

Impressum

Klaus Bung: And peace on earth

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e: klaus.bung@rochdalewriters.org.uk

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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Two neighbours, Kevin and Shahabuddin, have a long-standing feud. After a public slanging match, Shahabuddin writes a masterly letter of complaint to the police. They resolve the dispute on Christmas Eve.

Klaus Bung: And peace on earth



The brave traveller who tries to make his way across the hills which mercifully separate Darwen from Blackburn and keep the thieves of Darwen away from the burglars of Blackburn, and vice versa, may haply come across the obscure village of Rossenham, hidden in a narrow valley, with its picturesque church, its ancient pub ('The Cock and Bull'), a barber, a grocer's, no post office, and only one long line of terrace houses, inhabited by the families of 79 goras (1), 18 Muslims, 1 Bajan (2), 1 Nigerian prince, 3 Hindus, 2 Sikhs and 1 militant atheist, who spends his weekends in the pub, holding forth in front of a crowd of 78 goras and 1 renegade Muslim that Jesus was not born in Bethlehem (3) (not the least among the cities of Juda) and that in fact he wasn't born anywhere at all and is as legendary or historical as Little Red Riding Hood, and threatens with eternal damnation all who do not accept this as gospel truth.

One of the sights of Rossenham, a relic from the times when it was still a thriving mill-town and even once produced a poet ('The Rossenham Poet', as she is known to the world), is its

police station, still manned by 7 officers, 8 more than this sleepy village needs, for all its citizens live very peacefully side by side and don't care much about what Usama gets up to or what happens in Haiti, or in Kashmir, or in Sri Lanka, or Northern Ireland, or Sudan, or Rwanda, or Palestine, or Bosnia, or Ukraine, or London ('Where is that?'), or at whose fireplace the Home Secretary (Whatsisname?) warms himself from October to April. They keep themselves to themselves, love or hate their neighbours wherever they come from (like their Father which is in heaven and maketh his sun to rise (4) on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain, in Blackburn and Rossenham especially rain, on the just and on the unjust alike) and duly ignore whatever spiteful things their respective gods tell them in their holy scriptures.

'We ain't here to serve God,' one of them declared, 'God is here to serve us, and if he does the job he is paid for, we will have peace.'



Now the thing with the overstaffed police station of Rossenham was this. The Home Secretary had been so busy for many years, what with his private life and spreading joy, and with computer systems breaking down or never starting to work in the first place, and an avalanche of passport applications, and armies of bogus asylum seekers and benefit scroungers invading this country ('a menace greater than Hitler', the man, blinded by prejudice, is rumoured to have said), and to crown it all Mrs Saddam Hussain and Mrs Usama bint Laden applying for political asylum, - he had simply forgotten to close down Rossenham Police Station when he axed so many others in the country side, and the people of Rossenham had seen no reason to remind him.

When our weary traveller arrives in the Cock and Bull, he will first be questioned for news from the outside world. Then he will hear the story of the quarrel between Kevin and his neighbour, Sheikh Shahabuddin.



Shahabuddin lives in a small terrace house, where he runs a Social Club for elderly Muslims. One day Kevin bought a caravan, which he uses for only two weeks in the year, during which he goes holidaying in Padiham.

Shahabuddin is not a literary man, he is a bit greedy, a bit stupid, his English is rudimentary (except that he understands swearing when he hears it and can give as good as he gets), and he is not good at writing letters or filling in application forms.

So he employs a part-time assistant, Aisha, to do his paperwork. Aisha does not hold him in high regard. She doesn't call him a bit stupid, she just calls him stupid, she thinks he is lazy ('Why does he have to sit in front of my face from morning to night? Hasn't he got anything better to do?'), and she strongly suspects him of fiddling his accounts and the charitable funds for which she has to apply on his behalf.

On her good days she calls him an IBM, which is Egyptian for 'Idiot Bastard Mummyfucker' - 'cos he is dead boring', as she explains with an apologetic smile as if butter couldn't melt in her mouth.


When the neighbour started parking his caravan outside Shahabuddin's bay window, completely blocking his view, she had to write innumerable useless letters: to the police, to the council, to half a dozen solicitors, to the mosque, to the church, to the newspapers, etc.

Then he had this street brawl with Kevin. He called the police. The police arrived at 12.00 noon the following day. Shahabuddin sent them away. 'You were supposed to come at 10, now it is 12, you have to learn to be punctual. We said 10 o'clock English time, not 10 o'clock Indian time. I am too busy to wait for you all day long, go home and make another appointment', he told them and sat down to continue staring at Aisha for the rest of the afternoon.

He was furious: 'Write a letter of complaint to the police.'

Aisha felt that he was in the wrong and wrote a constrained letter requesting another appointment.

'That letter is no good: I want you to write an angry letter, real angry, English angry. Tell them how lazy and useless they are.'

