**From selling to running away**

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s a Muslim League child, I was made to believe that the Red Shirt leaders were pro Indian and anti Pakistan. While my father never approved of their politics, he always appreciated their steadfastness to their ideals and beliefs. While he complained about his fellow leaguers who changed sides and loyalties, he praised leaders like Abdul Wali Khan and his father, the legendary Ghaffar or Bacha Khan.

As my political leanings were left of centre, while Muslim League was a centrist party that at one time had a ‘left wing’ headed by Mian Ifthikaruddin, I was drawn to the progressive parties; PPP and NAP (National Awami Party). Then came my opportunity to meet Wali Khan when he was elected the leader of the opposition against the popular Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (ZAB).

The year was 1974-75, I was appointed editor of our department magazine called ‘Technico’. I decided to interview Wali Khan on the education policy. There was resistance from the university, but I went ahead and met him in Lahore. He was staying on Upper Mall at the residence of Kaswar Gardezi Sahib who was President of his party in Punjab.

[Barcelona pay tribute to Cruyff on anniversary of death](https://nation.com.pk/25-Mar-2021/barcelona-pay-tribute-to-cruyff-on-anniversary-of-death)

While we discussed several issues, what struck me was his statement that, “We neither sell nor run away” (Nay biktay hain aur na baghtay hain). I felt like talking to a ‘Rock’. He had serious eye problems. One of his eyes had been destroyed in jail, while the other was also strained. His command of language and issues was excellent. On Bhutto’s foreign policy he remarked, “We are running with the hare and hunting with the hounds”.

When Bhutto decided on military action in Balochistan in 1975, he removed NAP governments in the two provinces (NWFP, Balochistan). Wali Khan was arrested to be tried for sedition in the Hyderabad tribunal case. He stood his ground and boldly faced the charges.

His wife Nasim Wali Khan organised the workers under a new political outfit called the Awami National Party (ANP) which is now led by Asfandyar Wali who happens to be the stepson of Begum Nasim Wali and is certainly not the chip off the same block. After the fall of Bhutto in July 1977, Wali Khan was released and the cases against him were withdrawn by the usurper.

[Coronavirus situation worsening across France](https://nation.com.pk/25-Mar-2021/coronavirus-situation-worsening-across-france)

Since then, the legislature we elect and then sustain is mostly composed of compromised individuals who hardly carry out any meaningful legislation. Tables turn between the show of hands in the open and the secret voting room. Somehow Sadiq Sanjrani, the Senator from Balochistan has been at the centre of this power play.

Zardari Sahib preferred him over his own party stalwart Comrade Raza Rabbani. Once elected as Chairman, he was required to obey his benefactor but Islamabad has its own dynamics. Despite his common Baloch roots with Chairman Sanjrani, Zardari the master manipulator, decided to remove him.

Our spineless legislators are in no position to take a stand. The Wali Khan doctrine no longer holds ground, not even for his own party. Wali Khan proved to be the legendary ‘Shaheen Bacha’ of Bacha Khan but his own son decided to break away from this approach based on principles.

[FIA likely to launch massive crackdown against sugar mafia](https://nation.com.pk/25-Mar-2021/fia-likely-to-launch-massive-crackdown-against-sugar-mafia)

In the Senate contest between Yousaf Raza Gillani and Dr Hafeez Sheikh, wealth prevailed. Imran Khan insisted on a show of hands instead of the secret ballot as he was provided real time information about the money bags that were being prepared. In the ruthless under world anything can happen, there are circles within circles. A clean show of hands could have made a real difference but then it is all about winning and advantage.

The electoral contest in 1970 was free and fair; the elected representatives were mostly clean ideologues who wanted to make a difference. Today I received a copy on my WhatsApp of the first National Identity Card issued to Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in July 1973.

It was a masterstroke towards emancipation of the masses. Today, Pakistan has one of the best fully computerised citizen’s data systems with the National Database And Registration Authority (NADRA). Then came the unanimous 1973 constitution in August, which continues to keep the federation together despite several unholy onslaughts.

[Military parade for Pakistan Day to be held in Islamabad today](https://nation.com.pk/25-Mar-2021/military-parade-for-pakistan-day-to-be-held-in-islamabad-today)

The performance of the legislators was outstanding, the speeches on the floor from both sides were brilliant. Business was conducted very seriously. Foreign policy was Bhutto’s forte; at times he tried to solve internal issues through external pressures. After one of his foreign tours he roared in the assembly and tried to blame the opposition for straining relations with a neighbouring country. The leader of the opposition stood his ground saying, “Mr Bhutto you stop telling lies about me and I will stop telling the truth about you”, there was thunderous applause.

In order to get rid of the scoundrels, electoral reforms are needed followed by free and fair elections. There is a famous saying, “If you feed peanuts you get monkeys”.

This ‘monkey business’ has to end to revive the legislatures as they were before the Dark Ages. Legislature is the centrepiece of democracy—in the land of the pure, it is paramount that its purity be restored. Since July 1977, there has been no serious effort at nation building. When Bhutto relaunched the Nuclear Programme he told the nation; “We will build the bomb even if we have to eat grass”.

[Listen to the sounds of nature, immerse yourself in stress-relieving noises](https://nation.com.pk/25-Mar-2021/listen-to-the-sounds-of-nature-immerse-yourself-in-stress-relieving-noises)

Now we have our own device, it time to focus on the impoverished people of the Islamic Republic who have been kept out of the green pastures for too long. It is time to get rid of this political leadership that looks to be for sale. We may have to give them safe passage to end this era of deceit and lies which will be our tribute to the credible leaders that ran both sides of the house of the seventies that established democracy for all times to come.

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