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[Despatch Abstract.]

Govt Press - The Madras Govt Press Workers Union
Activities.

Back Papers.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Further Papers.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

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E.P.H.(C2) Deptt.

CONFIDENTIAL

From the Special Branch, Criminal Investigation Department.

No.1364/C

dated 28th Feb. 1949

I enclose, for information, the Shorthand S,Is' reports on the following meetings:-

X X X

2. Govt. Press workers' meeting in Madras on 21-2-1949.

X X X

Pub.(General) Deptt.

Submitted for perusal. E.& P.H.may see A on pages 8-9 infra. Dev. may also see.

E & P.H.(C2)

Pages 7-10 may be detached and the file passed on to Dev.U.O.

I.B.M.
(True extract)

2

Confidential.

Report.

The Madras Government Press Workers' Union - Public meeting -
Mint Buildings - 21-2-49.

A public meeting of the workers of the above Government Press was held in the premises of the Mint Buildings on 21-2-49, between 6 p.m and 7-45 p.m. C. Narayanaswamy, Vice- President of the Union occupied the chair and about 500 people, mostly workers of the Press, attended the meeting.

The President deplored the attendance at the meeting and said that though there were as many as 1400 members in the Union only a third of the number was present at the meeting. Many problems awaited them and yet the vast body of the workers in the Press were apathetic. The Central Government had recently increased the dearness allowance of ~~the~~ its Employees by Rs.10/- but the Provincial Government had not thought it fit to similarly grant such dearness allowance. There was no justification for withholding it. An Employee of the Central Govt., another from the B.O.C. and a third in the service of the Provincial Government lived in the same house in Madras or in some other place and yet there was difference in the dearness allowance paid to them. All of them paid the same prices and lived under similar conditions and yet the dearness allowance varied from Rs.18/- in the case of the Employee of the Provincial Govt. to Rs.45/- on the part of the Central Govt. Employee or the B.O.C. Employee. The Provincial Govt. if it cared for the welfare of its employees or really wanted to increase production must grant this increased dearness allowance forthwith. The Provincial Govt. did not want to grant this allowance without an agitation on the part of its Employees. If the Govt. really wanted an agitation they would have it sooner than they expect. The speaker hoped that the Government being the biggest Employer would set a better example and act with grace by giving this increased dearness allowance to its Employees. There were other problems facing the Govt. Press workers. The interim relief and the house rent allowance that were given to the Contingent Staff had been withheld from December 48. The Union

had taken up this question with the Government and would not rest till the concession was restored.

A free discussion then ensued and the following resolutions were adopted at the meeting.

Resolutions.

- (1) Whereas owing to the enormous cost of living the Central Government had increased the Dearness allowance of its Employees by Rs.10/-, the Provincial Govt. had not taken note of it and this meeting calls upon the Govt. to grant a similar increase to its Employees and thus avoid giving room for any agitation.
- (2) Expresses concern over the conduct of the Govt. in withholding the interim relief and the house rent allowance of the Contingent Staff who were enjoying them from 1946 but which were stopped from Dec. '48, and calling upon the Govt. to restore the privileges.
- (3) Calls upon the Govt. to give effect to the alterations in the scales of pay and increment in respect of certain categories of workers and to increase the number of posts in mono-casting, and other Depts. as recommended by the Union.
- (4) Considers that the present fixing of the out-turn of compositors at 1000 ens was beyond the reach of the ordinary and that it must be brought down to 800 ens and that the grant of bonus on the out-turn be discontinued as it would tend to create jealousy and unhealthy emulation among the workers.
- (5) Resolves to affiliate the Press workers Union recently formed at Pudukottai with the Madras Govt. Press Workers' Union.
- (6) Requests the Supdt. of the Govt. Press to disburse the arrears to the workers by way of overtime allowance before the end of March 1949.
- (7) That preference be shown to sons of Employees in the matter of appointment in the Govt. Press.