	<p>'You don't want to start jihad because of one ignorant kafir (5): Have a sip of Qibla Cola (6) and think of something holy and peaceful, that will make you feel better. Is it not written ...,' said she, but Shahabuddin let fly a profanity which was so unholy that it would make even a Spaniard blush (8), or so Aisha thought.</p> <p>She phoned a friend for advice.</p> <p>'If you write an angry letter, he will get into trouble.'</p> <p>'I want him to get into trouble.'</p>
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So Aisha wrote an angry letter. 'That's what he wants, so that's what he gets.'

'This is a very important letter,' she said to Shahabuddin. 'It must be perfect. Otherwise the police won't see how angry you are and how much they have hurt you. I must take it home and get it checked by a native English speaker to make sure it is really angry. Tomorrow you can sign it and post it.'

So it came to pass that this letter was written, Shahabuddin knew that it had been double-checked, read it, approved of it and signed it, and it was posted.

It is now one of the prized possessions of Rossenham's police.

Our traveller is taken from the pub to the old police station, where the seven officers sit, talk, smoke, drink tea, play darts and watch the porn channel on the telly, and there on the south wall, under glass, is the letter, the only letter ever received by this station.

CSACI
Centre for the Support of the Aged, the Crippled and the Insane
786 Corporation Street, Rossenham, Lancashire, BB13 8SU

Dear Mister Policeman,

I have this neighbour and he parks his caravan permanently outside my window so that I cannot get any sunlight. Then he harrasses me and our clients. Yesterday he even came and started swearing at us.

7 December 2004

Dear Mister Policeman,

I have this neighbour and he parks his caravan permanently outside my window so that I cannot get any sunlight. Then he harasses me and our clients. Yesterday he even came and started swearing at us.

This is very upsetting for me and my elderly clients, because they aren't used to swearing and don't even swear when they pour boiling water over their hands or hit their thumb with a hammer or drop the baby; and the baby wouldn't swear either, not even when it is dead: it is too stupid for swearing. But the old people don't swear because God don't like it.

And English swearing is much worse than Urdu swearing and has only

four letters to do it with, and our old people don't like to hear such language at all. They get enough of it from their own children, so why should my neighbour add to their distress? You tell me that!

They are all very upset and deeply offended, and I am upset and angry too. I could strangle this here neighbour, but I won't do it because it's against the law. So you have to do it for me, that's what you are their for.

So yesterday I phoned the police station, and you promised to send someone over here and sort him out good and proper, but you didn't, did you? That makes me even more angry.

Where is your sense of responsibility? You don't want any murder or ethnic cleansing to start in this street. It is the English who do the cleansing because it mustn't be ethnic.

I want you to come over here and swear at him for me, because if I swear he doesn't understand it so it doesn't hurt his black heart, so you have to do it for me.

This neighbour man is very wicked and needs to be stopped, and you are so powerful, you are the one to stop him.

So please hurry over here quickly and impose the Queen's law on this wicked neighbour, or else I would not be responsible for whatever happens to me.

And don't let me down a second time, otherwise I might feel like swearing at you, and you wouldn't

like that, would you?

Your devoted citizen and friend,
Sheikh Shahabuddin
CSACI
Rossenham

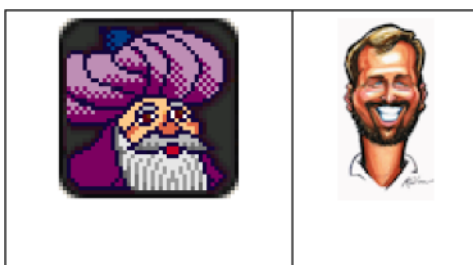
When this letter arrived at the police station, the seven officers marched to 786 Corporation Street like one man and invited Kevin and Shahabuddin to celebrate his literary masterpiece.



The two warring neighbours could not resist this temptation, especially at Christmas time, Kevin had a pint of Thwaites (9), but Shahabuddin, who is a god-fearing man and only fiddles the accounts when Allah is not looking, contented himself with a bottle of Mecca Cola(TM) ('Ne buvez plus idiot, buvez engagé!' (10) as it says on the bottle).



That happened on Christmas Eve. Kevin began to like his Shahabuddin, and especially enjoyed the innumerable jokes that are told about him (a drink together can work wonders, even if it isn't a Double Diamond) (11).



'Et in terra pax,' twittered the sparrers perched on top of the caravan, 'wa salam salam shalom', admonished a voice from heaven, and they flapped their tiny wings in adoration.

Kevin parked his caravan in front of Paddy's house across the road and now has a good old feud going with him. He doesn't like the Irish and thinks they are fair game.

Paddy is trying to get Aisha to write some letters for him, to the police, to the council, to half a dozen solicitors, to the mosque, to the church, to the newspapers, etc. He thinks she has brains. She has acquired quite a reputation in Corporation Street, for kindness, impartiality and a sense of humour. She is loved by all communities. She has had her share of joys and troubles, but loves the absurdities which life throws at her. 'Life is so funny,' she says when yet another misfortune befalls her, 'it could make you cry'.

