

In the mid-to-late 1960's G.V. Desani created several poetic essays which comingled a lively travelogue with sharp political commentary. The following example appeared Feb. 25, 1968 in The Illustrated Weekly of India. Desani's footnotes to his readers are appended.

NO REASON, NO RHYME

by G.V. DESANI

*Airlines, Carry Me to Kahira ...
I've Tired of Tamil Nadu!*

Dramatis personae

THE BARD	<i>author of the following unfettered vers libre.</i>
SAIDA BANU	<i>a woman athlete of Pakistan.</i>
V.K. KRISHNA MENON	<i>former Defense Minister of India.</i>

Argument

Marooned in Madras – the State of Tamil Nadu – the Bard is bored. He decides to fly to Egypt. He stops at Karachi and travels to the interior (Upper Sind, Pakistan). There he sees Saida, alias Lalli: and he addresses admiringly, almost worshipfully, 14 Lines to her. He returns to India. At the airport, he is met by a friend and a representative of this Journal.

Likewise bored – or from reasons other than boredom – Shri V.K. Krishna Menon decides to leave India and fly to Egypt.

I

[*Scene. Somewhere in Tamil Nadu.*]

The Bard (asserting an aspiration, soliloquizes): Airlines, carry me to Kahira! I've tired of Tamil Nadu!

[*Scene. Santa Cruz Airport, Bombay, as he is about to take off for Karachi.*]

The Bard: Jai Hind! Once more, Jai Hind! and farewell! Not [to] see Barat awhile! (sighs) not Ganga, Godavari! Kaveri, Tapti, Yamuna, Tungabhadra! S'one!

And bathe in Sindhu instead and imagine I'm in undivided India of yore!

(Reciting the samkalpa, as of yore, "...Jambudwīpe, Bharata Khanda, Aryavratāirakadesantaragate, Punyakshtre, Sindhutire, Kaliyuge, Kali-prathamacharane, Buddhavatare.")

(As the plane takes off for Karachi):

The Bard: Abyssinia, Hindis!

II

[*Scene. Somewhere in Pakistan, after a week. The bard has seen Saida. (In the ring, he recalls, she wore the salwar, a leather belt, and a body-stocking like garment above the waist.)*]

The Bard (soliloquizes): Seven days' sojourn in Pak, lucky I, aye! Karachiwise, Sukkurwise, Shikarpur and Ruka' towards! To High Asia, the old caravan road!

(By train, taxi, gharry, bus! old NWR transport!)

To see my sufis and savor again Sind and sing

(By the sārangī, the yaktaro, the algozo Pakistani!) that I've arrived!

III

Shall you ever forget Sindhuri, Sindhis!

Your darya shah, the Fuleli, the Indus so-named!

Ever Shahibaug, Shikarpur! Sadhu Bela, Sukkur!

*Though old Elphinstone Street, Karachi's today Shahrah Iraque
The Ruka Junction is nowhere: and the Juna Bazaar, Karachi's a shambles
Of kebab and roti shops: more like Kabul's, Kandahar's and Baghdad's:
Though the American Embassy opposite Frere Hall's a dream of today's architecture,
enchanted!
And the Hotel Metropole Karachi's where (maybe) an unknown I once stood!
It's a topsy-turvy world, my mias! qabal-e'arz neest!*

IV

*At Sukkurside, thereabouts, attended I a dangal,
(A daughter of Sind, shukiru! fazulu! ai'n khushikhabiri!)
The name of Saida urfe Lalli, a lady-wrestler who was challenging real men to a
wrestling bout, a dangal thereabouts!
And marhaba! Beat the brains of one and all!
Stirred aili! Enthralled alla! there and then did I compose an odd ode "FOURTEEN
LINES"
In praise of Saida Banu, the Sindhi! Lalli Lala-ji!*

FOURTEEN LINES

*Whoso thou favorest, almond-eater! Thou lovest to!
Suitor of men, pahilwan, kustibaz! Kumarī, selvi, musamat and Miss!
So guised: yet aurant art thou; phenomenal! true! sterling!
They whimsied suit to men fiercer, deadlier than any Eve's!
Yet, riddler! Helen! Josephine! thy rewarded are those that lose to thee!
Vanquished, backs to earth, thrown aloft: unmourned, referee's unfavored!
Tossed! Gonged, pinned! landslide and slammed, Saida!
Swatted, socked, mat-mauled, ex-wrestlers all!*

*Enigma! Cyclone! Killer! Rougher-up! Torso-twister! Bone-bender, breaker! Mangler!
Manhandler! Mai and Matador!*

*Tiger Jugendar, King Kong, Aslam Pahilwan, Goonga, Sky-high Lee, Rustom-e-Hind
Dara, one and all come and go*

Yet, thou Saida, lady-wrestler! Begum-potential, reignest supreme!

*“Heads I win! Tails you lose!” Thou symbol of femininity enlarged, grace strained, and
heavied form!*

*A’salaam! namaste! hail, and all hail! and vanakum too! and aadab and tasleem too!
and vandana!*

L’ENVOI

*Salaam, Saida! Mataram, vande! Lauding and applauding you, Lalli! (live as long as I
may)!*

V

[Scene. Karachi airport. Tearful farewell to the Bard by his old friends.]

