

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Indicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 372

Press
~~Mis.~~

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Dated

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

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13th March 1866.

No. 94. Read the following letter from the Inspector General of Police, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated 28th February 1866, No. 366.

I have the honor to make further report relative to Mahomed Ismael Khan, Moulvie (vide joint report by Agent of Ganjam and myself, dated 11th December 1865, No. 2408, confidential).

2. I have had an interview with the man. He is a Pathan by race. He states that he is the son of Hyder Khan, late a water-carrier in the 7th Cavalry, who died a Pensioner, some years ago, at Ellore. His grandfather, Nabbee Khan, and two grand uncles were Subadars in the 1st Cavalry. The original place of residence of the family was Arcot. But Mahomed Ismael was brought up in the Regiment of his father.

N. B.—He at first said that his father was in the 6th Cavalry, but corrected himself.

3. Mahomed Ismael enlisted in the 37th Regiment at Vellore, in July 1844, at the probable age of 20 years. He was five years in the Regiment, and was discharged in July 1849 at Secunderabad, with character "Good." The man states that he sought his discharge, because he wished to study and become a priest. He had married the daughter of a Subadar in the Regiment, Isoof Beg, now a Pensioner at Ellore.

N. B.—Colonel Owen explains "that the Regimental Staff informed him that the man was troublesome, by which, it is said, they mean independent—a zid-kurne-walla."

4. He then, he states, became a disciple in the school of one Moulvie Abdulla Sahib, in Hyderabad, under whom he read for some years. He passed his examination, and received his certificate as Moulvie from this master. From that time, he became a preacher to the Native Troops. This he admits, and explains by saying that he had been brought up amongst them.

N. B.—I tried to ascertain whether Mahomed Ismael's teacher was one of the School of the great Wahabee Missionary Waliyat Ali, who went from Patna to Hyderabad and formed a strong sect of Wahabees in that territory. He was very shy on the point, but evidently knew all about the founder of that School.

5. In 1852 he left Hyderabad and visited Kamptee, where his late Regiment was at the time stationed. Thence he passed on to Saugur, to visit the troops there, but returned to Kamptee, where he remained some months. Colonel Owen, Commanding the 37th Regiment, reports that about that time "Colonel Wardroper turned him (Mahomed Ismael) out of the Regimental Lines, on the "Subadar Major of the Regiment reporting that he was teaching certain doctrines in the Regiment. Afterwards, the Civil authorities sent him off to Nagpore." From other information I learn that he was sent away because he was "believed to be preaching sedition."

6. Mahomed Ismael appears afterwards to have settled with his family in Guntoor, where he became the Moulvie of the Veterans.

7. In July 1857, his conduct excited suspicion at Guntoor. He was, I believe, alleged to have set up a flag of revolt, and preached sedition or rebellion. The Kazi, Mufti, and other respectable Mussulmans of Guntoor, seem to have brought the matter forward, and the Tahsildar had him in confinement for a short

time. However, he was acquitted, on appeal, by the Assistant Magistrate. The record of this case has been lost; it perished in the Cyclone, and its precise nature has not been ascertained. It seems to have been treated by the European Officers as a religious difference amongst the sects of Mahomedans. One thing however seems clear, viz., that the man became specially active about the time of the serious rebellion in India. Whether this activity was purely doctrinal may be open to doubt. More inquiry may yet be made.

8. Shortly after this incident, Mahomed Ismael started on a Missionary tour to the Native Troops of the Madras Army in Burmah. He obtained a free passage in a Native Craft from Masulipatam, towards the end of 1857, and went to Bassien. He remained for some time with the Detachment of 4 Companies stationed there, and made *Murids*, or sworn adherents, amongst them.

9. From Bassien he proceeded to Rangoon. There many adherents joined him from amongst the Military during the three months he remained in Rangoon. A Jemadar of the Police then employed at Rangoon deposes that Mahomed Ismael was at that time known to preach sedition; but it does not appear that the authorities took any steps against him.

10. Mahomed Ismael then continued his Missionary tour to Thayetmyo. Colonel Longcroft, the Brigade Major, and Captain Hildebrand, the Assistant Commissioner, thus describe what took place.

