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S.A. letter for

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THE MUSLIM CONVENTION

Editorial

THE PROPOSED CONVENTION of Muslim Legislators called by the Jamiat-ul Ulema has become a subject matter of controversy. This is inevitable in view of the fact that the problems this Convention is expected to tackle are problems of a national democratic nature which cannot be solved by representatives of any one community sitting in a Convention but by the united effort of all secular, democratic forces in the country regardless of religion, community or party affiliation.

The revival of communalism and the recrudescence of communal riots in recent years constitute a serious menace to our common democratic life. Parties and organisations like the Jan Sangh, RSS and Hindu Mahasabha are systematically sowing seeds of national disruption to serve their reactionary ends.

It is natural that against the background of what has happened in Jabalpur, Bhopal, Moradabad, Mubarakpur, Ferozabad and several other places, the Muslim minority should feel nervous and insecure about its own future.

Besides, there are certain real grievances of the Muslims, such as discrimination against them in service, trade and various other aspects of life, inadequate protection to Urdu, victimisation of many innocent Muslims by the administration during communal disturbances, etc., which in a democratic set-up cannot be tolerated and have got to be redressed.

In this situation a Convention of Muslim Legislators, even of those who believe in secularism and democracy, cannot by itself serve much purpose. What is needed is a much bigger and wider democratic mobilisation. The protection of minorities cannot be treated as the concern of the minorities alone, but has to be taken up as a serious task by all healthy patriotic and secular elements in the national life.

Bearing in mind the seriousness of the menace posed by the growth of communal reaction, it is imperative that a united nationwide mobilisation should be brought about in opposition to it. To this end, it is essential that an all-India conference of all major secular parties and elements should be convened to discuss the communal problem in all its aspects and to evolve ways and means to eradicate this evil.

The Congress as the ruling party and the premier political organisation in the country should take the initiative in the matter and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru should lead a united nationwide mobilisation against the forces of communal disruption, obscurantism and reaction.

The proposed Convention of Muslim Legislators, now that it has been called, can help to promote that nationwide campaign if it gives a ringing call not only against communal elements in the majority community but also against the revival and growth of communal and separatist tendencies among a section of the minority community, as represented by the reorganisation and rehabilitation of the Muslim League in Kerala, Bombay, Madras and various other places and the systematic attempt to build in a clandestine manner the Jamaat-e-Islami with a diehard and fanatically reactionary outlook.

It is only on the basis of the unity of Hindu and Muslim masses and of all patriotic and democratic-minded elements that the problems facing the Muslim minority can be solved. This should become the keynote of the deliberations and decisions of this Convention.

The Communist Party shall fully cooperate with all secular forces in the country in the struggle for strengthening national unity and for rooting out the evils of communalism, casteism and other forms of national disruption.

(May 24)

Negotiate Settlement On Language

AJOY GHOSH CONDEMNNS CACHAR REPRESSION

Comrade Ajoy Ghosh, General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, has issued the following statement to the Press in New Delhi on May 22, 1961:

The brutal firing in Silchar which caused the death of eleven persons and serious injuries to many has shocked the conscience of the people all over the country. It has shown once again the callous disregard of the Government for human lives and its policy of trying to solve problems not by methods of negotiations but by resort to terror.

The Government has announced that it will hold a judicial enquiry into the firing.

This, however, is not enough. The Government must immediately release all prisoners arrested in connection with the agitation, withdraw repressive measures and restore normal conditions so that a proper atmosphere is created in which discussions can take place to resolve the dispute that has arisen on the issue of language. We earnestly hope that false considerations of prestige will not stand in the way of the Government taking these measures.

Conveying sympathies to the families of those who have died and to those who have suffered injuries, the Communist Party appeals to all the people of Assam to make earnest efforts to come to a settlement and to put an end to the suspicion, hatred and animosities that have grown in the State.



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ORISSA ON THE EVE OF POLL

OVER eighty lakh voters will be trekking to the polling booths from June 2 to 8 to elect the 140-strong Legislative Assembly of Orissa.

Of the 691 nominations filed, after scrutiny and withdrawals 533 are left in the field.