The Bard (to old friends): Pakistanu mubaraku hujeva, yaro!

(His last words to old friends):

Janaze te achijo, dosto!

(Pressing gifts, his hand on his heart, the old friend in forefront):

Friend: Hati pain achiji, jani!

VI

[Scene. Teen Murti, New Delhi.]

V.K. Krishna Menon (dejected, soliloquizes):

As idle in Delhi as a painted ship!

Upon a painted ocean that is Hindustan!

The Bard (meanwhile airborne to Egypt, reacting, aside):

Aunt Susan! Is this the Keralaputra who’d launch a thousand ships of Araby?

(Aerial, seafaring, dromedaries and Ruski tanks?)

And destruct the topless towers of Israel?

[*Scene. Somewhere in his home State of Kerala, South India, meanwhile....*]

V.K. Krishna Menon (shortly before taking off for Egypt, soliloquizes):

Hell grant soon we hear again the swords clash!

And the shrill neighs of destriers in battle rejoicing!

The man who fears war and squats opposing

My words of stour, hath no blood of crimson

But is fit only to rot in womanish peace

Far from where worth is won

For the death of such sluts I go rejoicing!

Damn it all! All this South stinks of peace!

Damn it all! All this South thinks of peace!

(Resolute):

Methinks, I'll jet me to Egypt!

The Bard (meanwhile airborne to Egypt, reacting, aside):

Was this Menonmaru's jangibaat, ultimo ratio regum a 'doxa'?

Adventurous, manly, mettlesome man accenting

Or was it (pause) yet another 'hoaxa'?

VII

[*Scene. Santa Cruz Airport, Bombay. (The Bard, back from Egypt, is met by his host's representative, Shri Dandekar.)*]

The Bard: "A'salaam alaykum!" from me to you, Dandekar

"Wa alaykum As-salamu!" from you to me, Dandekar!

Been to the Middle East, mine aqa!

Hence the stylized greeting: khosh amadid!

(To all Indians present at the airport, cordially):

The Bard: Mil gracias, Hindis! Muchas gracias!

Muchísimas gracias, salwars, saris, ragheads!

VIII

The Bard (addressing Dandekar):

What's it like in Bharat?

Che khabar-e-taze est, Dandekar?

Is socialism here already?

Are janabe mohataram the sethias and banias sharing their paunas?

How's astrology? Yoga? Increasing the span of your years?

Got the world's best health already?

How's the population explosion? The sifarish situation?

Is the Brahmi-Amla working? Pamanthaka thailam?

Doing the scalp any good, Dandekar?

And how's the hair-darkening business? The skin-bleach line?

Matrimonial effort – advertising?

Any pure ghee in the bazaar? Madhu?

How's smuggling? (Got a telescopic umbrella in Cairo, an electric shaver and an alarm watch):

And what's the price of pure gold like in the 'black'?

Who's the Man of the Year? How much's he worth in the 'black'?

How's about the plans for World Peace? Bhāratī 'spirituality'?

Vegetarianism? Litigation?

Been away awhile, Dandekar! So give it to me straight!

(Glancing at a news item from an old newspaper on the airline desk):

The Bard: I see we won glory, hm. 'doxa'! but are losing it!

Giving away a daughter and gaining a son! that's it!

IX — X

[*Scene. The Airport lounge. A press representative representing this Journal arrives and approaches the Bard.*]

Press Representative (scribbling): I want to ask you a few questions!

The Bard: Bismillah! You want *copy*, we have it!

PR: What was the purpose of your visit to the Middle East?

The Bard: Fact-finding, Mrs.

PR: What facts did you find?

The Bard: The saddle-sore air traveler finds Cairo hotels full. The Y.M.C.A. full. The Y.W.C.A. full.

PR: What did you do!

The Bard: There is always the lock-up, Mrs.! You razz a policeman – flout him – and you're in! Although it adds a pallor to the cheeks, there's always jail, Mrs.!

PR: What is your view of the food situation?

The Bard: You a vegetarian, I presume?

PR: Yes, I am.

The Bard: Marhaba! Copy! Coming up! Well, now! I myself have been rather keen on that prince of vegetables, the onion! Silver-skinned fleshy Maharashtra produce or the pinkish aristocrats from up Nasik! Fantastic! Used to love fish 'n' touch o' tarragon, crowned with tender onion rings. The khansamah used to do me proud, I remember, with the roast goose aghast with an aureole of onion and mushrooms – and a tomato for the centerpiece, to work in color! Fantastic! You want to try it, Mrs.? Now, in Cairo, they grill you a bird with deep fried shallots, and kebabs, with whole onions underlining, all laddered-up as postscripts, tastes like new love! Got a recipe for your readers, Mrs.! A Russian Bear! Much more than a dash of vodka, half a sam of crème de cacao, half a sam of cow cream, a dash more of vodka, stir, ice, strain, drain! And a sip of vodka for a chaser! Interrupt the proceedings with the pick of the pickled onion! Spanish beauties – framed in crystal clear jars – the size and the luster of the pearls of the sea! Fantastic!

PR: What is your impression of Cairo?

