**Politics of resistance**

[Dr Farid A Malik](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/dr-farid-a-malik)

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As June is the month of my birth, I usually write about my own journey. As a genuine Muslim League child growing up on the Mall I have seen/participated in all movements. Politics of resistance is a totally different ball game in which there is no room for the softies who play only for the trophy and the associated glamour. It is either ideology or interests that play a dominant role in politics. Historically, while the original Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) was driven by progressive ideology, the Jamaat-e-Islami continues to operate on a conservative religious approach. In our days it was classified as politics of ‘Left’ or ‘Right’.

Like PPP, PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) was also launched in Lahore as a genuine political entity. With its welfare state approach, PTI remained a left-of-center political entity till the electable hijacked the party after the mammoth October 2011 Jalsa at Minar-e-Pakistan. Gradually the party ideologues have pushed aside the migratory political birds that took charge.

[Elton John’s Glastonbury triumph attracts 7.3 million TV viewers](https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Jun-2023/elton-john-s-glastonbury-triumph-attracts-7-3-million-tv-viewers)

To give the devil its due, one has to agree that those who have never experienced political struggle do not fully comprehend its ramifications and challenges. Those who appear at the time of harvest do not appreciate or even understand the rigors of plowing. Pakistan has a history of crushing dissent by the use of brute state apparatus. I remember before Zia-ul-Haq unleashed his reign of terror stories were narrated on state Television of human rights abuses during the Bhutto regime.

The program as I remember was titled; Zulm Ki Dastan (Stories of Terror). J.A. Rahim the Secretary General of the party and a sitting federal minister narrated his arrest and abduction experience at the hands of FSF (Federal Security Force) so did Ifthikar Ahmed Tari, a provincial minister who was kept confined in Dalai Camp in AJK on the banks of river Jhelum. Then there was the Hyderabad Tribunal where Wali Khan was being tried for sedition after his party was banned (National Awami Party). All of them were provided immediate relief by the third usurper but once he decided to go after the Progressives all limits of terror were crossed. They were lashed, haunted, tortured and arrested.

[Mitsotakis’s conservatives clinch landslide Greece election win](https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Jun-2023/mitsotakis-s-conservatives-clinch-landslide-greece-election-win)

My first-hand experience with state power was quite early in life. In October 1958 at the age of five, I stood holding my father’s finger on the Mall near the Kims Gun to receive Khan Qayyum Khan the most popular and able leader of his times. When the wait was stretched, rumors of his arrest surfaced. Khan Sahib was arrested at the Ravi Bridge and taken to the dungeons of Lahore Fort where he stayed for a few days after which he reached an understanding with the establishment to quit politics for ten years and go home.

My father Nazir Malik the hard-core-spirited worker of the freedom movement was very perturbed at the timidness of Khan Sahib and decided to convince him to fight back against the dictatorial regime. As my two elder brothers (Mahmood and Mansoor) were studying away from home at Lawrence College Ghora Gali I had the chance to accompany my old man for his moral support. Khan Sahib was badly shaken and in no mood to offer resistance of any kind.

The movement that toppled the mighty Ayub regime was led by the students. While still in school we became a part of the resistance by default as we lived and studied on the Mall where all the action took place. The first free and fair elections of 1970 changed the destiny of the nation. When power was not transferred civil war started in the Eastern Wing and Jinnah’s Pakistan was dismembered and what remained emerged as a constitutional democracy on August 14, 1973, under the unanimously agreed constitution.

[Ukraine forces recapture new Russian-occupied settlement](https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Jun-2023/ukraine-forces-recapture-new-russian-occupied-settlement)

The establishment was in disarray and licking its wounds when this happened. By 1977 by the time the elections were announced, the establishment was back with its dirty tricks. Bhutto not only lost power but also his life. It took me back to the year 1959 when my uncle Dr Saleem Wahid Saleem a progressive writer and poet, decided to single-handedly take on the state apparatus.

He started his hunger strike across the main gate of the Civil Secretariat. He had three demands: Lifting of Martial Law together with restoration of the 1956 constitution, open trial for the murder of the first PM Liaquat Ali Khan and withdrawal of surveillance of the Progressives. No one came for negotiations after 14 days without food. He was close to death at this point. My father was tasked to save his life which he did by arranging a meeting with fake negotiators. His life was saved but Pakistan lost its track.

For his defiance Dr Saleem was not spared, his personal and professional life fell apart. To raise his two sons his wife went back to Aligarh to live with her parents while he left for London to join the BBC Urdu service but could not keep his job and had to return home as a bruised and cornered professional destitute fighting to survive.

[Obama: Row in India over former US President’s remarks on Muslim rights](https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Jun-2023/obama-row-in-india-over-former-us-president-s-remarks-on-muslim-rights)

The current crackdown after the May 09, 2023 happenings under the garb of Article 245 of the constitution is totally uncalled for. The 1973 constitution guarantees fundamental human rights which are being trampled through the use of Colonial Era laws. Fear is being spread through the blatant use of state apparatus which is unconstitutional. We the students of the sixties and seventies were prepared for political resistance.

On campus, we had to face the organized force of the JI-sponsored IJT (Islami Jamait-e-Tulba) while outside we had to fight the state apparatus. Fighting on two fronts was not easy but the progressives managed to resist the regressive forces which have been unleashed again to crush dissent. To take on the state apparatus is an uphill task that only the battle-hardened comrades of change can handle. The Chairman is willing to fight till the end but is his team ready for the same?