"The 39th N. I. occupied the southernmost row of lines; but the Native Infantry Mosque, common to all three Regiments, was situated in the centre; and here, for several Fridays, this Moulvie was in the habit of coming and preaching to the men.

"It became understood that his discourses were seditious, and he was making a large party, and increasing the attendance rapidly."

"On one occasion, the Steamer was to leave for Rangoon at noon on a Friday."

"On this particular day, it was known that the Moulvie intended to come into Cantonment on an elephant and with a procession, and that something particular was intended. I, or Brigadier Messiter, I forget which, went to Captain Hildebrand, then the Assistant Commissioner, and the end of it was that, just at the time the Moulvie was going to make a start for the Cantonment, he was seized (ironed I think) and shipped on board the Steamer for Rangoon by Hildebrand.

"The business was done quietly and well, and I recollect that it was supposed to have had an excellent effect on his followers in Cantonment."

11. Captain Hildebrand describes what took place in the following terms:—

"One morning in the month of September, I think it was, and either in the year 1857 or 1858, I forget which, but certainly while the Mutiny was raging in India, Brigadier Messiter, Commanding at Thayetmyo, accompanied, I think, by Lieutenant Colonel Longcroft, the Brigade Major there, called at my house, and told me that he had received trustworthy information that a Mahomedan, I forget the name, was preaching sedition in a Mosque lately erected in the Commissariat Cooly Lines; that a number of the Sepoys from the Regiments stationed there

N. B.—The man talks of himself as a Missionary; and likens his calling to that of Christian Missionaries in India. He distinctly admits that the object of his trip to Burmah was to visit the Troops there and proselytise.

"were in the habit of listening to his preaching; and that it had been arranged that he was to be carried in procession on an elephant through the Sepoys' Lines next day. Brigadier Messiter asked me, therefore, to inquire into the matter, and take measures to stop the man from preaching any more sedition at Thayetmyo. I, accordingly, made inquiries, and learnt that he had been at Thayetmyo for a few months; that he had first of all preached in the Town Mosque, but that the townspeople, for some time past, prohibited his preaching any more in their Mosque, as his preaching savoured of sedition, and that the Commissariat Coolies had then built him a Mosque in their lines, where he was constantly preaching sedition. I then sent for the man, took the evidence of one or two Jemadars of the Troops stationed there as to his preaching sedition, and sent him, with my proceedings in original, or a copy of them, a prisoner to my then immediate superior, the Deputy Commissioner of Prome, for him to deal with the man as he should think fit. Here my dealings with him ended, but I believe the Deputy Commissioner at Prome sent him on to Rangoon a prisoner, by the same Steamer that had taken him from Thayetmyo to Prome."

12. Unfortunately, the record of this case has not been traced either in the Provinces or Calcutta.

13. But it appears from the statement of Mahomed Ismael that he was at once shipped to Calcutta as a prisoner. He was there brought before the Magistrate for examination, but was released and ordered to return at once to his own Presidency. This he did and returned to Guntoor.

14. He states that, after the breaking up of the Veteran Detachment at Guntoor, he moved with his father-in-law, the pensioned Subadar Isoof Beg, to Ellore, which has since become his Head Quarters. He has a Mosque there, built chiefly by subscription amongst his adherents in the 31st and 24th Regiments of Native Infantry.

15. I need scarcely add that at Ellore he is in the midst of Military classes—a great many Pensioners who have friends and connexions amongst the effective strength of various Regiments settle there, and Mahomed Ismael states that his *Murids* and friends from different Regiments visit him on their way to and from leave, &c. He has many *Murids* of both sexes in Military classes.

N. B.—From the Police Report, I gather that at Ellore the Wahabee sect is far stronger than in any other place in the Northern Circars. The Superintendent states that there are 200 Wahabees in Ellore—the Mahomedan Inspector estimates them about 50.

N. B.—Mahomed Ismael names the 7th, 8th, 10th, 11th, 13th, 14th, 23rd, 24th, 31st, 37th, and 41st Regiments as those in which he has most adherents and is best known, but adds that he is known in other Regiments also.

