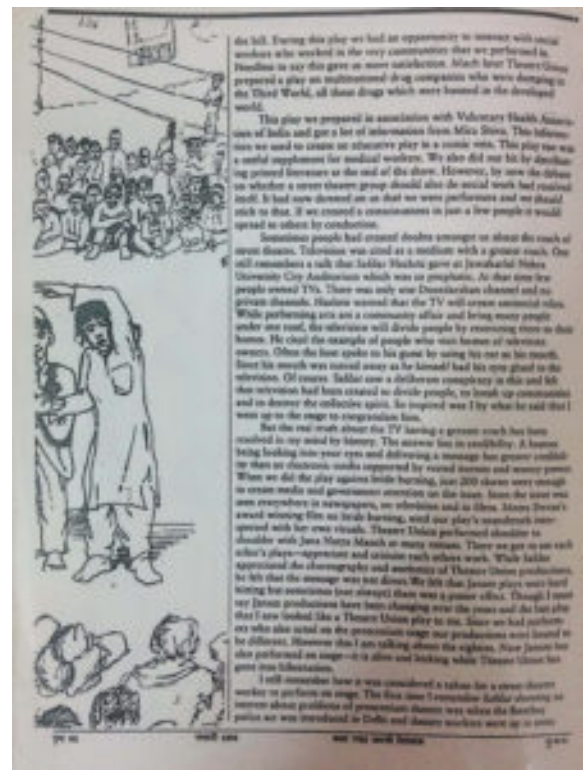


# Nostalgia Street by Manohar Khushalani



again is, that theater is a medium specially organized against it, "this was the first step towards government censorship of theater". I was particularly agitated about it since I felt that the police was disappointed in understanding the nature of theater. Little did I realize at that time, that in effect, given the total ineffectiveness of the official censors, giving a police license, meaning though it may be, was just another formula to be considered. Also, even theater, which had the maximum potential of a political vehicle was outside the purview of a performance license since these performances were not in its audience. Yet theater police was actively followed by M.K. Bhaia who had a line in both the house.

Street theater does not mean just mixing up any ideas, introducing a touch of enthusiasm, and converging on the last over-reaction and urban action. It may take months to write a well-thought script. Workshop Theatre took three months to produce Rishi Kumar's *Alma* and six months to Luther realize the play. An issue may arise from a film, it may be with housing, or a disabled husband, or a middle class downy problem. Is a theater for a general audience, workshop theaters are organized and a script is evolved keeping in mind the target audience. Few people know that Rishi Kumar's *Julius* has been performed in Pakistan as well. Street theater has attracted a few people because of the excitement involved in the whole exercise. Since they are often exposed, the police which never likes reformers in its own backyard, often tries to stop the performances. Sometimes even the audience gets pulled up because of the personal use in one relationship that the medium uses to establish. When the police tried to stop a performance of *Julius* by Prady in Commonwealth's central park, more than a decade ago, the audience intervened on behalf of the performers and battled with the police. Similarly, during the Emergency, when the police stopped a street performance in Circus Park, Calcutta, the common people responded by turning up in thousands to watch the same performance the next day. The censors, however, were all about some time. Only a few who are gradually converted stick to the movement. "If ever you do street theater, forget that you will be happy, forget that you will be famous, forget that you will be rich," says Rishi Kumar. However, today theater's subterranean movement has changed all that. People have become more conscious of a performer's right to perform. But street theater which appeared to be an old fashion is bound to rise up again and fight the monsters of social evils. Be it with glow like James's incomparable *Joan* or Theatre Group's similarly remarkable *Take Tell Joseph*. □