The Bard: El Kahira? Well, Mrs. El Mousky – the oldest commercial street of the same – fantastic! Bazar Khan Khalil, a bazaar of the same, takes your breath away! I confess myself taken in by Cairo skyscrapers too.... My *eyebrows* go up, Mrs., whenever I see a tall construction! Is this a behavior defect? The face should be lifted up to the heights! Talking of heights, you want to go and see the Pyramid of Cheops, Mrs.! Fantastic! And the smiling Sphinx! Never says nothing! Fantastic! You want to visit an-Nil – darya-e-Nil, Nilo nahr, the *Nile* – and you are carried on a camel! Romantic parties take a dolly to a moonlight *kebab* dinner on the back of a camel! And the garlic-lover, the interpreter, breathing down on the romantic parties' necks – as well as the dolly's! The *last straw*, eh, Mrs.? Ha, ha!

PR: May I ask why are you wearing a fez?

The Bard: It's windy! Marvelous value! You can't get felt like this in India for love or money! Picked it up for a song in Cairo! Fantastic value!

PR: May I ask if you are not wasting your time and precious foreign exchange on these trips?

The Bard: Khuda na khasta, Mrs.! Khuda na khasta!

PR: (huffed, and walking away): Not a word of this interview would appear in our pages, if I have anything to do with it!

The Bard: Mind the makeup, Mrs.! It's windy!

[To Dandekar.]

The Bard: That's bad! Real bad, Dandekar! Zahee sharmindagi! The only Indian who can interview me in *depth* – repeat *depth*, Dandekar – is Satyajit Ray. Wins the year's Magsaysay Award for *journalism* – repeat *journalism*, Dandekar! A resourceful editor would have commissioned him. Could have Boeing'ed from Calcutta to Bombay in no time! I don't much care for myself. But my public expects....

[Airline's peon interrupts.]

The Peon (to the Bard): Tumche Nav Kai, sahib?

The Bard (to the peon): Mama, timro nam key ho?

[Takes a letter from the speechless peon.]

The Bard (to Dandekar): He asked me in Marathi my name and I asked him in Gurkhali – the Gorkha line baat – what's this! This is addressed to me....

(Opens and reads the letter):

The Bard (to Dandekar): My secretary addresses it to *await arrival at the airport....* Writes, he quits.... Running away with the neighbor's *ayah....* The fellow has no goals, Dandekar, none! Cussedness, yes. He would pursue *any* woman, with or without intrinsic value. Since he fails in *my* area of endeavor, he runs away with the neighbor's *ayah!* Deserts on the line of duty and expects a golden handshake! Fine homecoming this is, Dandekar! There would be police inquiries, I am sure, if the woman – running 40, if not over, I tell you! – were below the age of consent! Remind me to book a trunk call to the lawyer.... Airavatham Gantavatharam.... Says in his letter that my psychologist has been asking for me. That's *another* money-grabbing so'n'so, and worth avoiding.... I was complaining to him of constantly hearing the whistling theme song from *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. Had me on the couch – 20 sessions of depth analysis, and charged in full! – till I found out that some Parsi kids in the flat below were mucking about with the record player, the same record, and *constantly*, as I said....

NOTES

Dramatic personae

The Bard ... Saida Banu ... Are obvious (*v. supra*).

V.K. Krishna Menon, *pandithan, punyavan, kirtivan* – the learned, virtuous and famous – former defense minister of India. (*Additional data: b. Panniyankara [dist. Calcut (Ed: now Kozhikode), Kerala], May 3, 1896. Family name Kamathu, caste name Karup, Navar – alternative spelling Nair – up to the time of gaining his first degree at Madras, called Kunji-Krishna, the prefix (Kunji-) since dropped.*)

I

I've tired of Tamil Nadu! I've not tired of Tamil Nadu (formerly Madras State). The phrase employed symbolically (of life's many frustrations).

... Kahira! El Kahira. Cairo, Egypt. Formerly Amr's city, *al Fustat*. Founded 641 A.C. by Caliph al-Mu'izz's commander-in-chief.

Jai Hind! Is obvious. Hail to (mother) India!

Bharat. Ancient name of India.

Ganga, Godavari ... Ancient and beautiful rivers of India.

Sindhu. The Indus – its ancient name. Hence *Sindhuesa*. Hence *Sindhi*, and *H (S)indu*. Beautiful river of Pakistan (formerly of undivided India). It was the belief of the ancients that one earns merit by bathing in the rivers of Bharat (India).

Samkalpa. A declaration of intent. The bather, desirous of earning merit by bathing in a beautiful river sacred to him, recites the ritual *samkalpa*. “... *Jambudwīpe, Bharata Khanda, Āryāvarta...*” The traditional Indian (Hindu) *samkalpa*. Refers to India as *Āryāvarta* (the land of the Aryas). (If any person or persons, north or south of India, have an objection to this ancient term, such *brethren* and *cistern* (as the chairman of the Plumbers Convention said) may substitute any other term or word of their choice. ‘*Baratam*’ and “*Hindūstāṇ hamārā*” are ready-made.)

Abyssinia, Hindis! Is obvious. *Ah-be-seein’ya*, Indians!

