. By and the large Press appreciated the decision. Liaquat claimed that he received letters of gratitude from public at large. Some of the politicians also showed their support in favor of the decision (Dawn, 26-1-1949). Still, both Liaquat and Mudie knew that this decision had put more pressure on them and they had to deliver something big without wasting any time; otherwise people would start raising objections on them. The first thing they did to get the public support was by discrediting politicians who had served in the previous regime. Propaganda campaign was launched and it was popularized that the instability in the province was basically because of the factional strife amongst the politicians. Charges of corruption were not only leveled against Mamdot and his political team but also against the civil servants who were close to him. Mudie started running the affairs with the help of bureaucrats of his own choice and thus became an all-powerful executive of the province. Obviously he had the backing of the Prime Minister, who had no plan to hold elections in the near future (Liaquat to Mudie, 18-2-1949).

Daultana soon understood that he had committed a mistake as he was only used by Liaquat and the real beneficiary of the entire drama was actually Mudie. This realization brought him close to Mamdot and the two factions of the Punjab league once again reunited and that too under the patronage of the Central Muslim League. Khaliqzaman, President of Pakistan Muslim League, visited Lahore and managed to find out a compromising formula between the two groups. Mamdot was nominated to the Central League Working Committee (CMG, 6-3-1949) and Daultana resigned from the office of President of Punjab League, and his nominee, Main Abd al Bari, was elected to the post as a consensus candidate (Pakistan Times, 19-4-1949). With this reunification, a movement was launched to remove Mudie from the job of Governor. Important newspapers including Dawn, Pakistan Times, Civil & Military Gazette, Nawa-i-Waqt etc. also joined the campaign demanding the recall of the "British Governor" (CMG, 26-4-1949). They

blamed Mudie for dragging government officials into politics (Nawa-i-Waqt, 31-1-1949). With the passage of Objectives Resolution the campaign got further strength as they started pleading that no non-Muslim could hold a key position in an Islamic State. Working Committee of the Punjab League passed a resolution on May 23, in which it demanded that Mudie should be replaced by a Pakistani governor (Pakistan Times, 24-5-1949). They also threatened to use the option to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement. Mudie kept convincing Liaquat that the reason behind the “propaganda” against him was to protect the corruption of Mamdot and that if he was not “brought to public trial, then the result will be the complete triumph of the forces of corruption” (Mudie to Liaquat, 26-5-1949). Mudie also wanted Liaquat to pull the strings of Khaliqzaman and other leaders of the Central Muslim League and also to ban or at least to put sanctions against the newspapers which were involved in the campaign (McGrath, 1996: 62).

In spite of all what was happening in Punjab, Liaquat, till very late, stood firm behind Mudie. He was publically declaring that Mudie was the selection of “Quaid-i-Azam” and was “discharging his onerous duties as Governor... loyally and faithfully”. He was also condemning the activities of Punjab League and wanted the party to consult “Central Government” before indulging in any anti-Mudie campaign (Liaquat’s Statement, 24-5-1949). However, when the movement against Mudie gained momentum, Liaquat realized that the things were going out of his control. He first asked Mudie that “Law and Justice should be enforced” but “propaganda” done “against Mamdot” should be stopped (Liaquat to Mudie, 19-4-1949). This annoyed Mudie, who raised the question of trust deficit between him and Liaquat (Mudie to Liaquat, 20-4-1949). Later, in a meeting with Khaliqzaman and Bari, Liaquat agreed to induct Punjab League’s representatives as advisers to the Governor. When the news reached Mudie he categorically stated that he would not accept the nominee of the Central Government as his advisers. He further clarified that no one, who was involved in movement against him, would be inducted and that the advisers would only be advisers and not be considered as ministers (Mudie to Liaquat, 26-5-1949). Liaquat, who was not interested in annoying Punjab League anymore, after a meeting with its Working Committee on June 22, communicated to Mudie that the advisers’ plan was finalized; its members were to be appointed by the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the provincial League and would act as ministers (Liaquat to Mudie, 22-6-1949). Since it was not acceptable for Mudie, he resigned on June 24. Liaquat wanted Mudie to at least give the formula a try (Liaquat to Mudie, 28-6-1949) but Mudie was not ready to change his decision (Mudie to Liaquat, 2-7-1949). Mudie’s ouster was hailed in the country as end of an “anomaly of a foreigner occupying the office of a Governor in a sovereign and independent State” (Pakistan Times, 9-7-1949).

