

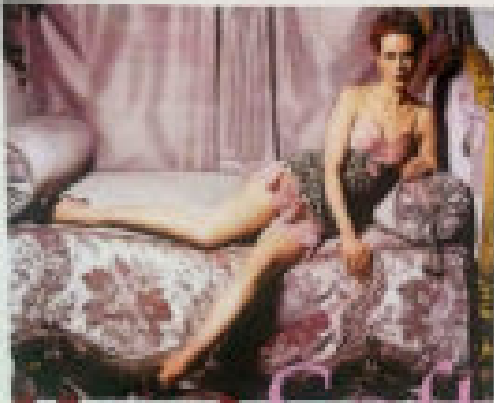
**Film Festival – to be or not
to be by Manohar Khushalani**



**Cultural Extravaganza for Kids
by Manohar Khushalani**



**Hard Soft by Manohar
Khushalani**



Hard Soft

Filmakers are trying to understand the real intentions of America in its "war on terror" in the post-September 11 world

Manohar Khushalani

There has been a perceptible shift lately in the subjects chosen by politically inclined filmmakers around the world. Cinema of the kind not created for pure escapism, often reflects the current political and social climate. In the 1970s and 1980s, many filmmakers focused on the lives of the beleaguered, the problems of newly independent post-colonial, non-aligned nations, the Cold War among other things. In the 1990s and 2000s filmmakers commented on nations like the Vietnam war and the Vietnam policy were being taught by Soviet and US allies. In the 1990s, focusing on Asia (South America, the Iran-Iraq war and the conflict in Yugoslavia) provided fodder for politically and socially aware cinema.

Now, in the post-September 11 world, filmmakers are trying to understand what the real goals of the US really are in its "war on terror." Does the US want unconditional surrender who is not on its side? Or is it genuinely seeking the world of those who really gave a thrust to humanism? And is Israel's war a just war?

The 10th International Film Festival of India showcased several films on these subjects.

Suzuki Makimasa's *Two 1/2 Apr.*, an Iranian film set in post-1979 Iran. Afghanistan, Ayatollah Khomeini, a young refugee boy, dream of becoming the President of Afghanistan. He witnesses a girl and a father escape, join up, and participate in an abandoned police where the only condition is an eye. The film explores the relevance of human

rights democracy in a stronger land where power is still a dream. The film also depicts the plight of refugees who have to fight for small territories such as a few square feet of unroofed space and a few drops of water. In an amazing but unsettling scene, Ayatollah and his father cover an old man in the desert who says he is going to Kandahar to meet Mullah Omar. "The late" has returned, "the Americans have already overthrown him."

The Olive Branch is Palestinian director Haniya Elwan's first feature film. Elwan has made several short movies about Palestinian women. *Olive Branch*, The Olive Branch is a romantic triangle involving two mothers and a woman. Elwan has just returned to his village from an Israeli prison and his brother Taher has arranged a bride's wedding for him. Now, Elwan falls in love with Haniya, his brother's fiancée. Haniya's political father pushes Elwan, the freedom fighter as a gesture for his daughter. Haniya Elwan was a prisoner of Palestine. The film is a verbal commentary on the lack of unity among the Palestinians.

The most talked about film in the festival was French filmmaker Laurent Tourneur's highly stylised *Dogville*, also been screened at Cannes, which is a section of cinema though it was initially seen as horror. The movie like is shot as a set representing a small town called Dogville. The central character is a suffering, non-verbal, blind, played with remarkable intensity by Nicole Kidman, who is the most brave gangster who have just a price on her head. The location is Dogville where a young woman gives her shelter. Some critics believe the film's commentary on the morality, responsibility and the fear of "the other" is actually an indictment of the U.S., which post-September 11 is ignoring the "Great Tradition" and other traditions in its "war on terror".

Delhi College Dropout Awaits US Car Patent by Manohar Khushalani

Delhi college dropout awaits US car patent

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give the American inventor two wheels leading a path to success.

Asheer, who lives in the Delhi suburb of Okhla, has been working on his invention for two years. The idea of the vehicle is to be a compact, self-propelled, three-wheeled car, 100 cm long and 50 cm wide, with a seat for one person. The car is powered by a 12V battery, which is the key to the success of the design. This design also meets the requirements of the government's safety standards. At the time of writing, the government is considering the patent application for the vehicle.

The inventor says that the vehicle is not only a mode of transport but also a means of generating electricity. The weight of the battery is 10 kg, which is a major hurdle in its use.

The concept of this patent is to use solar energy to power the vehicle. The inventor says that the vehicle is not only a mode of transport but also a means of generating electricity. The weight of the battery is 10 kg, which is a major hurdle in its use.

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Asheer is waiting for the patent on his three-wheeled car.

with the failure of it. There are no mechanical steering parts, no gears and no differentials.

There would be an added advantage of having a dynamic loading facility. When you get into the car, the car will move in the direction of the loading.

Asheer says he has a full-time job and is not looking for a full-time job. He is looking for a part-time job.

