

Politics of the Left in Pakistan: Progressive Political Ideology, Constitutional Struggle and Journalism of Mian Iftikhar ud Din

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Abstract

The leftist ideas and progressive political ideology of Mian Iftikhar ud Din remained controversial among the political leadership and ruling elite after the creation of Pakistan. His advocacy for a uniform and structural policy regarding land reforms for the refugee rehabilitation, his oppositional and critical stance on Objectives Resolution and, his rebellious attitude towards the policies of leadership of Muslim League isolated him politically within the ranks of Muslim League and caused his expulsion from Muslim League. But the campaign of Mian Iftikhar ud Din for a modern democratic state remained intact through Azad Pakistan Party and Progressive Papers Ltd. As a progressive ideologue his vision inspired all the leftist and progressive segments across Pakistan. This paper would highlight some important aspects of political ideology, constitutional struggle and journalism of Mian Iftikhar ud Din. The political journey of a progressive and leftist politician to align himself with Muslim League which was dominated by powerful Muslim landlords and the survival of distinguished political vision, constitutional stance and Journalistic discourse of Mian Iftikhar ud Din are the key aspects of this paper.

Keywords: Left Politics, Political Ideologue, Constitutional development, Muslim League, Progressive Papers Limited

Introduction

The term 'Left' has multi-dimensional aspects and broader meanings. It is an umbrella term which confronts its actual meanings. In political context, the term 'Left' derived its meanings from the sitting plan in the 'French Estate General of

1789' in which the French nobility sat on the right side of the king whereas the commoners sat on the left side of the king.¹ This common definition of left implies that the privileged class sat on the right side while the underprivileged class sat on the left. In ideological context, it encompasses the progressive attitudes towards social change.² In broader context, the 'Left' is defined as the liberal orientation and enlightened expressions towards a political order.³ Generally, the definition of 'Left' varies along geography and various meanings are attached with it over time and space. The agreeable approach to define 'Left' is based on its characteristics such as democracy, freedom, welfare, progressive and reformist agenda.⁴ In addition, the political agenda of 'Left' is the commitment to social equality and eradication of traditional institutions, hierarchies and injustices.⁵ Thus, the characteristics of the 'Left' include convenient tool and thoughtful approach to understand the left politics.

In British India, 'Left' and the left politics is often deemed as intermingling of ideological connotations as well as political typologies.⁶ In fact, the anti-British sentiments were either inspired by the ideological streams or followed the principles of western social democracies. Both strands adjusted the leftist doctrines with the indigenous realities of India. The social democrats, who followed the principles of western social democracies, were keen to adopt the peaceful means for political, social and constitutional reforms whereas the ideologically zealous were interested in overthrowing the old and traditional hierarchies through resistance.⁷ Notwithstanding, there were commonalties between these two leftist categories on the basis of characteristics such as anti-British attitude, anti-feudal approach, advocacy of maximum autonomy and promotion of social justice and equality. It is pertinent to mention here that the only organized political platform in British India for the leftists and social democrats was Indian National Congress (INC) which attracted many western educated progressive ideologues in India. Among such ideologues, Mian Iftikhar ud Din was a prominent figure.

Mian Iftikhar ud Din was a leftist and progressive politician in the political and constitutional history of freedom movement and the nation state of Pakistan. He started his political journey from the platform of INC and remained provincial head of INC in Punjab. Afterwards he joined All India Muslim League (AIML) and was elected as member of provincial assembly in 1946. After joining AIML, he tried to organize the progressives and leftist forces to garner their support for the Muslim cause. In this regard he also laid the foundation of Progressive Papers Limited (PPL). After the creation of Pakistan, he was given the provincial portfolio of Refugee Rehabilitation and provincial president of the Muslim league in Punjab. He played a pivotal role not only in provincial politics but was also quite vocal in national politics of Pakistan. He advocated for the economic reforms, constitutional rights of people, land reforms, raised voice for the minorities and opposed the Objective Resolution in constituent assembly. Mian Iftikhar remained a progressive figure among the powerful legislators in the assembly and critical of the authoritative measures of Muslim League government. Ultimately he was expelled from Muslim League. After his expulsion he laid the foundation of leftist political party with the name of Azad Pakistan Party and PPL remained the mouth piece of leftist politics of Mian Iftikhar ud Din.