Post-Mudie

Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar replaced Mudie as the next Governor of Punjab. He in the words of Liaquat, was “one of the best servants of the nation” as he “firmly” wanted “to put an end to the factionalism” in the province (Liaquat’s Speech, 25-8-1949). Liaquat’s judgment about Nishtar proved true but Liaquat himself was not able to stop interfering in the province’s affairs. In the beginning he gave the local politicians a free hand as he first decided to withdraw the politically motivated corruption case against Mamdot from the High Court and then according to the Liaquat-Bari formula appointed advisers to the Governor of Punjab on the recommendation of the provincial League in November (Syed, 1989: 58). However, when the differences between Daultana and Mamdot resurfaced, he failed to act as a neutral arbitrator and his tilt towards the former was quite obvious. Daultana felt that Mamdot had started tightening his grip on Punjab League as Bari was showing sympathy towards him (Shahnawaz, 2002: 260-1) and that majority of the advisers were also his men. In order to challenge Mamdot’s power, he first pleaded that after the appointment of a Pakistani as Governor, there was no need for the advisers. However, when this move was defeated by the Provincial League Council, he brought a no confidence motion against Malik Muhammad Anwar, the chief adviser. The session of the League Council held on July

24, 1950, to discuss the motion, had to be called off because of an open fight between the two groups. Daultana and his supporters met in the absence of the other group and passed the resolution. Bari resigned in protest. His resignation was approved by the Working Committee of the Punjab League in its session held on August 21. Mamdot and his devotees walked out in protest. Later Daultana managed to get his man, Sufi Abdul Hameed, elected as the new president (Mahmood, 2002: 114-6).

Central Muslim League Council, on October 8, 1950, with the amendment in the constitution of the party, allowed the same person to hold a party office alongside a ministerial position and thus Liaquat became the president of the League. Speaking on the occasion he bluntly talked about the dominance of Center over provinces in the party, as he said that if a provincial League “wanted the Government to accept and act upon any of its proposals” it should first get the motion approved by the “Working Committee or the Council of the Pakistan Muslim League” (Liaquat’s Speech, 8-10-1950). Mamdot, who was already convinced that Daultana had the backing of Liaquat, under the new development became sure that it would be pointless for him to compete within the framework of the League. He, along with his aides, quit Muslim League and formed a new party with the name of Jinnah Awami Muslim League (Syed, 1989: 59). With Iftikharuddin and Shaukat already expelled from the League for violating party discipline, the ground was left open for Daultana to dominate the Punjab chapter of the organization. Mamdot’s assumptions proved correct when the elections were announced and Liaquat openly came out in support of Daultana. Not only that his announcement of withdrawing from Commonwealth Conference on the issue of Kashmir “electrified the masses in favour of the League” (Dawn, 11-1-1951), but he also directly campaigned for the party declaring that League was the true custodian of Jinnah’s vision (Dawn, 3-3-1951). His intentions can clearly be judged from his statement that Pakistan was “the child of the Muslim League” and that it was “the duty of the mother to look after the child till it grows up” (Liaquat’s Interview, 11-10-1950).

Polling was held for eleven days between March 10 and 20, 1951 and the result was announced on March 30. Muslim League managed to win overwhelming majority in the assembly and their number even increased after the election as some independent candidates and others who crossed floor also joined the party. Opposition blamed Liaquat responsible for rigging the elections but no documentary proof verify this allegation.⁴ On April 3, Daultana was elected as the leader of the League’s parliamentary party in a meeting, which was presided by Liaquat. Speaking on the occasion Liaquat claimed that the “result of the general election” was “a writing on the wall” as people of Punjab had not “voted for individuals or groups” but for “Muslim League and its programme” (Liaquat’s Speech, 3-4-1951). Following the footsteps of Liaquat, Daultana besides being Chief Minister was also elected as President of Punjab League. From then onwards Liaquat, till his death, continued to put his weight behind Daultana in the politics of Punjab. He stood behind him when amendment, suggesting that the parliamentary leader would hold office for the life of the Legislative Assembly but other office-bearers were to be elected annually, was passed in the constitution of the Punjab Muslim League (Dawn, 27-9-1951). He also backed Daultana with his idea of introducing land reforms in the province. Liaquat went to the extent that he threatened the landlords to go back to the electorate for a fresh mandate, in case they wanted to oppose the bill (Afzal, 2001: 58). However, after the assassination of Liaquat, Daultana’s position weakened and eventually his rule in the province came to an end on April 3, 1953.

⁴ Liaquat’s electioneering and League’s image of leading the Pakistan movement played an important role in party’s victory. Furthermore, Fatima Jinnah’s decision to remain in isolation from politics, in spite of Mamdot’s claim that she would run their campaign was also an important factor. Punjab’s pro-establishment mind-set also played a significant role.

Conclusion

It appears that Liaquat, in order to secure his position in the national politics of the country, wanted to have friendly government in Punjab. For this he first backed Mudie and then invested in Daultana. Being an immigrant himself, Liaquat knew that he had no constituency in Pakistan. In order to sustain himself at helm of affairs at the national level, he needed support from a strong ally, who could help him win election in the times to come. Daultana, probably was the best bet as he was not only himself one of the biggest feudal of Punjab but was also influential with the landed aristocracy in the province at large. All this resulted in the undue interference of center in the politics of Punjab. Even if one agrees to the argument, that Liaquat had no personal motive behind his involvement in the provincial politics and he genuinely supported Daultana because, to him, he was more competent and trustworthy, the repercussions of his course of action were still negative. Liaquat's policy of increasing power of the center at the expense of Punjab, which otherwise is considered as the blue eyed province of the center, in any case set a wrong president. The practice of centralization of power not only continued but was also started being considered as a positive feature in the national narrative. Federalism in Pakistan was indeed the biggest victim.

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