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STAR - PORTRAIT

Intimate Life Stories Of Famous Film Stars

by

HARISH S. BOOCH

and

KARING DOYLE

Fine Arts
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1962

New Revised Edition

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First Published 1956
New Revised Edition 1962

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KARING DOYLE

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Foreword

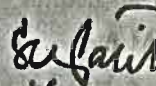
A "Star-Portrait" hardly needs any introduction. The star is popular and the portrait is in the mind's eye of the public.

I have gone through the life-sketches of the film stars prepared by Harish S. Booch and Karing Doyle and have found them very interesting. I am glad that these pen-portraits have been prepared authentically.

Film stars have come to occupy an important place in the artistic and social fabric of our country. Society has been unwilling to accord them the same status as a professional lawyer or doctor, probably because artistic talents have not received the same recognition from the State and the public in the past as the other learned professions. The day cannot be far off when those who use their artistic talents for the entertainment of the people will receive full recognition and credit, besides popularity.

To aspirants to stardom, these portraits should serve as an eye-opener that there is no royal road to the starry skies. Sweat, toil and tears is the medium of success to all and film stars are no exception to the rule. To the Society high-brows who may not be inclined to think high of the stars in the film firmament, this publication should serve as a revealing biographical document which is inspiring and fascinating. To the average cine-goer, this publication should meet a long-felt need.

I congratulate Harish S. Booch and Karing Doyle for the useful work they have taken up. I am confident that it will prove to be of great interest to the public and the film industry.



(S. K. PATIL)

PRESIDENT,

INDIAN MOTION PICTURE PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION.

(Foreword to the first edition)



S. K. Patil

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To facilitate reference, the pen-portraits of film stars have been placed in the alphabetical order of their names.

PHOTOS : Rajdatt Arts, Studio Shangri-la, R. G. Shah, India Photos,
B. J. Panchal, Poonam Press Photos, Shiraz (Studio Highlight).

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PREFACE TO NEW REVISED EDITION

This new revised edition of "Star-Portrait" is a tribute to its unique popularity both in India and abroad.

Indeed, it has proved a much sought-after book at International Film Festivals, cine gatherings and get-togethers of film folks. It has been avidly read by people in far distant places, ranging from Karlovy Vary in Czechoslovakia to San Francisco in the United States; from Moscow in the U.S.S.R. to London in the U.K.; and from Nairobi in B. E. Africa to Bangkok in Thailand. A prominent newspaper in America took a special note of it. A delegate to a World Film Festival abroad revealed to me that it was in great demand among the foreign film critics gathered there. The stars themselves have lavished unstinted praise on it as the most authentic and informative among their biographies.

The reading public has given it a hearty welcome. This could be judged from the fact that the book was out of print within a year's time. Several editions in the Indian languages, including Hindi, have also been brought out.

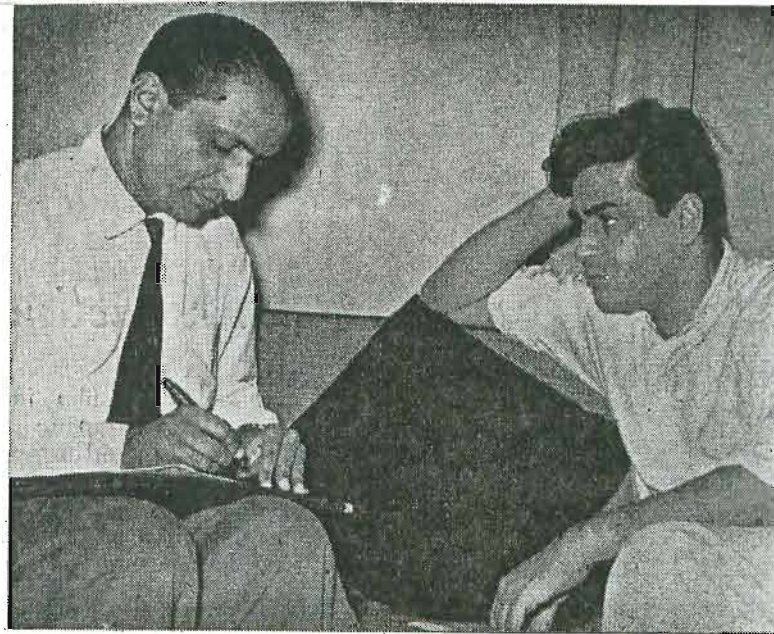
All this is very heartening and inspiring, for what greater reward could an author expect than a realisation that the labours taken in research and collection of rare facts in a publication of this nature have been well appreciated? I am grateful both to the Press and the reading public for receiving this modest volume with such unanimous acclaim.

In the present revised edition, several new stars have been added, and the information about those, who were there in the first volume, has been made up-to-date. I trust "Star-Portrait" would be found equally appealing in the revised form.

My thanks are due to all those stars who have helped me to make this book a success by giving me exclusive and interesting facts about their career.

Bombay
1962

HARISH S. BOOCH



Several new stars have been added to this new revised edition of "Star Portrait". Here is Rajendra Kumar, the top-most among new stars, being interviewed by author Harish S. Booch for the present volume.