Mian Iftikhar ud Din as Leftist Political Ideologue

Mian Iftikhar got his higher education in England and came back to India in 1930.⁸ During his stay in England, he encountered with progressive and leftist ideology and, he had the opportunity to observe the working of democratic institutions. He was impressed by the western socialist ideas therefore after reaching India he contacted with the leftist groups. As in 1930s INC was the symbol of non-communal progressive thought, left politics and anti-imperialism in British India, Mian Iftikhar joined INC in 1936 to utilize his political experiences and wisdom.⁹ It was this time when the ideological factor was playing an important role in the politics of India and the British government was keen to curb the religious and revolutionary leftist tendencies. Mian Iftikhar was a staunch

believer of parliamentary politics and condemned the use of religion in politics for specific interests. He became member of Punjab legislative assembly in 1937 on INC ticket and he was instrumental in founding the Congress Socialist Party, an affiliate of INC.¹⁰

As a leftist ideologue, Mian Iftikhar was vocal against the British Imperialism. He resisted against the landlords of Punjab, imperialist interests and the Unionist ministry as he believed that the unionists were the 'stooges' of British imperialism.¹¹ Moreover, he defended the political prisoners and leftists along with revolutionaries in provincial legislative assembly.¹² During Quit India Movement he was arrested along with other leaders of INC and soon after their release serious differences emerged with the INC leadership. Therefore he resigned from the post of Punjab president and primary membership of INC.¹³ It is noteworthy that Mian Iftikhar was sympathetic towards the AIML demand for separate homeland. According to him,

The unity of India could only be maintained through the consent of different elements that constituted the national life of this country and these elements included Muslims as well. In his views, holding India together against the wishes of its communities would only serve to stiffen separatist tendencies and the way to unity lay in conceding the right of secession.¹⁴

For this cause, he lobbied and pushed INC leadership for rapprochement with AIML demand but failed. As he believed that INC failed to follow its historic program of communal harmony and national unity in British India, he left congress and joined AIML.¹⁵ Other prominent leftists also joined AIML.¹⁶

The leftists prepared the progressive manifesto of AIML for 1945-46 elections. It was election manifesto which played a pivotal role in winning the overwhelming support of Muslim segments for AIML in British India. In 1945-46 elections, Mian Iftikhar became the member of Punjab

provincial legislative assembly. Despite having mandate and largest political force in Punjab AIML was not allowed to form government. This had worsened the political tensions in British Punjab. In Punjab legislative assembly, Mian Iftikhar raised his voice against the injustice done to AIML and presented the league as a progressive and revolutionary party. In defense of Nawab of Mamdot for his previous association with Unionist party, he responded that,

God willing, this Nawab of Mamdot who today is the leader of a progressive Muslim League will tomorrow be the leader of a revolutionary Muslim League.... Those who were Khan Bahadurs yesterday are Khan Bahadurs no more, and those who are Khan Bahadurs today, soon they will become revolutionaries.¹⁷

After the election victory of AIML, the feudal leadership of the party was suspicious of the leftist tendencies in the league's ranks. Soon differences emerged between the leftist and progressive groups of league and the feudal elements. The latter tried to remove the leftist and progressive elements from the higher ranks of AIML.¹⁸ In spite of staunch opposition from the leadership of AIML, Mian Iftikhar lingered on with its cause and was arrested during communal tensions in early 1947.¹⁹ In response to his arrest, mass agitation started in Punjab which caused the removal of Unionist ministry in Punjab.

After the creation of Pakistan, Mian Iftikhar ud Din joined the provincial cabinet and was given the portfolio of provincial minister for refugees and rehabilitation in September 1947. Mian Iftikhar in his first press conference as minister voiced against the 'illegal inhabitants, land grabbers and unauthorized occupants of evacuee properties and buildings and, therefore stressed upon the role of legislation and role of press in formulating the public opinion is necessary against such squatters.'²⁰ Further he also explained the official policy and approach of League's ministry that "the Muslim league is doing its duty towards the long term and short term requirements of refugees."²¹ Mian Iftikhar presented an inclusive arrangement and scheme for the rehabilitation of refugees in the assembly for approval. In this scheme, 'he

suggested the comprehensive taxation procedure on individual income and also stressed on taxation on agriculture sector, demanded land reforms and recommended the immediate nationalization of industry.²² However, his keenness in solving the refugee crisis in Punjab as well as throughout Pakistan got rejection from the powerful landed elite of Pakistan. Moreover his demand for land reforms was labeled as un-Islamic and contrary to the fundamentals of Islam.²³