Kannappar, Vice-President of the Union speaking next said that he called on the Supdt. of the Press in connection with the out-turn of the compositors and was able to convince him that the turn-out of 1,000 ens was unreasonable and rather heavy and that it must be brought down to 800 ens. The Supdt. being a technical man must be able to understand this and it was therefore his duty to address the Govt. and convince it of the impossibility of the present fixation of the out-turn. A practice of fining those compositors who did not reach the out-turn fixed was in vogue in the Press and the speaker hoped that the fines would be refunded. It was a matter for pity that certain new compositors with a view to earn bonus were giving the out-turn of 1,000 ens and thus betraying the old workers. They would be adversely affected in the long run as it

The President in his concluding remarks said that an unfortunate incident took place that day in the Government Press due to the overbearing conduct of the Superintendent, Mr. Siddique. While going on his usual rounds the Supdt. had vulgarly abused Jayaraman, a worker in the Machine Department. The latter resented this and as a result the workers in that Dept. had to observe a stay-in-strike. This was a direct result of the behaviour of the Supdt. The days of abuse by Superior Officers on poor subordinates were over and they were all citizens of a free country. Officers must change their outlook and if they did not, it would be a bad day for them. The present Superintendent Mr. Siddique had a notoriety for being uniformly uncivil towards his subordinates. In 1937 while he was in the Mount Road Office as the Asst. Supdt., he was responsible for a similar stay-in-strike as he nearly booted a worker. A Popular Govt. while insisting on discipline must take note of mis-conduct on the part of its Superior Officers and deal with them promptly as otherwise it would be a reflection on the Administration.

Concluding the speaker announced that the election of Office bearers would take place about the first week of April and only the workers who have paid their subscriptions to the Union in full would have the right to vote. They should therefore pay up all their arrears.

Impression:- The speeches had a good reception.

Madras.
22-2-49.

K. Veeramani.
S. I. Police,
Shorthadd Bureau.

From	X	To
R. Siddique, Esq.,	X	The Secretary to Government,
Superintendent,	X	Education & Public Health Deptt.,
Government Press, Madras.	X	Fort St. George, Madras.

No.88/Mis-S. Dated 14th March 1949.

With reference to an extract from the Confidential report dated 21-2-49 about the Public meeting of the Madras Government Press Workers' Union held on 21-2-49 at Mint Buildings and the Confidential Endorsement No.C.4/49 -- dated - March 1949 from the Commissioner of Labour, Madras calling for details about the incident referred to in the report, I have to submit the following to Government for information.

Due to heavy pressure of Budget work I had few departments of Government Press working on Sunday the 20th February 1949 when some of the workmen demanded special night allowance. In view of the fact that Government have negatived the proposal for night allowance, I had to refuse the request of the employees and arrange to get the work completed the following morning. At about 9 a.m. on 21-2-49, as I was walking through the Machine department supervising the allocation of work to various machines, I heard Machineminder M. Jayaraman shouting at the Top Senior Foreman of the Machine department. I then asked the Machineminder not to talk so loud for which Machineminder lost his temper and demanded of me saying "How dare you say don't talk to me" in a very threatening and rude manner. I told him that I said "Don't talk so loud to the Maistry". The Overseer was also at the spot who was asked to translate in Tamil that the Superintendent only said "Don't talk so loud" and not "Don't talk".

As I have already explained to Government in person the situation seemed to be tense in the machine room and likely to interfere in the completion of the Budget work which was promised on that forenoon.