16. Mahomed Ismael states that he has made frequent Missionary tours from Ellore to the Native Regiments stationed at Masulipatam, some probably unobserved by the authorities. His visits, as the Government is aware, have excited the suspicion of the Commanding Officers and Magistracy. He has visited Samulcottah since the 19th Native Infantry was removed thither.

17. In 1863, he extended his tour as far as the Cantonment of Vizianagram, and caused disturbances and suspicion on the part of the Military authorities. He was forbidden to enter the lines of the Regiment stationed there; but his preaching outside was attended by Sepoys. At length, finding himself closely watched by the Police, he left the place. General Browne firmly believed that he was habitually inculcating disaffection amongst the Native Troops.

18. About the middle of last year, Mahomed Ismael started on an extended	
Missionary tour through all the Military Stations of the Northern Division and	
Towns where Pensioners reside. He visited, besides other places en route, Samulcottah, Vizagapatam, Vizianagrum and Berhampore. This tour has been attended with much success. He has made <i>Murids</i> at every station. Formal	
lists of between 300 and 400 of those who have taken the oaths of fidelity to him, at the different stations through which he passed, were found on his person. They contain the names of a considerable number of persons of all classes—he seems to have been most successful at Vizagapatam—but chiefly of Military followers, effective and pensioned. The names of all effective men in each Regiment who have sworn to abide by him are carefully entered in distinct lists. Amongst them are the names of several Subadars. He was on his route to Cuttack when stopped.	
19. Mahomed Ismael is an intelligent and fair spoken man, evidently accustomed to argument and of reputed eloquence. He is shy of the imputation of being a Wahabee, avers that he does not understand the creed, and professes to belong to the sect <i>Sunato Jamat</i> . He states that he only preaches against the corruption of Faith prevalent amongst the Moslem races in general, and against the loose manners of the <i>Bidate</i> or wordly especially. But amongst Mahomed Ismael's papers is found a pamphlet which is a panegyric of Wahabeeism, a book evidently in daily use. The Kazi and Naibs of the different places he visits state that his teaching is Wahabeeism. His sect and adherents are every where admitted to be Wahabees; and their tenets and manners are those to which the term is universally applied in this Presidency. Mahomed Ismael is unquestionably a Wahabee Missionary of a Hyderabad School, and a very zealous one. There is nothing of fanaticism about Mahomed Ismael. He is a cool, fearless man. He has systematically made, and still makes, the Native soldiery, effective and pensionary, the special object of his Missionary zeal. Amongst these, his former life gives him great facilities of making himself acceptable.	
20. I have failed, hitherto, to connect Mahomed Ismael with the disaffected Wahabee sect of Patna, &c., and no actual tampering with the fidelity of the Troops has yet been proved against him. Ostensibly he confines himself to religious subjects, and is far too old and experienced an agitator to commit himself on political matters (if he does inculcate sedition) save amongst his safe adherents, with whom he was in the habit of holding meetings by night. It is vain to hope for evidence from these. However, much may be inferred from his general conduct. Wherever he has gone, throughout a number of years, he has shown grounds for suspecting his designs. Everywhere his conduct has roused excitement, caused anxiety, and encouraged the belief that he habitually inculcates disaffection and sedition. The occurrence of the Mutinies in 1857-58 roused him into exceptional activity; and his present successful exertions, undertaken at a time when changes in the Army have excited inquiry, and perhaps aroused doubts in the minds of the Native ranks, may be significant of method and design, whether in communication with, or under the guidance of, disaffected political parties, or his own part only.	

No. of Murids.	
N.B.—At Samulcottah 39	All Military men.
" Peddapore 19	Other classes.
" Vizagapatam 65	Not Military.
" do. 42	Military.
—	
" Vizianagrum 113	Mixed, chiefly Military.
" Chinnole 16	Chiefly pensioners.
" Kinedy 16	Mixed. One the Inspector of Police.
" Berhampore 49	Mixed, chiefly Military.
This does not include the names entered in a number of loose detached papers.	