Beside the reformist agenda of Mian Iftikhar, there was a tussle between central and provincial governments on the issue of refugee rehabilitation. The chief minister of Punjab Nawab Iftikhar Mamdot was critical of Mian Iftikhar's policies. In fact, the structural policy laid down by Mian Iftikhar was not acceptable to chief minister²⁴ and he threatened to leave the central 'refugee council'.²⁵ In his resignation letter to chief minister, Mian Iftikhar wrote:

I feel that the crisis through which we are passing requires most radical changes in our economic system, administration and in our relations with our neighbours. In fairness, therefore, the important task that was assigned to me, it is proper that I should resign.²⁶

After his resignation from ministry, Mian Iftikhar was made provincial president of Muslim League. He successfully utilized his position to mold public opinion across the country in favour of his reformist and progressive agenda. As provincial president he categorically raised certain questions. "What are my suggestion about the refugee rehabilitation and regeneration of agriculture income? Are these suggestions un-Islamic? Is this the appropriate time to implement these proposals? And if the answer to last question is yes what would be the responsibility of a member of Muslim League?"²⁷ In addition to this, he strengthened his argument in favor of his scheme by quoting the phrase of Muhammad Ali Jinnah in which he advocated for equality and social justice.²⁸ Through such a strategy, Mian Ifikhar was becoming more and more popular among the masses.

Meanwhile, by seeing the growing public stature and fame of Mian Iftikhar, the League's central government issued 'Pakistan Public Safety Ordinance' to curb the oppositional voices against the League's unpopular policies. Consequently Mian Iftikhar and certain other disgruntled leaguers²⁹ gathered and signed a resolution which stated that,

It is an occasion for consideration and regret that the Pakistan government should have deemed it necessary at this juncture to pass an ordinance an ordinance suppressing the freedom of press, speech and political development. That an important measure of this nature should have been enacted into the law without the consultation with the elected representatives of people has come to us as a great surprise.... Many who fought for the success of Muslim league party have further reason to pause and think, 'are the civil liberties and people's interests safe in the hands of the men whom the Muslim league has put in power'? ³⁰

After issuing the statement against the ordinance, the League's government served 'Show Cause' notices to these members for their rebellious act. Majority of members requested for pardon and held Mian Iftikhar responsible for this.³¹ As a result, through a resolution in League's central executive committee (CEC), Mian Iftikhar was charged with violation of party discipline, damaged national interest and questioned the party line. Therefore the resolution suggested for the expulsion of Mian Iftikhar from Muslim League without any trial.³² Mian Iftikhar reiterated that public safety ordinance was against the fundamental rights and it resembled with imperial tool for controlling the masses in British India.³³ After his expulsion from the Muslim League, he laid the foundation of Azad Pakistan Party (APP).

The aim and objective of APP was to follow the vision, ideology and principles of Muhammad Ali Jinnah which the Muslim League's leadership had forgotten after his death and indulged in malpractices in safeguarding their own vested interests. In its strategy, APP had a roadmap for the political freedom, security of fundamental rights and course of action for

the prosperity of the country.³⁴ It is worth mentioning here that the creation of APP was a challenge to Muslim League leadership especially Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan who claimed that “No one would be able to form a political party other than Muslim League in his life time.” However, after seeing the popularity of APP he had to admit veracity that “this party has laid the foundation of oppositional progressive politics.”³⁵ Mian Iftikhar called for the dissolution of existing constituent assembly and demanded for the holding of fresh general elections in the country. His demand for general elections was not only criticized but also declined by the League’s leadership. However, when the provincial elections were announced, Mian Iftikhar and his party participated in the electoral exercise. During election campaign, he associated the attitude of League’s government with British government in India. According to him “vote for League would be a great sin.”³⁶

Mian Iftikhar and APP contested the provincial elections with the manifesto which comprised of abolition of ‘safety acts’, ‘provincial autonomy’, ‘land reforms’, ‘independent foreign policy’, ‘compulsory military training’, ‘issues of common wealth and sponsoring of people’s revolution in occupied Kashmir.’³⁷ Though, on the basis of his election manifesto, Mian Iftikhar made certain efforts to unite anti-Muslim league elements to form a united front against the Muslim league yet he failed to do so.³⁸ Due to his failure, APP showed insignificant progress in the provincial elections and secured only one seat. Moreover, the maneuvering tactics³⁹ of league’s government in elections compelled APP to demand re-elections.⁴⁰ In terms of agitation, Mian Iftikhar and APP resisted against the imposition of martial law in Punjab. He vehemently criticized the Punjab government for its lethargy and ineffectiveness for not controlling the Ahmadiyya issue therefore he labeled the provincial government as the ‘agent provocateurs’ for the casualties and he believed that the provincial government was responsible for the imposition of martial law.⁴¹ During the Ahmadiyya issue, Mian Iftikhar participated in peasant agitation in Faisalabad and in this

agitation he started a vigorous campaign and voiced for the release of political prisoners and martial law 'detenees'.