One hundred and thirty-eight Congress candidates are in the contest for the 140 constituencies. PCC President Bijoyanand Patnaik and a former Minister, Pabitra Mohan Pradhan, are each contesting from two constituencies.

The Ganatantra Parishad (G.P.) has set up 121 candidates as against 108 in 1957.

In the last elections these two parties had secured 56 and 51 seats respectively. Both are making a desperate bid for an absolute majority this time.

The PSP is contesting in 43 constituencies and the Communist Party in 35, the Jharkhand Party in 20 and Lohia Socialists in seven. The Socialist Unity Centre has entered the contest for the first time with one candidate.

A few Swatantraites have entered the fray in the guise of Independents and there

are a number of other Independents, though for all practical purposes they are appendages of one political party or other, of this or that warring faction of the Congress. The moment they are elected many of them will mount the block and get themselves auctioned to the highest bidder. In the last Legislature, only one member survived as an Independent but subsequently he was also found to be an appendage of the PSP and sometimes, it is said, of the G.P.

There are 85 candidates for the 25 Scheduled Castes reserved seats and 92 for the 29 scheduled tribes reserved seats.

The Congress is facing straight fights with the G.P. in 20 constituencies with the Communist Party in one, with the PSP in one and two with Independents. In the rest there will be multiple contests.

The CPI is fighting most of the Congress stalwarts—Revenue Minister Satyapriya Mohanty in Bhubaneswar, former Minister Pabitra Pradhan in Talcher, former PCC President Banamall Patnaik in Khurda, erstwhile Khadi Board Chairman V. Sitaramayya in Chiltrapur, Mahatab's henchman S. Champatirai

in Begunia, Karunakar Panigrahi in Sora, Ratnamall Jema in Erasama. And in most of these seats the G.P. has also set up candidates.

Divided Congress

Though it is the foremost political party in Orissa, the Congress finds itself in a mess, being a house divided. The official group is led by PCC President Bijoyananda Patnaik. The other group is led by former Chief Minister Dr. H. K. Mahatab.

In spite of the best efforts of the central leadership, these two groups are now at daggers drawn with each other. The rift is widening with each passing day. Mahatab is not seeking election this time. So also Radhanath Rath, Minister of development in the Coalition Government. That does not mean Mahatab is keeping quiet. He is determined to see the Congress defeated this time.

Barely 20 of his nominees have found place in the official Congress list. So he has sponsored about 40 Independents, most of them Congressmen, who are fight-

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GOA WEEK

JUNE 11-18

Smt. Aruna Asaf Ali, Chairman, National Campaign Committee for Goa, has issued the following statement to the Press in New Delhi on May 17:

SINCE the holding of the National Convention for the Liberation of Goa, Daman and Diu and Against Portuguese Colonialism and Fascism in New Delhi in March this year, there have been important international gatherings where the cause of Goan liberation has been fully supported. The World Peace Council session in Delhi, the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Council meeting in Bandung and more recently the Casablanca Conference of the patriots from all the Portuguese colonies have underlined the importance of the struggle against the most hateful of surviving colonialisms in the world.

The accredited representatives of twelve million people of Angola, Mozambique, St. Tome and Principe, Cape Verde, Guinea and Goa, who met in Casablanca on the Sixth Anniversary of Bandung, have unitedly resolved to overthrow the yoke of Portuguese imperialism. The National Campaign Committee for Goa wholeheartedly supports their call for unity, solidarity and co-

operation between the nationalist parties and organisations struggling against Portuguese colonialism and endorse their appeal to all the independent States of Asia and Africa for support.

The Committee also reiterates full sympathy and solidarity with the brave and courageous people of Angola who are engaged in a life and death struggle against the fascist regime of Salazar.

We appeal to all the independent States of Asia and Africa that maintain diplomatic relations with the Portuguese Government to sever all their relations with this colonialist Power.

In order to rally the forces of unity and solidarity with the people of Goa, Daman and Diu in their struggle to overthrow Portugal's hateful domination, we appeal to all patriotic Indians irrespective of their political affiliations to observe a GOA WEEK from June 11 to 18, 1961. During this week, the entire people of India should come forward and express its determination through public meetings and mass demonstrations to free and unite Goa, Daman and Diu.