II

Karachi, Sukkur, Shikarpur, Rukkan. Former capital, towns and a village of Pakistan.

Garry. Is obvious. A horse carriage.

NWR. The North Western Railway of British days before the partition of India. The old trains are still running. The first class is furnished with easy chairs – an unheard of amenity in the Indian sub-continent today.

To see my sufis. Old and dear friends and philosophers (*sufis*). Pakistani Muslim friends.

Sārangī, the vaktaro, the algozo. The musical instruments – string and wind, *saza* – of old Sind, Pakistan. Except the Sindhi version of the *sarangi*, also in use in the Punjab, Rajasthan, Balochistan and Afghanistan.

III

Sindhuri. The terminal *ri* is suffixed, as a term of endearment (for the river). The terminal *u* in ‘*Sindhu*’ – and indeed in all the Sindhi words in our text – should be pronounced as the *u* in ‘*pull*’. In Sanskrit the terminal *u* in *Sindhu* would be pronounced as the *u* in ‘*rule*’. Approximately.)

Sindhis! In our text stands for Hindus who migrated from Sind to other parts of the sub-continent (after the partition of India).

Darya shah. The kindly – *Shahi* – river. The king river. The Indus. (Sindhi. Gender *m*.)

The Fuleli. The river Indus so called in the district Hyderabad, Pakistan. (Sindhi. Gender *f*.)

Shahibaug. The great Persian garden of Shikarpur, dist. Sukkur, Pakistan, with its overwhelming purple, yellow and red roses, and abundant jasmine, which the Bard remembered, and hence went to worship. A sentimental journey. Today, deserted: almost barren.

Sadhu Bela. The island *ashram* in the Indus, Sukkur, belonging to the Hindu Vanakhandi Baba sect.

Elphinstone Street. Old Saddar, Karachi Cantonment. Once a quiet street, now a bustling highway. [Editor's note: now renamed Zaibunnisa Street.]

Ruka. A railway station on the old N.W. Railway between Sukkur and Shikarpur. (The trains today bypass it; or the one carrying the Bard did.)

Frere Hall. Karachi Cantonment.

Mias. Is obvious. An honorific term applied to Muslim gentlemen and elders.

Qabal-e'arz neest! There is nothing more to say!

IV

Dangal. A wrestling bout in a ring.

Shukiru! Fazulu! ai'n khushikhabiri! Sindhi for Thank God! Bounties! And Good Tidings! (because she was a daughter of Sind, a Sindhi).

Urfe. Alias. The heroin's name was Saida, alias – also – Lalli, Sindhi names both.

Marhaba! Bravo! And why not?

The audience heard groans from men and the Sindhi and Urdu versions of 'Ah!' 'Oh!' 'Ouch!' and – from the Bard, accompanied by his friends – the Sindhi and the Urdu versions of " 'Taint no use sayin', boys. Was that nice, Saida' " or " 'Taint my birthday, Lalli!' " ("Tsch! tsch! Shed a tear suckers! You back-fallen, body-slanted, agonized lot!")

Aili! Alla! Exclamations denoting wonder, surprise. Sindhi (from Arabic 'Ali!' "Ya Ali!" 'Allah!')

Saida Banu. Banu, a lady, a woman of rank. Courtesy title.

Lalli Lala-ji. Lalli (Saida) blessed by Lalu Sai, the saint. Sometimes, the river India personified as Lalu Sai. Gender *m*.

FOURTEEN LINES

Almond-eater. Most wrestlers, in India and Pakistan, are partial to almonds as a strengthening diet: also *ghee*, fresh milk drawn from udders, and mixed with powdered candy (*misiri*, Sindhi).

Pahilwan, kustibaz. An athlete, a wrestler.

Kumari, selvi, musamat. Courtesy titles (in Sanskrit, Tamil and Sindhi) prefixed to the name of a young unmarried woman. (The last to a married woman's, also.) The Bard so addressed Saida.

Aurst. Woman. A woman.

Helen, Josephine. The names allude to domineering and fatal women.

Thy rewarded are those that lose to thee. With utmost deference – and not for a moment suggesting that Miss Saida's wrestling was not aboveboard – it is said, from poetic license and half-seriously – also from personal reasons cited, *infra ...* that some men (“*thy rewarded...*”) might *choose* defeat rather than win (*thereby avoid marrying Miss Saida*).

Today's world wrestling champions being Europeans, Americans and Japanese, moreover, Miss Saida's offer to *marry the winner* which prove yet another deterrent to the champions and others and so *lose to her* (and *thereby escape matrimony*). Hence, they are *her rewarded*. The rest is clear.

Women wrestlers and adepts are by no means news. Not long ago, a Miss Hamida was wrestling in Bombay. The strongest woman wrestler of her day, known as *Sandwina* – born the German Kati Hexmann – actually defeated the great Sandow in a weightlifting contest. (She used to lift up her husband six times – the 154 lbs. of him – before breakfast as routine exercise.)

Wrestling, first mastered by bears, wild beasts and such, as an *art*, was known to Egyptians as far back as 5,000 years ago. Today, it has become 'free': turn-over scissors, agonizing butts (often with the head), headlocks, high kicks, strangleholds, pulling the hair, bending back an opponent's fingers, catch-as-catch-can, even bites, being permitted.