Mian Iftikhar as Constitutionalist

After electoral failure, Mian Iftikhar, as member of constituent assembly of Pakistan, played oppositional role along with Pakistan National Congress. As he was critical to League's governance style, his recommendations were turned down and his motions in the constituent assembly were not allowed for discussion.⁴² Notwithstanding, when in March 1949 Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan presented objective resolution, Mian Iftikhar was the only Muslim Leaguer and Muslim member who was critical of the contents of Objective Resolution. In fact, Objectives Resolution was considered as the foundational stone in the constitutional history of Pakistan as it expressed the foundational principles of future constitution. The resolution stated that,

Whereas sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to God Almighty alone and the authority which He has delegated to the state of Pakistan through its people for being exercised within the limit prescribed by Him is a sacred trust...wherein the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice. ⁴³

The minorities and Pakistan National Congress members condemned the Objective Resolution. Mian Iftikhar, firstly, countered and responded to the objections raised by the non-Muslim members of the constituent assembly who belonged to congress party in these words:

It has been said that it gives the constitution a theocratic approach. Sir, I assure the members of the congress party that the wording of the preamble does not in any way make this objective resolution any more theocratic, any more religious than the resolution or the statement of the fundamental principles of some of the modern countries of the world....The authority, whether we say it or not, is derived from the Higher Power. It does not lie within our power to change the laws of nature or to add to or detract from the power of Nature's God. ⁴⁴

Secondly, he criticized the government and the architects of 'Objectives Resolution' for their incapability to explicate the terminologies such as 'Islamic democracy' and 'social justice' and questioned the government members that how these jargons were to be different from that of 'western terms'.⁴⁵ According to him,

It may be said that I am anticipating the work of the constituent assembly, and it is a question which is covered by the word 'Islamic' democracy, freedom, social justice.... Of course, the Islamic conception of justice and democracy is what I am trying to explain but, as I have said before that word has been used before and Islamic justice and Islamic democracy has not been given.⁴⁶

While criticizing the role and influence of Ulema in Pakistan, Mian Iftikhar opined that they were 'stooges' of the imperialism in united India and after the partition they had become the 'puppets' of the feudal leadership of Muslim League.⁴⁷ Indeed, he laid greater emphasis on spirit rather than slogans; therefore in his views Objective Resolution was "a victory of slogan over spirit."⁴⁸

Beside this Mian Iftikhar had the conflicting views regarding One Unit bill and he cautioned the ruling party about repercussions of this scheme. He was of the view that this scheme would lead to disintegration of country instead of integration. He was in favour of 'federal unity' and against the 'unitary federation'. He, through historical context and quoting examples from Canada and USA, opined that the federal unity would be more democratic in spirit rather than unitary unity.⁴⁹ While going into deeper aspect of this scheme, he raised voice in favor of various ethnic groups and nationalities who were residing in West Pakistan regarding their fundamental rights of those groups to 'rule over subjects who are of their own concern'.⁵⁰ According to him,

...the manner in which we were conducting ourselves would not lead to the unity that we all desired, or said that we desired, it would gradually result in the

disintegration of our country...if we do not bear in mind the natural unity of west Pakistan, we shall land ourselves into an equally embarrassing situation. It is the matter of sheer common sense that just as unnatural centralization must ultimately harden centrifugal tendencies, likewise the absence of coordination ultimately must result in administrative inefficiency and disruption.⁵¹

The passing of One Unit bill from the constituent assembly gave an opportunity to the progressive and leftist groups in Pakistan to make an alliance against the ruling Muslim League government. The utmost desire of Mian Iftikhar was in process of materializing. He and his political party was the driving force behind the creation of anti-One Unit leftist alliance in the shape of National Awami Party (NAP).⁵²

