

## Views

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We want progressive and democratic Pakistan

By Shaukat Kashmiri

'We want India and Pakistan to have friendly relations so that there could be peace and stability in South Asia. But before they reach that stage - genuine friendly relationship between both countries - Kashmir dispute has to be resolved according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people.' This was said by the JKLF leaders in a reception given to them in Switzerland by Sabir Malik, a Pakistani community leader.

Sabir Malik while welcoming Abbas Butt and Dr Shabir Choudhry said, 'I am a Pakistani nationalist and my loyalty lies with Pakistan, but I do admire your struggle and have great sympathy for you people.' He said, 'Love for Kashmir is also in my blood, but national interest of Pakistan is paramount to me. I like Kashmir to become part of Pakistan but if people of Jammu and Kashmir want to have their own independent country, free from both India and Pakistan, I will accept that as well.'

Abbas Butt appreciated these sentiments coming from a loyal Pakistani, and said 'We Kashmiris are not against state of Pakistan or India, but we are against their policies which want to keep people of Jammu and Kashmir divided and deprived of independence.' He further said if people of Kashmir get their independence then we can all live in peace and side by side and work for peace and prosperity of the entire region. We have many things in common and it would be good to work together for peace, stability and prosperity of South Asia.'

Sardar Shaukat Kashmiri said, 'People of Kashmir living on the Indian side of

LOC had complaints against India and they are showing their resentment against that. We people on this side of the LOC also have genuine complaints against the attitude and role of Pakistan, but to date we have not taken arms against Pakistan because we believe in resolving issues through a process of dialogue. He further said, 'Pakistani governments have exploited our resources and have deprived us of basic human rights especially in Gilgit and Baltistan'.

He said, 'There are many examples and one can be given to prove this point. Take example of Mangla dam which was built to meet water and energy needs of Pakistan, but people of Mirpur had to suffer because of this. People who were uprooted in 1967 have been not settled yet and Azad Kashmir government did not get any royalty for this, and yet the Pakistan government has decided to upraise the dam again which will further uproot more than hundreds and thousands people'.

'Similarly earthquake victims are still suffering in tents and the resources and cash money collected for this purpose has been diverted and misappropriated by Pakistani officials. When we complain against such misdeeds we are declared as anti Pakistan and Indian agent, and this does not help to create cordial relationship between both communities'.

Dr Shabir Choudhry said, 'We also like Pakistan but like other people we also love our motherland. At present, Jammu and Kashmir is not legal part of any country, as future of the State is not determined yet. But if Pakistan wants to divide Jammu and Kashmir and join a conspiracy to keep the state divided and deprived of independence then we have to see what is good for us'. He said 'We want to see stable and peaceful Pakistan which can play its due role in the community of nations. A stable, democratic Pakistan which is at peace with itself and its neighbours is in the best interest of the region. It will help people of Pakistan to prosper and forge friendly ties with other nations'. He said, 'Image of Pakistan abroad is not very good and good Pakistani people have to take a lead to change that image'.

Nasir Aziz Khan, while addressing the audience emphasized the need of working together. He said, 'we nationalist Kashmiris need to work together to

get that right message across. We need to reorganise the struggle on secular and nationalist lines, as religious element will cause more problems in future'. He said, UKPNP is a true progressive nationalist party which wants to set up branches in all major cities of Europe so that Kashmiri workers are able to lead and project their miseries and exploitation in their own region internationally, as well as can take part in international labour movement effectively. The workers of UKPNP are struggling to counter activities of those elements that are communalising the struggle by making it Jihad and Islam versus other religions. He said, 'these people are not only misusing the funds and commercialising the struggle but damaging it. He further said that UKPNP is natural ally of Pakistani and Indian masses. We want Indian and Pakistani people have their basic rights. We would like Pakistan become a true democratic country and dictatorship and feudalism should be abolished. UKPNP is against use of religion in politics or against enemy as weapon. We are secular democratic people. Our party has long history of struggle and scarifies. We are state victims and state institutions have always been used against us.