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The Turban Man of Vadodra by Manohar Khushalani



Where Parents were Treated as Children by Manohar Khushalani



Secular Indians – Proof in Bollywood Pudding by Manohar Khushalani





Mellow Drama by Manohar Khushalani

Reel Life meets Real Life

Producer of films & TV series, Raja Bhandari, now intends to produce a new state - Bundelkhand



Manohar Khushalani Mumbai

I actor, director and producer Raja Bhandari and the Bundelkhand Mukta Morcha, are to have their way, a new state will appear on the map of India-Bundelkhand-carved out from one just one but two states: Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Recently elected president of the Bundelkhand Mukta Morcha, Bhandari took over from Shambhu Lal Mishra. He was on his way to Bundelkhand when I met him, with the intention of backing only those candidates who were willing to lend support to his movement, irrespective of which parties they belonged to. At present, only the BJP and BSP have included the formation of separate states in their manifestos.

According to Bhandari, Mayawati had won the greatest number of seats from Bundelkhand previously because she had proceeded to support the formation of the proposed state. Unhappily, however, the two parties fell out in Uttar Pradesh and Mayawati was unable to deliver on any of her promises. Although Bhandari has little hope from the Congress, he recalls that Lakshmi Narain Malik, a former Congress MP, was one of the early presidents of the movement. Back from Madhya Pradesh, where the BJP had recorded a thumping win in the recent assembly polls, Bhandari claimed that at least two MLAs had won because of the support of the Bundelkhand Mukta Morcha. He admits that although the BJP is not looking to fight elections at present, it intends to do so once it can gather enough momentum.

HN: What is the present status of the movement for a separate state?

Bhandari: The movement has been going on for at least 20-40 years, but in the last five to seven years, when Shambhu Lal Mishra took on the leadership, the movement gathered steam.

HN: How did a person from the entertainment industry get involved in a people's movement?

Bhandari: Shambhu Lal Mishra asked me to visit Bundelkhand and see what they were doing. Admittedly, I went out of curiosity. But, on reaching the area, I realised that there was a need to create awareness among the people. Eighty per cent of the population in the region was illiterate. Also, there were no hospitals at the government level to take up their cause.

HN: Now that you have been elected president of the Morcha, are you considering a career in politics?

Bhandari: Not at all. I was very reluctant to accept the post. I told them that my commitment was for the cause, not for any organisation. I have been going there for about a week every month over the last seven or eight years. But they felt that my involvement would be even greater if I took on some responsibility. That movie came to me. Once I return to Mumbai, I get involved in my production

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Taking on an official responsibility means giving more thought to Bundelkhand.

HN: What made you think you could make a difference?

Bhandari: My connections with the media were a big help. Some came out of curiosity, but at the end of the day they heard me out, at least. I was also able to garner support from the film industry, including Jay and Ashwini Kulkarni from this region. I have been urging them to do something for Bundelkhand. I just happen to work in Mumbai. Maharashtra is not my land, it's my home. If I can do something for my region, there's nothing like it.

HN: What do you tell the people when you meet them?

Bhandari: That the Congress, Samajwadi Party, BJP and BSP are doing all the thinking for them. They have stopped thinking for themselves. If there, you may have other things to offer but at least don't surrender your minds. It is worse than slavery. Fifty per cent of Bundelkhand's population lives below the poverty line. According to an India Today survey in 2002, every third person in Bundelkhand either died of starvation or committed suicide. Isn't that shocking?

HN: Do you really think a separate state will solve the region's problems?


Bhandari: No. Just a separate state won't solve our problems. It is a question of identity and self-respect. We have street vendors but do not get uprisings from them. All the electricity goes to Lucknow, Kanpur and Allahabad. We have power cuts for 8-10 hours every day. Yet another survey has revealed that the Bundelkhand region is more backward than other backward states like Assam. The maximum number of prime ministers and senior politicians have come from this region. Even Atal Bihari Vajpayee comes from here. But nobody is willing to take any initiative for the benefit of them.

HN: Bundelkhand has a majority of Dalits, which is why Mayawati won so comfortably from this region. You are a Thakur, how did you become a mass leader of Dalits?

Bhandari: The meaning of Thakur has changed in this region. Now Thakurs are those who carry guns. I have always been against this kind of culture and my people know it. That's why I went to Mumbai. I am a self-made man. I cannot without my bodyguards inside Bundelkhand.

HN: Will you give up your film and TV career if Bundelkhand becomes a separate state?

Bhandari: The two are independent of each other. At the same time, my work in films has remained connected with my soul. My first big, 10-episode TV serial for Zee, *Mulla Chand Chakire*, was made totally in this belt - Jhansi, Lathpura, Ujhna. Even the location that I have made, Pruthi and Kame Bhanuwar Ahar, Lakhan Ki, were shot here and were based on local stories. I shot my films here because nobody else was shooting in this belt. I wanted my people to see how films are made. I wanted to give them some employment. Even if it was just a film festival, it would be a way of returning the love that I have received from them.



Terrorism Revisited by Manohar Khushalani