Moreover, when the draft of 1956 Constitution was presented in the Constituent Assembly, Mian Iftikhar vehemently criticized it. As he was critical of objective resolution therefore it was obvious that he would have concerns on the constitutional draft. He argued that the delaying tactics were used in constitution making only to safeguard the interests of Ulama and the political elite of West Pakistan.⁵³ He stressed on the necessity of general elections on adult franchise so that the constituent assembly by the people's mandate would have the powers either to accept or reject this constitutional draft otherwise this constitution would be a constitution of non-elected members majority of whom belonged to West Pakistan and it should be not more than a piece of paper.⁵⁴ After the passage of Constitution, Mian Iftikhar staged walkout along with other oppositional members in protest. In his speech in the Constituent Assembly he expressed his views in these words,

...let democracy go to the people. Let democracy come to Pakistan. Let the economic and social structure be determined through democratic methods and not through intrigues and bureaucratic manipulations....when the rulers will be celebrating the passage of this undemocratic, un-Islamic constitution,

let the people celebrate this day as a challenge to the spirit which brought Pakistan into being....⁵⁵

After the passage of Constitution in 1956, conflicting debates were started on the electoral system of Pakistan for minorities either it would be held jointly or there would be separate electorates. Mian Iftikhar and other Leftists advocated for the joint electorates whereas the Muslim League along with religious parties especially Jamat-i-Islami stood for separate electorates. Some Leftists like Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy and A. K. Fazalul Haq fell prey to the power politics in center who surrendered the cause of joint electorates in favor of separate electorates for retaining their power.⁵⁶ Contrary to this, Mian Iftikhar said that

...now what we have been discussing on this great occasion is the supposed problem of meeting tyranny, intrigue and oppression of the Hindus who constitute 10 percent of our population. We, the biggest Muslim state, the fifth largest state of the world, have been discussing in this House how to save the Muslims of Pakistan....⁵⁷

Mian Iftikhar and Progressive Papers Limited (PPL)

Mian Iftikhar was one of the pioneers who laid the foundation of modern journalism in Pakistan. He started Progressive Papers Limited (PPL) which played pivotal role during the Pakistan movement in British India especially in Punjab. In fact, PPL since its foundational day remained the mouth piece of Leftists. Though it was started with the help of Muslim Leaguers like Nawab Iftikhar Hussain Mamdot (chairman), Mian Mumtaz Daultana, Feroz Khan Noon, Syed Ameer Hussain Shah (Managing Director) and Malik Bagh Ali, yet after the partition, PPL retained the independent policy.⁵⁸ Initially PPL published an English newspaper with the name of *The Pakistan Times* on the directions of Muhammad Ali Jinnah because he had close relations with Mian Iftikhar.⁵⁹ It started its publication in February 1947 from Lahore and the first editor of *The Pakistan Times* was Faiz Ahmad Faiz, a staunch leftist, socialist and friend of Mian Iftikhar. ⁶⁰ After partition, PPL

started Daily *Imroze* an Urdu newspaper in 1948. In 1957, PPL started another weekly magazine with the name of *Lail-o-Nahar* under the editorship of Sibte Hassan. PPL remained an influential publishing house during the first decade after the creation of Pakistan despite the political opposition and international pressures.

As mentioned above, *The Pakistan Times* started its publications on the directions of Jinnah therefore after the Independence till the demise of Jinnah, *The Pakistan Times* was encouraged to highlight the political as well as economic problems of the nascent state and brought light to the government efforts in tackling these issues. But after the demise of Jinnah, the PPL faced vigorous opposition from the government side. As the policy of PPL was stuck to the ideology of Pakistan and ideals of Jinnah, the criticism on government policies was unbearable for the official circles. As far as the editorial policy of PPL was concerned, Mian Iftikhar never interfered in the affairs of the Paper. The chief editors, Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Mazhar Ali Khan of *The Pakistan Times* remained objective and developed a progressive view point. PPL always emphasized on the issues of working and labor classes and never compromised on the editorial independence and its integrity. It was due to the non-compromising policy of PPL due to which, for the time being, *The Pakistan Times* was banned and heavy penalty was imposed on the editor Faiz Ahmad Faiz under Pakistan Security Act 1949.⁶¹ Further, its consistent opposition to the preventive measures of government and the slogans of land reforms popularized PPL among the masses but it was suspected by the government.⁶²