Miss Saida invited *any* style at all. The Bard – in his day, no stranger to the ring – forewarned by the terms of her challenge – fought shy of her, did not enter the ring, and was content to be an admiring onlooker.

Mai and Matador. 'Mai' Mother (Sindhi). Since she chastises, she is the *Mai*. Since she masters the bulls (the wrestling, struggling, fighting men in the ring) she is the *Matador* (master of the bulls loose in the ring).

(*Sarva Shri*) *Tiger Jugendar, King Kong, Aslam Pahilwan, Goonga...* Well-known wrestlers. (*Shri Sky-High Lee*. The famous tall wrestler from Singapore. Recently wrestled in Bombay.)

Begum-potential. A married woman (to be: *potentially*). She only lets a man of her choice defeat her in the ring, and she is his *Begam* (his wedded woman).

"Heads I win; Tails you lose!" The discerning reader should refer to the note *"Thy rewarded..."* (*supra*). If a challenger is defeated by her in the ring, she *wins*. If she lets a challenger defeat her, she *wins* (is married to him; to find a match for a unique woman like her being exceedingly difficult and hazardous, to put it mildly).

A-salaam! Namaste! Vanakkam! ... Abad and tasleem ... Vandana! The Bard so salutes Saida in Sanskrit, Tamil and Urdu.

L'envoi. A poetic *postscript*.

Mataram, vande! Mother, I praise thee! The Bard, invoking Miss Saida as Mother and All-Mother, so saluted her.

V

Pakistanu mubaraku hujeva, yaro! To old friends and philosophers – unaffected by the quarrels between politicians, governments, nations – the Bard said, *"May Pakistan be auspicious to you!"* (*Yaro!* friends! playmates!) *"May good fortune attend you in Pakistan!"* (Sindhi.)

Janaze te achijo, dosto! It is *jaiz* – admissible, lawful – for good Muslims and old friends – to attend one another's funerals. The Bard invited his friends to grace his funeral (if he went first). (Sindhi.)

Hati pain achiji, jani! His friends said to him, in heartbreakingly – indeed unaffected, though employing words from the nursery – *beautiful* Sindhi (approximately translated), *"Come and play hide and seek with us (again) (our) life and soul! (both)!"*

VI

Teen Murti. New Delhi neighborhood where Mr. Menon is reported living at present.

As idle in Delhi. The lines, gratefully acknowledged to Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) and his publishers. Coleridge's lines, modified by us (with apologies and regret) are: *"As idle as a painted ship / upon a painted ocean."*

Aunt Susan. Our aunt. (Our maiden Aunt Susie.)

Keralaputra. *Shri V.K. Krishna Menon*. Born in the State of Kerala, he is the son (*putra*) of Kerala (just as we were, a son of Kenya, Africa).

Who'd launch a thousand ships... We quote – the speech in *italics* – from Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), with grateful acknowledgments to the late poet and his publishers. (Marlowe has, “*Was this the face that launched a thousand ships / And burned the topless towers of Ilium?*” – from his splendid *Helen*.) The lines have been modified by us (with apologies and regret).

Ruski tanks. Russian tanks (in Egypt).

Hell grant soon we hear again.... The verses, in Roman type, are quoted from Mr. Ezra Pound (1885-1972) with grateful acknowledgments to the poet and his publishers. The lines are from Mr. Pound’s powerful *Sestina: Altaforte*, altogether 49 lines, from which – with humble apologies and great regret – we quote only 8.

Mr. Pound’s lines express, more fully than anything we could have devised, or composed, Shri Menon’s mood prior to his departure for Egypt soon after the hostilities between that country and Israel broke out (*v. infra*).

(So committed or harnessed in the service of Art – reciting the noble lines of Coleridge, Marlowe and Pound – we extend our heartfelt felicitations to Shri Menon. A prime character! A capital character!)

“...*Womanish peace...*” “*South stinks of peace!*” Women are lovers of peace. Indeed. South – the Indian South, in this context – certainly “stinks of peace”.

It is relevant here to quote Shrimati Yashodamma Dasappa of South India. Inaugurating a Women Writer’s Seminar, at Bangalore, Mrs. Dasappa, then Minister of Social Welfare, Mysore State, said, “... *Only women could save the world from nuclear holocaust.*”

Mrs. Dasappa’s *unforgettable, prophetic* and *apocalyptic* words have occupied us in a long, an exacting and an uninterrupted meditation for more than four years.

It is a fact that as many women as men – if not *more* – scientists and as assistants, as aides, secretaries, deputies and helpmates to men – from Mrs. J.J. Thompson to Marie Curie herself, and the *wives* of the scientists, from Rutherford’s to Max Plank’s, Einstein’s to Enrico Fermi’s – and those of the others, before and since, right up to (Shrimati) Chiang Ching, Madame Mao, have *actually helped in the discovery, production and employment of the nuclear energy and weapons, right up to their stage missile delivery.*

How can women, therefore, who have *caused* – aided and abetted – in bringing about the threat of “nuclear holocaust” *save* the world from it? – save themselves, the men, and the innocents? We confess ourselves defeated and incapable of wrestling with the question further.