21. Without entering into the nature of the revival, or dissent, which under the name of Wahabeeism may be proceeding amongst Mahomedans in India and elsewhere, I think that there is a general and just feeling arising that the matter deserves close watching in respect to the Native soldiery. The spirit of the movement is thoroughly intolerant and aggressive. The angry discussion of its tenets amongst the ranks probably leads its adherents to canvass their subordination to a Christian Government, while it arouses a bitter spirit of sectarianism amongst their comrades who adhere to the old customs and traditions of their faith. The formation in Regiments of these semi-religious clubs, whose members are bound by an oath to each other, can scarcely be conducive to discipline or good feeling in a Corps. And where these Regimental clubs are linked together by an astute and revered master, common to all, who wanders from one Regiment to another, the objectionable features of associations, which may at any time be converted into secret societies, are aggravated. We know that the religious guise of Wahabeeism has been made the cloak for extending serious political intrigue; and I think that, on the whole, the Government may fairly interfere to protect their Troops from the influence of a man of the exceeding suspicious character of Mahomed Ismael, who avowedly lays himself out for the Native soldiery.

22. I have consulted the Military Authorities of the Northern Division, and find them unanimous and earnest in urging that the wanderings of this suspicious individual amongst the Sepoys and Military classes may be stopped. It would not be desirable to extend the period of detention under the Criminal Procedure Code. But I think that this case is one in which the provisions of Regulation II of 1819 may be put in force, and protect the Native soldiery from temptation and evil design. I would recommend that Mahomed Ismael be brought down by Steamer from Gopaulpore, and removed to the Jail at Coimbatore, or other station, where he would be least likely to come into contact with Military classes.

No. 95. ORDER THEREON, 13th March 1866, No. 372.

It appears that, so far back as 1852, Mahomed Ismael Khan, the Moolvie referred to in the foregoing letter, was turned out of the lines of the 37th N. I., for preaching sedition; that subsequently, in 1857, he was suspected of similar practices at Guntoor, and that, shortly afterwards, for a similar reason, he was removed from Burmah, and sent a prisoner to Calcutta; that, in 1863, he was again suspected of inculcating disaffection among the Native troops at Vizianagrum; and that he has now again subjected himself to suspicion by preaching to the Native soldiery at other stations in the Northern Circars. The Inspector General states that the Military authorities in that part of the country are unanimous in urging that he

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
13th March 1866.*

should be prevented from further tampering with the Native Troops. Looking to the antecedents of this man, and to the view entertained of his proceedings by all the authorities, Civil and Military, to whom he has been known, the Governor in Council agrees in the opinion of the Inspector General that the case is one which may properly be dealt with under the provisions of Regulation II of 1819, and he accordingly resolves, under the provisions of Section 2 of that Regulation, to issue a Warrant for the confinement of Mahomed Ismael Khan, as a State Prisoner, in the Jail at Coimbatore, and to direct that he be sent, under a suitable guard, by the first steamer which may touch at Gopaulpore, to Madras, where the Commissioner of Police will arrange for his being forwarded to Coimbatore immediately on his arrival.

(True Extract).

Chief Secretary.

To the Inspector General of Police, with Warrant.
 „ Inspector General of Jails.
 „ Superintendent of Jail at Coimbatore.
 „ Magistrate of Ganjam.
 „ Commissioner of Police, Madras.
 „ Military Department.

Exd. J. H. Burns.

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Judicial Department

*To the Superintendent of the District Jail
 of Coimbatore.*

*Whereas the Governor
 in Council for good and
 sufficient reasons has
 seen fit to determine that
 Mahomed Ismael Khan
 shall be placed under
 personal restraint at
 Coimbatore, you are
 hereby required and com-
 manded, in pursuance
 of that determination,
 to receive the person above
 named into your custody
 and to deal with him
 in conformity to the
 orders*

orders of the Governor in
Council and the provisions
of Regulation II of 1819.

Fort Saint George, the
13th day of March, one
thousand eight hundred
and Sixty-Six.

By order of the
Governor in Council.

[Signature]
Chief Secretary to Government

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Judicial Department.

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read letter from the Inspector General
of Police.

2/28 Feb. 1866. No 366.

Order thereon. 13th March 1866 No 372

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[Signature]
J. R. H.
[Signature]

[Signature]

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Inspector Genl of Police - with Warrant
Inspector Genl of Jails
Supts of Jail at Coimbatore
Master of Ganjam
Commissioner of Police Madras
Military Deptt

dispt. 14/3

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