S. O. S. FOR CASH

V. N. Lawande, President of the Azad Gomantak Dal, has made the following urgent appeal for funds to help the Goa liberation struggle:

BY seizing the opportunity created by the upsurge in Angola and elsewhere in the Portuguese empire, the Goa militant forces have struck in Goa at a right moment under the banner of the A.V.C. Goa Commando.

Their first attack on the military post of Kerin was a warning shot to the adamant Salazar Government that Goans have launched upon a decisive struggle and that they are determined to free Goa by the end of 1961 or die in the cause.

Then came the lightning daring attack on the Betim post which has driven the Goa Government into panic and the people into admiration for the Commando.

More and better plans are to follow and it is the earnest desire of the leaders of the Commando to speed up the activities before the monsoon sets in as a part of the strategy to spread the movement throughout Goa.

But the financial position of the Goa Commando is unfortunately very poor. No activities of any kind could be run without enough funds. Underground activities particularly require more such funds. THE VOLUNTEERS OF THE GOA COMMANDO LIVE A VERY HARD LIFE TODAY, MOVE BAREFOOT AND ARE POORLY CLAD BUT WORST OF ALL, THEIR

ACTIVITIES ARE HAMPED FOR WANT OF MONEY AND MATERIAL. Let us not forget that the Commando has to face a formidable enemy equipped with most modern weapons.

The Azad Gomantak Dal has established contacts with the leaders of the Commando inside Goa and is in a position to reach safely all help sent to them through the Dal. With this view, a fund to aid the Goa Commando is sponsored by this organisation and I, therefore, on its behalf, earnestly appeal to all sections particularly the richer section of the population, all organisations and institutions, Goan and Indian alike, to kindly come forward and donate liberally as in the past by remittances or cheque to make the fund a success.

I am confident the entire Indian people who have always regarded Goans as their brethren and the Goan freedom struggle as their own, will realise the urgency and intensity of the help to be rushed to the Goan patriots and will respond enthusiastically to the humble appeal.

All help should be sent addressed to the Treasurer, Azad Gomantak Dal, B. C. 138, Camp, Belgaum, Mysore State.

A letter we have received from friends in Goa says every donation will be welcome—and not only money, but also clothes, shoes, medicine, etc.

U. S. Obstruction—India's Effective Answer

The United States continues its game, both at Geneva and at Na Mon, of obstructing and delaying the solution of the Laotian problem.

IN Geneva they continue to question the truth of the International Commission's report that a de facto cease-fire was effective in Laos. Despite a formula on Laotian representation being agreed to by all, a formula which was satisfactory enough to enable the U.S. itself to participate, the Boun Oum clique has persisted in its refusal to join and the USA instead of persuading them to come in continues to complain on their behalf.

At Na Mon, at the tripartite conference of Laotians, the Boun Oum rebel clique, after having agreed to the order of agenda as proposed by the Souvanna Phouma Government and the Neo Lao Haksat delegations, has resiled from that position and has refused to discuss the question of the creation of a coalition Government first.

Thus in accord with Kennedy's formula of "Neither peace nor war", while the Geneva Conference is sought to be dragged out, inside Laos under cover of extravagant charges of breach of cease-fire, incessant provocations are being staged with the aim of stabilising the shaky military positions of the Boun Oum-Nosavan clique. Even the forthcoming Khrushchov-Kennedy meeting is sought to be used as part of these delaying tactics by arguing that after all nothing very substantial can be decided at Geneva till after the results of the Vienna meeting are known.

Isolation Of U. S.

With all its tactics, the USA which had been opposed to the holding of the Geneva Conference as such seeks now to create an atmosphere of futility around that Conference. In this atmosphere the heads of a number of delegations have left Geneva, promising to return at a later date.

Nevertheless, by May 23, the first round of the general debate on the Laotian problems was concluded at Geneva, and it did bring out the differences in aims and approaches, highlighting again the isolation of the United States. Except for their SEATO allies and puppets—Thailand and South Vietnam—they had none to support them. Here we have space to contrast only the U. S. and Indian positions.