We are *nevertheless* convinced that the Dasappa Statement is most significant: being of the nature of *intuition*, hence *supra*-rational, and worthy of the highest consideration.

It is from that bias that we – through their accredited and consular representatives in India – circulated her Statement – with our express endorsement “*urgent attention*” – among Their Excellencies Mr. Lyndon B. Johnson and Mrs. Johnson (U.S.A.), M. Nikolai V. Podgorny and Madame Podgorny (U.S.S.R.), Chairman Mao and Madame Mao (*Peoples’ Republic of China*), Her Majesty’s Prime Minister Mr. Harold B. Wilson and Mrs. Wilson (*Gt. Britain*), Gen Charles Andre Joseph Marie de Gaulle and Madame de Gaulle (*France*), as representing the nuclear powers, as well as Shrimati Indira Nehru-Gandhi, Hon. the Prime Minister of *India*, and Hon. the leader of the Opposition in *Ceylon*, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike. [Editor’s note: Sirimavo Bandaranaike subsequently served as prime minister of Ceylon and Sri Lanka three times.]

Except for an “*I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your communication of ...*” from the Fourth Secretary of a certain dignitary, we have had no positive response, or even an acknowledgment, to our communication. Furthermore ... (Delete the rest of this *Note*, in the interest of the country’s foreign relations. This is a free country and the Constitution allows every citizen and resident the freedom *not* to reply to a letter. *Sd.* Legal Adviser.)

It speaks volume for the cynicism and decadence prevalent in India today that perfectly serious suggestions for saving mankind from certain destruction are treated no better by the leading segment of the country’s press. (Our own effort, in drawing attention to Mrs. Dasappa’s suggestion, goes in as a page-filler for a so-called *Humor* issue, for which we are paid, quite frankly, fantastic or extortive fees!)

Methinks, I’ll jet me to Egypt! From the peaceful South (his home State of Kerala) he went East, to Egypt. Is obvious.

Menonmaru. Why *maru*?

The word *maru*, since its known history, is employed in Japan at the end of a name – *exempli gratis*, *Menonmaru* – to denote special fondness and affection.

A divine figure – *vide* J.P. Peare – descended from heaven to teach the Emperor of Japan shipbuilding. Today a shipping law of Japan specifies that the suffix *maru* be used after the name of a ship.

Shri Menon – our text, *v. supra* – being “*as idle in Delhi...*” “*as a painted ship*” (sic), *launched* himself upon Egypt. He is, according to our scheme and imagery, therefore a *ship* (hence, *maru* is suffixed to his name: *Menonmaru*).

A *most* felicitous vindication for the use of the term in our text, however, is the fact that the word is of *Indian* origin too and excellent Hindi and – what is more, *v.*

infra – factually applies to Shri Menon. (*Maru* – alternatively, *maroo*. Hindi. Gender *m*. “A song dedicated to war...” The poet Bihārī employs it. “*Saba mila maru gayo...*” (“Together they all sang *maru...*” – a song dedicated to war.)

Even so: how does the term *factually* apply to Menon*maru*?

Shri Menon – possibly motivated from talking himself into a position of prominence, as an *authority figure* among the Arabs – while returning from Egypt, at the conclusion of the Arab-Israeli war, reported *A.F.P.* – urged all Arab nations, through the medium of the Lebanese daily *Al Anwar*, to “*use all arms at their disposal against Israel and its allies,*” (regardless of the agreed ceasefire between them). It is, therefore, and hence, as a *man-of-war* (a *ship*, in our imagery) and *factually*, as a *man-of-war*, who sang a *maru* to the Arabs, that Shri Menon is (once more) Menon*maru*. (In our near-futile search to rhyme it, we struck upon ‘*baru*’ – alternatively, ‘*bharu*’ – from Kota Bharu, Malaysia, L 3° South, Long. 140° East.... Had Shri Menon gone to *Baru*, we could have, with felicity, rhymed Menon*maru*.)

Sardar Sahib Swarn Singh, the present Defense Minister of India, recently assured us that Indian arms in the North are ‘adequate’. It arises – the incensed Jews might query, and there are some *very* clever people living in Israel – why doesn’t Shri Menon sing a *maru* to the *Indians*, to “*use all arms at their disposal...*” – and those at their disposal happen to be ‘adequate’, we have it on the highest authority – and so (incidentally redeem his own “standing up” oath to free “*every sacred inch of the Indian territory*”? (This is not a matter of *sacred inches* but – according to another high authority – “*thousands of miles of Northern Indian territory,*” lost to the Chinese. (*P.T.I.*, recently quoting the Deputy Prime Minister of India, Shri Morarji Desai.)

Since the days of Mahatma Gandhi’s *satyagraha*, non-violence, prayer meetings and experiments with the Truth, are over, the ‘*arms*’ at India’s disposal, and actually deployed by Indians against Indians today, include such national and indigenous assets as crowding and restraining those in authority (*gheraoing*), non-stop slogan-shouting to prevent you from sleeping, rioting, student rioting, language rioting, tearing out electric fixtures, public property, railways, and plumbing, stone and brickbat throwing, *lathi* wielding, arson, looting, fasting unto death, recruiting private armies, and occasional bomb-planting, *bang! puff!*

These means, and their technology, are *also* at India’s disposal and merit Shri Menon’s consideration with a view to their employment against anyone at all.