Under the circumstances, I thought it wise in the interest of the work to leave the Machine room which I did. Next moment, the Vice-President and the Secretary of the Union came to me demanding an enquiry to be held by them alleging that the Superintendent had used harsh words to the Machineminder, Jayaraman. I refused to let them interfere in my administration and on the following day interviewed the Secretary to Government, Education and Public Health Department and under his specific oral orders I arranged to hold an enquiry in the conduct of Machineminder, Jayaraman. In the meantime on the evening of 21-2-49 when General Body Meeting of the Union was proposed to be held in the Government Press, Mint Buildings, the Vice-President, C. Narayanaswami in his concluding remarks is reported to have said "that an unfortunate incident took place that day in the Government Press due to overbearing conduct of the Superintendent, Mr. Siddique while going on his usual rounds, the Superintendent had vulgarly abused Jayaraman, a workman of the Machine department. The latter resented this and as a result the workers in the department had to observe a stay-in-strike. This was the direct result of the behaviour of the Superintendent."

With reference to my Memorandum No.852/SBC. dated 22-2-49 calling for an explanation from Machineminder Jayaraman, the explanation contains the allegations that the Superintendent had

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used the words "Don't talk" and "Damn fool".

On 4-3-49, Machineminder, Jayaraman, the Overseer and the Assistant Superintendent IV were called up, to hold the enquiry when Jayaraman made a clear breast of the whole thing saying that at the instigation of the Vice-President and the Secretary of the Union he submitted the explanation alleging false charges about the Superintendent. He has now given in his own writing in Tamil that he feels sorry for his misbehaviour towards the Superintendent and also writing false allegations against the Superintendent in a fit of anger and begging the Superintendent to excuse him.

From the above facts it is so apparent that the Vice-President and the Secretary had arranged to somehow dislocate the work in the Machine room and to prevent the Budget work going out at the scheduled time. They also wanted to belittle the administration of the Superintendent by wanting to hold an enquiry making false allegations against the Superintendent and also instigating workman Jayaraman not to subject himself to the enquiry to be held by the Superintendent.

In reality there was no stay-in-strike as alleged by the Vice-President, but only the temporary suspension of the work for a few minutes due to the scene created by the workman Jayaraman.

Before the enquiry could be held it was highly irregular on the part of the Vice-President to have made a statement in the General Body Meeting in the evening decrying the Superintendent and also subsequently insisting upon holding an enquiry by the Office bearers of the Union.

On 4-3-1949 when I was virtually holding the enquiry in my office they sent me a note signed by the office bearers of the Union demanding their presence at the enquiry which was refused.

From the oral statement made by the Machineminder, Jayaraman during the enquiry confessing to have been put up by the office bearers of the Union, it is so obvious that the Union was out to decry the administration of the Press by the Superintendent. Out of fear for the Union, the Machineminder, Jayaraman although he confessed the whole thing orally, was not prepared to commit the statement in writing. However, he has given in writing in his own hand that it was all his fault that he behaved so rudely towards the Superintendent in a fit of anger and also that the allegations made against the Superintendent were false. He begs to be excused.

I have put up the entire facts to Government to acquaint them of the low manner in which the dealing of the Union are being conducted by the Vice-President, Secretary and the Office bearers.

In this connection, I like to bring to the notice of Government, the few following facts:-

- (1) The Union taking sides of the Head Reader Sri S. Ganapathy Iyer and Senior Top Reader Sri E.N. Munuswami for promotions as Assistant Superintendents, came out with a notice to Government with a threat of strike on the appointment of Sri Madhavabalakrishnan, Sri K. Rajaratna Mudaliar and Sri S. Krishnan, Assistant Superintendents. They were told that they will have to face the consequences in case they resorted to strike and on this warning they withdrew the strike notice to Government.

8/11

(2) When the post of Top Senior Foreman in the Machine room fell vacant, the Vice-President, Secretary and the Office bearers of the Union wanted me to appoint a junior Machine Foreman who is a member of the Union in preference to a senior Machine Foreman who is not a member of the Union. This I naturally refused to do. Ever since I am receiving numerous complaints from the Union about the inefficiency of the Top Senior Foreman of the Machine room and try to force me to promote the Union candidate, against rules.

(3) Since overtime in the various departments were cut down, some of the office bearers of the Union have been making a series of attempts to dislocate the work in the Gazette department and prevent the Fort St. George Gazette going out at the appointed time. In one instance the Gazette department had refused to work overtime in the emergencies and I had to resort to disciplinary action.