She was never invited to the celebration at the Police Station. 'Women have no brains and no morals: they should stay at home, wear their hijab (12) and never meddle in men's affairs,' says Shahabuddin, and Kevin wishes English women too would live by these sensible maxims, 'stands to reason, dunnit?' 'Muslims are not as stupid as they look,' he said, and affectionately slapped his new-found friend Shahabuddin on the shoulder. Here was something they could agree on.

In February Shahabuddin went for a long holiday in his village in Panjab. He invited Kevin to follow him in his caravan. He has a beautiful niece who wants an English passport, and Kevin wants an obedient wife. 'You can't say no fairer than that, can ya?'

Kevin is ready to leave the moment he receives his transit visa for Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. He must be looking for trouble. (13) If not en route, he'll find it in Panjab.

'And how is the police in England?' asked Shahabuddin's brother.

'Not too bad, not bad at all,' said Shahabuddin.

'They have framed me,' he added triumphantly.

FOOTNOTES

1. gora: Urdu for 'white' (like English 'nigger' for 'black', Trinidadian 'coolie' for East Indian as opposed to ex-African, "He's a gora, but he's a good gora. She's a gori and as bad as they come.")
2. Bajan: native of Barbados (aka smart-ass, or 'small-islander')
3. Bethlehem: Matth. 2:6
4. maketh his sun to rise: Matth. 5:45
5. kafir: Arabic: unbeliever, infidel
6. qibla: Arabic: 'direction', and specifically 'THE direction', i.e. the direction towards Mecca which Muslims face when saying their daily prayers
7. Qibla Cola and Mecca Cola. Mecca Cola is the French product, Qibla Cola is its British 'look-alike' and rival. Background of the two companies and the Cola Wars: FINANCIAL TIMES, Thursday, 8 Jan 2004, p 13: 'New colas wage battle for hearts and minds'.

There is Ummah Cola (the Ummah is the world-wide community of believers), whose website is down, is i.a. sold in Britain and, according to the label, may be made in Egypt. [image not found]

 <p>The image shows two cans of Zam Zam Cola on the left. One is red with 'ZAM ZAM Cola' in blue and white text, and the other is orange. To the right is a red circular logo with white Arabic calligraphy and the words 'Zam Zam' in yellow. Below the cans and logo, the words 'ZAM ZAM' are written in large, bold, blue letters with a white outline.</p>	<p>There is also Zamzam Cola, made in Iran, and selling well there, in Saudi Arabia and in other Arab countries. It is named after Mecca's Zamzam holy spring water. Muslim tradition has it that the Zamzam was opened by the angel Jibril to save Hagar and her son Ismail from dying of thirst when they were out in the desert.</p>
 <p>The image shows three bottles and two cans of MuslimUp. There are two blue cans in the foreground and two larger bottles (one clear, one dark) behind them. All the packaging features the 'MuslimUp' logo, which includes the word 'MuslimUp' in English and Arabic script.</p>	<p>SevenUp (TM) now has a rival in MuslimUp</p>
 <p>The image is an advertisement for 'Jesus Jeans'. It shows a pair of denim jeans worn by a person, with the buttocks visible. The text 'Chi mi ama mi segua.' is printed in white across the buttocks. At the bottom, the 'Jesus jeans' logo is visible.</p>	<p>Similarly inspired by pious sentiments was Italy's brand 'Jesus Jeans' (1973), with the words 'Follow me' (Mark 1:17) or 'Chi mi ama mi segua' (If you love me, follow me) printed on juicy female bums.</p>

8. Spaniards: Everybody knows that the Spaniards hold an Olympic gold medal in creative swearing in which they abuse their mothers, their god and their saints ('todos los santos jodidos', an expression too awful to be ever translated into English).

9. Thwaites: long established Blackburn brewery
10. Ne buvez plus idiot, buvez engagé: Stop drinking like an idiot, drink with political engagement (20% of the price of Mecca Cola goes to Palestinian charities)



11. Double Diamond: a brand of beer

Advertising jingle:

A Double Diamond works wonders, works wonders,
A Double Diamond works wonders,
So get one today

12. hijab = Muslim head scarf
13. trouble and strife: domestic bliss

Cockney rhyming slang:

Trouble and strife:
Wife

Therefore
"He is looking for trouble." =
"He is looking for a wife."

Analogously:
Butcher's hook:
Look

Therefore:
She gave him a butcher's: =
She gave him a look.

&c

The following products to be further explored: La Ummah Cola es la que sigue el camino de la Samsam Cola (Samsam - fuente en la Mecca cercana a Caaba), la Mecca Cola, Arab Cola, Salam Cola y Kubla Cola (dirigida a Caaba - a donde van los musulmanes a la hora de los rezos).

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