Jangibaat. His war talk (addressed to the Arabs, *v. supra*).

Ultimo ratio regum. An argument of (between) kings. As reported, Shri Menon spoke to the Arabs as an equal of rulers – of kings – almost giving an order of the day (himself a non-combatant, untouched by the rigors of their war).

'Doxa'. We have availed ourselves of the word, compelled – more or less – by the dictates of our *daimon* and to meet the demands of our entirely personal rhetoric, and rhythms: not forgetting the beauty potential of all the languages we ply in our text. The word is Greek – with grateful acknowledgements to Dr. J.S.M. Hooper and his publishers – for *glory, splendor, grandeur*.

In the interest of Indian unity, and the integration of the Indian peoples – now threatened by language nationalism and rioting – we give its translation in the country's regional languages (which we are asked to treat as equal with English). *Doxa*, therefore, is Greek for *mahima, gaurava* (Sanskrit), *gorob* (Bengali), *gorob* (Assamese), *gaurav* (Gujarati), *gavrav* (Marathi), *gauraba* (Odia), *mahima, vaihbav, gaurav, prabhav* (Hindi), *vaibhavmu, prabhavamu, prabhatvamu* (Telugu), *mahathuvan, thejas, manam*, (Malayalam), *makimai, makathuvam* (Tamil), *jalal, wadiai* (Punjabi), *jalal, tamjid* (Urdu), *jalalu* (Sindhi) and *thonok, man* (Santali).

As a gesture of courtesy to certain minority groups resident in India – omitting Portuguese and French, not long ago official in Goa and Pory – we offer *izzat, jalal* (Pashto), *shan, shaukat* (Persian), and *thejas, mahimaya, gaurava* (Singhalese).

'Hoxa.' Is obvious. A hoax.

VII

"*Salamu alaykum!*" "*Wa alaykum ...*" Is obvious. Salutations. Greetings returned.

Aga. Master, lord, sir.

Khosh Amadid! General welcoming (Persian).

Mil gracias, Hindis! ... A thousand thanks, Indians! I thank you! (Spanish forms).

Salwars, saris, ragheads! To the Indian ladies and gentlemen present at the airport. *Salwars, saris* – personified – Indian women. For centuries, Indian men have worn turbans. Hence '*ragheads!*'

VIII

Che khabar-a-taze est, Dandekar? What's the news, Dandekar? What's the latest?

Janabe mohataram the sethias and banias... The eminent rich folk and commercial classes. The affluent strata of Indian society.

Sharing their paunas... In the lesser Bombay neighborhoods – not slums – it is customary to buy a *pauna* – a three-quarters full – cup of tea in a tea shop – rather than a full cup (to economize). The *pauna*, further, is divided – portioned in the cup and the saucer – and shared with a friend. "*Sharing their paunas...*", we reckon, is a measure whereby the degree of socialism achieved in India might be known. Either

all the poor become *sethias* and *baniyas*, go up (*supra*), or the *sethias* and *baniyas* come down (go for *paunas*, *infra*) – and so achieve equality, parity, balance.

Sifarish. Recommendation. Influence. Certificate-hawking, without which you cannot get anything done. A feature of life in India.

Brahmi-Amla ... Pamanthaka thailam. Hair oils extensively used by both men and women in India. The ingredients in these oils are alleged to ‘increase’ the user’s ‘eyesight’, to ‘cool’ his ‘brain’, ‘improve’ his ‘memory’ and grow his (and her) ‘hair’.

Hair-darkening business. Is obvious. The Indian consumption of hair dyes – and indeed export of the preparations which ‘darken’ the hair – is considerable.

Skin-bleach line. Is obvious. Creams that bleach the skin a shade lighter.

Matrimonial ... advertising. Is obvious.

Pure ghee ... madhu. Unadulterated *ghee* (clarified butter), at the price you can afford to pay, is a rarity. And unadulterated *madhu* – honey – is also difficult to come by.

Shri H.C. Mishra, Magistrate, New Delhi, earlier this year, expressing his dissatisfaction, said that a *sealed* bottle labeled pure (*shuddha*) honey (*madhu*) sold by Khadi Gram Udyog Bhawan – of impeccable credentials from Mahatma Gandhi down – Regal Building, New Delhi, “also sells adulterated.” (Imposing a fine of Rs. 7,500, he sentenced Shri Hazarilal Jain, Asst. Manager, to one year’s rigorous imprisonment.)

The ‘black’. The Indian black market. The term – widely used during the World War II in England – has been adopted by *all* Indian regional languages. We have noticed uneducated and unlettered women, styling themselves as business and company ‘directors’, as ‘partners’ and “sleeping partners” – they sign and thumb-print business documents, a dodge to avoid paying income- and super-tax – pronounce it as ‘blake’ (rhymes with ‘lake’). We have also come across (in Tamil country) *chor mārga* – an adequate translation – literally, *thieves’ way* (or device). (Found in certain ancient astrological works written in Tamil.)