(4) The allegations brought against the Electrical and Mechanical Engineer by the active members of the Union resulted in his being suspended from duty and disgraced. Even now the Electrical and Mechanical Engineer bitterly complains against their demeanour and subversive activities.

(5) The Vice-President and the Secretary have been in the habit of sending a series of unnecessary reports direct to the Government in the Education and Public Health Department to the Hon'ble Minister for Education and for the Hon'ble the Premier. I mention out a few of such things.

- (a) Saying that 21 men made to work for printing Fort St. George Gazette on one day without interval for lunch.
- (b) Saying that I utilized the services of the Assistant to Electrical and Mechanical Engineer on suspension for starting the Power House during a holiday for a period of 35 minutes.
- (c) Saying that the work unnecessarily being given to outside printers.
- (d) Wanted to dislocate work connected with the Budget by setting up men to strike work.
- (e) Directing men of the Gazette department not to work overtime even in emergencies, such as expediting Fort St. George Gazette publication.

Under the above circumstances, I request Government to take serious note of their subversive activities with a tinge of communist complexion and deal with the Union appropriately to prevent this unwarranted interference with the administration of the Press by the Superintendent and creating a very unhealthy atmosphere in the Government Press.

R. S. Digne
14.3.44.
Superintendent.

(See 12)

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Copy communicated to the Commissioner of Labour, Madras with reference to his Confidential Endorsement No.C.4/49 dated March 1949.

(sd) R. Siddique,
Superintendent.

Confidential

Sub. Govt. Press - ^{The} Madras Govt. Press
Workers' Union - Activities

(D)

pp 1-5 CC

Regd again :- G.O. No. 381 Dev. D 11.2.1938.
Ref :- from the S.G.P. No. 88 / M-5 D 14.3.49.

Order (M) no 1263 Edn 25.4.49

The S.G.P. is requested to inform the Madras Govt. Press Workers' Union that it should rigidly follow the Conditions of its recognition laid down in the order cited and that it should forward its representations invariably through the S.G.P. on pain of withdrawal of recognition.

201
The S.G.P.
The President
Govt. Press
Union. Thru SGP
S.C.

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From the S.G.P. No.88/Mis.S.dated 14-3-1949

Madras - Govt. Press Workers' Union - Activities.

The S.G.P. has brought to the notice of Govt. certain instances in which the Vice President and the Secretary of the Madras Government Press Workers' Union have unnecessarily interfered with his administration. A perusal of his report on pp 1-5 cf. would seem to show the ~~am~~ manner in which the Union attempted to dislocate the smooth working of the Press. The S.G.P. in the circumstances requests ~~to take~~ ^{that} ~~the~~ ^{we take} serious notice of the subversive activities of the Union with a ^{tinge} ~~huge~~ of communist complexion and deal with the Union appropriately to prevent this unwarranted interference with the administration of the Press by the Superintendent and creating a very unhealthy atmosphere in the Govt. Press.

2. It may be noted, that the Govt. Press Workers' Union was recognized by Govt. in G.O.381 Dev (Conf'd) dated 11-2-1938. One of the conditions of recognition is that the Union ~~shall~~ submit its representation, if any, through the S.G.P. From the instances quoted by the S.G.P. this condition has more than once been violated. It does not seem desirable that the Union should ~~interfere~~ ^{the} interfere with day to day administration of the Press. For orders whether the Union ~~should~~ ^{may be} ~~form~~ categorically ~~be~~ informed that it should rigidly follow the condition of its recognition ^{and} that it should forward its representation invariably through the S.G.P. on pain of withdrawal of recognition. Please see in this connection Mr. Giri's (the late Hon'ble Minister) minute at 'M' on p 37 - (D)

3. As for K above, Public may see before circulation.



EXPH.V.O. 22/49 C-49 J.P. 1/6

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