**The talent of resistance art**

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There are news stories in Indian media that only those artists who will sign a document of obeying state policy would be allowed to work in Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir. Before this, India applied new rules for journalists last year in the occupied valley and now this subjugation is extended to artists and performing arts practitioners as well.

The latest victim of unannounced rules for artists is Mudasir Gul from Srinagar, who is facing fears of being tagged a criminal under the draconian Public Safety Act (PSA).

Mudasir Gul on May 14, started painting a mural “We Are Palestine” to express solidarity with Palestinian people and India, which has a strategic partnership with Israel, called this solidarity expression as an act against the State.

Students of Communication Philosophy and the History of Theatre, remember that signing a contract by artists and practitioners with the State for the following subjugation was a standard tool of the former the Soviet Union after the Prague Spring era in the former Eastern Bloc during the period of normalisation. Stripping every chance of expression away from Czechs was called “Normalisation” by Soviet rulers. The period of Normalisation is an era when the former Soviet Union was taking away all forms of freedom of expression from the population of regions under its influence and the foremost target was former Czechoslovakia because as a means of resisting and questioning the cultural and political values of the period of so-called normalisation, Czech artists were expressing their anger through paintings and theatrical activities.

[Pakistan loses Rs209 billion in tobacco taxes in last five years: Report](https://nation.com.pk/26-May-2021/pakistan-loses-rs209-billion-in-tobacco-taxes-in-last-five-years-report)

Dennis C Beck in his scientific paper, “Gray Zone Theatre Dissidence: Rethinking Revolution through the Enactment of Civil Society” indicates that the struggle of artists has a long history to communicate with society without falling into the non-pluralistic tendencies of xenophobic nationalism that would replay the monism of the totalitarian system they oppose. Examination of the development of such artist-intellectuals’ reveals the complex and changing relationship of civil society, its artists’ unique ability to put such ideas into microcosmic practice, and their sensitive relations with civil society. The observations of Dennis C. Beck can be applied to artists of all regions working under subjugation and are true for artists of Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir also because the painting of Mudasir Gul was actually a symbolic presentation of what Kashmir is facing and he used Palestine as a pictogram representing the pains the Kashmiri people are facing.

[Govt makes COVID tests mandatory for international passengers](https://nation.com.pk/26-May-2021/govt-makes-covid-tests-mandatory-for-international-passengers)

Resistance art, or sometimes also called protest art, has been a tool to resist and react under dictatorships and one should remember that it played a pivotal role in the Black Consciousness Movement, a grassroots anti-Apartheid movement that emerged in the 1960s led by the charismatic activist Steve Biko in South Africa.

Mudasir Gul from Srinagar is only the first and of course the last who contested the writ of State through an innocent act of painting a wall, expressing his rage against brutalities Indian Kashmir and Palestine are facing. Such an event indicates that Indian forces, through the use of power and brutality, have failed to fetch away resistance from Kashmiris who have been denying their rights of freedom and expression for seven decades and the revocation of Article 370 (35A) of the Indian Constitution has changed so much outside, but nothing inside of a Kashmiri.

If we read the history of “Normalisation” (that was actually sheer subjugation conducted by the former Soviet Union), we understand that this act was similar to the revocation of Article 370 (35A) of the Indian Constitution. Did normalisation help the former Soviet Union to strengthen its grip over Czechoslovakia and help to eliminate the desire for a separate motherland? The answer is No. Rather, normalisation eliminated the misconception held by several groups of former Czechoslovakia that the Soviet Union could respect their ideas, resulting in a covert, underground resistance that lasted till the independence of Czech in 1989. The disintegration of the USSR can be an example for imploding India; no power, no brutality and no so-called normalisation can subjugate a nation that decides its freedom because history teaches us that sometimes fear becomes freedom, subjugation results in liberation.