Litigation, Kerala Mata – Mother of Kerala, (so hailed by the jubilant crowds in Trivandrum when the end of prohibition was announced by Food Minister Mrs. Gauri Thomas of the Kerala government). She said, recently, that “between 5,100 to 6,000 cases were pending against the Kerala government.”

P.S. If *this* – having a *Mata* of their own – is yet another ‘regional’ advantage the state of Kerala in South India claims from the Center, at the country’s expense, to further Indian unity and the integration of the Indian peoples, we suggest that we all have a *living Bharat Mata* – a Mother India, the Mother of *all* and *entire* India!

We need an eminent Indian lady – a *sarva pujanīya*, *adarnīya*, and *priya* (by all esteemed, honored and loved) *Adimata* or *Amman* – the *ultimate* Mother.

Any candidates? Suggestions, anyone?

Lilavati Munshi? Vijaya Laxshmi Pandit? Sucheta Kripaleni? Indira Nehru-Gandhi? Mary Clubwalla Jadhav? Asha Bhosle? Gauri Thomas? Mahadevi Varma? Freeny Taleyarkhan? Mala Sinha?

We won glory.... Our own Kumārī Jagat (the year’s Miss World) Rieta Faria brought us glory. (*‘Doxa’, supra.*) Messrs. Mecca, Ltd., her agents, said not long ago, “Sky’s the limit! There never was such a demand for Miss World, not ever!” She however told a press conference recently, “I quit.” Announcing her abdication, she added, “I wasn’t fired. I quit.” (*...We won glory ... but are losing it,* v. our text.)

Of the gentlemen in her life, she told *Reuter* and the *A.P.*, -- concerning Gulu Lalvani of London – who has a gold-plated Rolls – “Of course Gulu and I are only friends!” About Shri David Gerton of America, she told the panel of *London Forum* of the *B.B.C.*, “we are engaged.” (“... *Giving away a daughter and gaining a son*”-in-law, *vide* our text. Announcing her break with Shri Osborne Lobo of India, she told *Reuters* and the *A.P.*, “I am still writing to Osborne but they are only Platonic letters.”

P.S. Do the young people of today know that *all* countries of the world – members of the Postal Union – indict and prosecute anyone at all, if found passing “*non-Platonic*” matter through the mails? Everything had better be ‘Platonic’!

L’ENVOI

Rita! How’s it like to reign and resign, before the term is spent?

Pride of Bharat! Daughter! Entertainer of American anti-Kong!

Star cross’t! Star kiss’t! co-existent with B. Hope in South Vietnam!

Faria! Rieta! Weanling! I.I! our own Kumārī Jagat!

(*Entertainer...anti-Kong.* She entertained American troops in Vietnam with Mr. Bob Home. *Weanling.* She was weaned in India. *I.I.* Indian Issue (After the American usage, *G.I.*, Government Issue.) Rita Faria is an Indian Issue, is obvious.

IX — X

Bismillah! Let’s begin, in the name of Allah!

Tarragon. Vinegar flavored with the herb (*Artemisia dracunculus*).

Khansamah. Butler. Often cooks. (In our text, our *former* cook. It was last Spring that he ran away with an inoffensive neighbor’s wife – leaving us a mutinous and rowdy

parrot, his pet, to look after, who declines freedom. Home wanted. Bird lovers, correspond.)

Russian Bear. A cocktail. (Use *Russian* vodka for preference.)

Fez. Is obvious. A red cone-shaped and brimless hat. Ours has a long, quality black tassel, nearly 10" from the crown, same length the late ex-King Farouk used to wear.

Khuda na khasta! God forbid!

Zahee sharmindagi! Shame! What a shame!

Line baat. Gorkha army argot. The language (*baat*) of the *line* (army camps and barracks).

Golden handshake. The secretary, according to a line in his letter, expected from us a parting gift after the style of the great American and European employers who reward with a *golden handshake* – substance, negotiable securities, debentures, shares – an old and faithful employee (director, general-manager class) on his honorable retirement, to show their gratitude and appreciation.

Speaking broadly, we ourselves regard this behavior pattern – shaking hands – altogether unnecessary, undesirable, and *unhygienic*. And with the *dogs* – owners often urge their pets to show off to guests and visitors – reprehensible. We have not hesitated to ask for hot water and soap following the exercise.

Airavtham Ghantavataram, Shri T.S.R. The lawyer. Specializes in serious trouble generally, his strong point being to question – from start to finish, *persistently* – the jurisdiction of a court. In our experience, more than 80% of the cases are won by him, or thrown out, or otherwise disposed of, from this slant alone: the remaining 20% on points of law rather than the facts or the merits of a case. A recent more or less equitable civil claim against an acquaintance – a just and impartial award which he half-heartedly contested, only on Shri Ghantavatharam's *insistence* – was rendered *null* and *void* on the plea that the arbitration proceedings were held on a *Sunday and a holiday*. This occurs, possibly in a fine type, in certain rulings, probably as a footnote. There may have been other points, too, favoring our acquaintance.

The Bridge on the River Kwai. The film of that title.

In addition to minor editing, the text has been Americanized.

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