The layout of *The Pakistan Times* was structured on the leading British newspapers and it gave the maximum reporting to national and international developments. Moreover, it had international correspondents appointed in London, Paris, Istanbul, Tehran and New York to report from the headquarters of United Nations.⁶³ According to Zamir Niazi, “during the short span of twelve years as free and independent journalism, PPL was the only publishing house which could claim near consistency in its struggle for the freedom of the press and for

championing the cause of downtrodden people of this unfortunate land.”⁶⁴ After the formation of APP, PPL remained its official press organ regarding the domestic as well as international politics. In fact, PPL acted as the mouth piece of political activities of Mian Iftikhar and his party till the formation of NAP. It was considered that the APP was the only organized oppositional political party in Punjab due to PPL.⁶⁵ *The Pakistan Times* and *Imroze* were instrumental in influencing the public opinion with their vast circulation and its readership. Though Mian Iftikhar and his party lost the provincial elections but Mian Iftikhar remained successful in securing the seat of chief financier of PPL, Syed Ameer Hussain Shah from Gujrat.⁶⁶

During the Punjab disturbances, the mainstream press played an important role in instigating the Ahmadiyya riots and disturbances in Punjab. The politicians and religio-political parties sponsored the mainstream press to ignite the situation.⁶⁷ A commission was formed for inquiry and report of the commission clearly stated that it was the Punjab government along with the press which was responsible in these riots. It is interesting to note that the report of the commission clearly stated that there was no role of PPL in these disturbances and it remained neutral in this regard. On the other hand, PPL in its English and Urdu editorials criticized the politicians as well as Ulema for using the religious card in the politics. When Mazhar Ali Khan, the editor of *The Pakistan Times*, was interviewed and investigated by the commission, he clearly stated that the use of religious card in the politics of the country would have disastrous consequences.⁶⁸

PPL policy and editorials were against the policies of ruling party either it was constitution making process or the one unit bill or the issue of representation in the two units or the issue of joint and separate electorate. For instance, *The Pakistan Times* pointed out the dangers inherited in the ambiguities in the Objective Resolution and pleaded that Islam could be woven into the state fabric as a matter of policy and not of law.⁶⁹ On One Unit scheme, *The Pakistan Times* editorials criticized the architects of this scheme and stressed

upon the zonal federation in the West Pakistan.⁷⁰ The Pakistan times vigorously advocated for the joint electorates in the country. On the issue of electoral system of Pakistan, *The Pakistan Times* and *Imroze* editorials vehemently advocated for the joint electorates in Pakistan. According to these editorials the Two Nations Theory was presented by the Muslims of British India to justify the partition but after the independence it was useless and illogical to ask for separate electorates which were a threat for the minorities to justify their allegiance to the state.⁷¹ *The Pakistan Time* wrote:

no logical connection between separate electorates and the consciousness of separate nationhood that it is empirically known to have fostered in the minority in united India, surely it is not the intentions of its protagonists that a parallel development take place among the Hindus in Pakistan.⁷²

Besides the domestic issues and policies, on Foreign Policy of Pakistan, PPL was critical of defense pacts with the United States. It advocated pro-Russia and pro-China foreign policy and advocated for the peaceful resolution of Kashmir issue. As a result of defense pacts with the United States military aid arrived in Pakistan but it was criticized and faced opposition from the progressives and Leftists elements within the country. PPL lamented the secrecy with which the government chose to conduct the foreign policy.⁷³ The leftist orientation of PPL caused it heavy loss in the shape of Nationalization of PPL under the martial law of Ayub Khan.

Conclusion

Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din as a leftist politician and progressive constitutionalist played an important role in the early history of Pakistan. Before partition, he tried to reproach Congress and League leadership on the issue of partition and voiced against the pro-British rule of Unionists in Punjab. Moreover, he was considered to be one of the pioneers of modern journalism in British India. After partition, his political and constitutional struggle in the early years of Pakistan set an example for the leftists and progressive politicians to raise their voice against

Abdul Wajid

the exploitative nature of governance in Pakistan. As a founder of Progressive Papers Limited, he introduced new trends in print media and used his publishing house for the propagation of liberal, progressive and leftist ideas. In fact, PPL remained a mouthpiece of his political organ Azad Pakistan Party. Further, in first two constituent assemblies of Pakistan he was vocal against the nexus of landed elite and the Ulema of Pakistan. Therefore, for his progressive views, he was given utmost respect and due regard from political circles. On multiple occasions, using his political stature, he tried to make a united front against the Muslim league and its government. He made applicable suggestions for the future Constitution of Pakistan but his proposals were turned down by the government. When martial law was imposed in 1958, he was persecuted by Ayub Khan for his leftist ideas and his publishing projects also faced the wrath of martial law administration.

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