Apart from making the withdrawal of the U.S. armed forces from Laos conditional on the withdrawal of non-existent North Vietnam troops there, Dean Rusk, the U. S. Secretary of State paid lip-service to the need for a "neutral" Laos, promising magnanimously that the U.S. delegation would try to discover whether it was possible for the Conference to agree on the establishment of a

neutral Laos free from interference and pressures from outside. He demanded that the Conference adopt a definition of neutrality which goes "beyond the classical concept of non-alignment."

Further the USA's chief delegate insisted on the need to develop "an international machinery for maintaining and safeguarding that neutrality against all threats to it from within as well as without."

Finally, he demanded the administration of economic and technical aid to Laos (contributed by "many States and agencies") through another outside agency composed of those who might qualify according to the U.S. definition as "neutral nations of the area."

Attack On Commission

With all this there was the persistent suggestion about the worthlessness of the existing International Commission and the need to enlarge it and vest it with greater powers.

One of the U. S. puppet delegations, the one from Thailand, expressly demanded on May 23 that the Commission be enlarged by addition of "two Southeast Asian countries."

Dean Rusk tried to make out as if there had been no Geneva Conference in 1954 and it had taken no decisions on preserving the independence and neutrality of Laos.

Regarding criticism of SEATO as the source of insecurity and instability in Southeast Asia, Dean Rusk trotted out the old Dullesian arguments. The threat to Southeast Asia according to him came "from the North and not the South." "If these threats were removed," he declared, "SEATO itself would wither away for it has no purpose but to maintain peace in Southeast Asia."

All this adds up to a diabolical plan of reimposing the colonialist militarist stranglehold on Laos.

An effective reply to all this was given, among others, by India's V. K. Krishna Menon. He emphasised that the present Conference was a reconvening of the 1954 Conference. India looked upon the 1954 agreement as the sheet anchor for the peaceful solution of problems in the Indo-China region, he said. He quoted the earlier speeches at the present conference of the Chinese, British and Soviet delegation leaders and said he was glad to note that several speakers before him had taken a similar line.

The present Conference like the last one, Menon said, was to deal with only the external aspects of the Laotian problem. In sharp opposition to the U.S. position he said that the Conference should not in any way interfere with the

internal affairs of the country. It must help Laos to develop in accordance with her own genius. It must respect her sovereignty and integrity, create conditions for making Laos neutral, conditions which should enable her to be non-aligned with major world groups or major world Powers.

Menon rejected the idea of particular type of neutrality—"Austrian", as the U.S. insists—on Laos. "What we should really think of is to have a Laotian type of neutrality taking into consideration its factors of geography and other local aspects," he said.

As for the functioning of the Control Commission, V.K. Krishna Menon said, "We believe that the Commission has done its duties very effectively. So long as it was allowed to function in Laos, there was no civil war. Whatever impasse that country has reached has happened after the Commission was made to leave Laos. If the Commission had been allowed to continue, we might not have reached the present situation."

Through the Commission's machinery, however, they must not create what might be called a "State within State," said the chief Indian delegate, refuting U.S. suggestions on that score.

He said that the Government of India felt strongly on one matter—that was that the Commission was integral to the 1954 agreement. "It is built into it," he said. He opposed any substantial alteration in the composition of the Commission.

He refuted U.S. aspersions regarding the cease-fire in Laos. "India takes the view that de facto cease-fire in Laos exists," said Krishna Menon.

Mischievous Attempts

The U.S. agencies have since been particularly active to distort India's position. Shrivankar in his despatch appearing in The Hindu of May 21 writes:

"It should be mentioned also that there have been some mischievous attempts in the Press and in some Conference circles to distort India's position. She has been represented for instance, as having 'attacked' the Soviet Union on the veto question. There has also been a curious story that 'the Indians' are worried by a supposed 'Chinese move' to oust them from the Control Commission and bring in Burma and Cambodia—a very strange story indeed, considering that the suggestion about Burma and Cambodia originally emanated from American sources. This kind of trouble-making is perhaps to be expected in the present state of world politics, but it is nonetheless deplorable for that."

—ZIAUL HAQ
(May 24)