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Introduction

The rise and growth of the Indian film industry during the last four decades has been a glorious romance, a romance that is perhaps more exciting than all the synthetic thrills of the celluloid dramas put together. It has been a stirring saga of pioneering endeavours that triumphed against overwhelming odds. And even today, thanks to the Herculean endeavours of their present-day successors, this torch of unflinching human endeavour lit up by pioneers of old keeps burning with ever-increasing radiance.

Among those valiant campaigners of film-front, who have sweated and toiled ceaselessly to give our millions their favourite entertainment, are the stars of the silver screen and the story of their rise in the film firmament is no less thrilling.

Indeed, during recent years, our stars have achieved phenomenal popularity and it is no exaggeration to say that their names have almost become household words. Fortunately, today they no longer remain the mythical gods and goddesses of glamour they used to be considered once, nor are they thought to be some mysterious beings huddled far away from public gaze behind the "celluloid curtain"! In fact, during last five years, our stars have come closer and closer to our people and they have not hesitated to do their bit whenever a good cause needed their help and support. Their closer contact with the people has helped a lot towards removing several misgivings from the public mind and people, at large, have realised that above everything else our stars are human—intensely human.



Nalini Jaywant explains something interesting during a chat with co-author Karing Doyle.

No wonder then that an unprecedented curiosity has been witnessed among all sections of the people to know more about the lives of their celluloid idols, about their disappointments and successes, their joys and sorrows, and about their achievements in the domain of film-acting.

While there have been many attempts to record the contribution made by our stars towards the enrichment of the histrionic art on screen through the medium of film sections of daily newspapers and various film magazines, it is seldom that we find the stories of our stars' heroic struggles at the altar of film art presented to our people in a single volume. Publications of this nature are very rare. "Star-Portrait" is, therefore, designed to ful-



fill this long-felt need. It is a happy co-incidence that it is being published on the eve of the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the "talkies" in India.

We are not unaware that the list of the leading stars in our country is not at all exhausted with those introduced in this volume. It was our ambition to include as many prominent stars as possible here, but we had to adjust our desires to the practical problems of this publication, the number of pages, the cost of production and a price within easy reach of the reading public. That meant preening the number to the present lot. However, we hope to cover as many of the remaining stars as possible in the second volume.

Meantime, we express our sincere thanks to all the stars who have given us their unstinted co-operation in the preparation of this book by supplying us exclusive and interesting facts about their career through special interviews which, in many cases, had to be continued for more than one sitting.

We shall be failing in our duty if we do not record here our sense of gratitude to Shri S. K. Patil, M.P., President, B.P.C.C. who has rendered valuable services to the Indian film industry as the Chairman of the Film Enquiry Committee appointed by the Government of India and who still continues to serve this industry as President of the Indian Motion Picture Producers' Association. He has been kind enough to spare time from his multifarious activities to go through the manuscript and write the foreword for "Star-Portrait".

Our thanks are also due to Shri I. K. Menon, Secretary, I.M.P.P.A., Shri M. A. Mughni and Shri Ajit B. Merchant for the active interest they have taken in this publication and to Shri Rajdatt for supplying some of the exclusive photographs appearing in this volume.

Bombay,
1956.

HARISH S. BOOCH
KARING DOYLE

(Introduction to the first edition)



Author Harish S. Booch jots down an interesting point during an interview with Geeta Bali. Exclusive details about film stars' career were obtained for "Star-Portrait" through special interviews which, in many cases, had to be continued for more than one sitting.

PRESS COMMENTS ON "STAR - PORTRAIT "

"The authors have presented the life sketches of the artistes in an interesting and lucid style. . . . The publication should appeal to film fans, especially film aspirants, as Mr. S. K. Patil has expressed in the foreword."

— SCREEN

"A well documented and neatly got up volume. . . . readable anecdotes couched in a racy style make 'Star-Portrait' an illuminating publication. . . . provides interesting life sketches without indulging in saucy details about stars' private lives and romantic squabbles. . . . informative and welcome book."

— BHARAT JYOTI

"The authors have made a successful effort to satisfy a common curiosity the book should prove to be of interest to the Industry and the cine-goer."

— JOURNAL OF THE FILM INDUSTRY

"The book, well got up, contains intimate and interesting life sketches of stars. . . . it is adequately illustrated."

— SPORT & PASTIME (Madras)

"'Star-Portrait' is a commendable effort at providing something the readers could treasure with pride."

— SUNDAY CHRONICLE

"These biographical sketches explore the personal drama behind each case with understanding, sympathy and rare frankness."

— EVE'S WEEKLY

"A unique book. . . . such publications help to raise the standard of film journalism."

— JANMABHOOMI-PRAVASI

"By presenting constructive facts about stars, this book provides very important data about stars. . . . A superb volume for which the authors deserve congratulations."

— BOMBAY SAMACHAR



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ME SAMACHAR

ASHOK KUMAR

ASHOK KUMAR is undoubtedly the ever-young, ever-successful hero of the Indian screen. Indeed, he appears to grow younger and younger with every new film. Fifty years young, he has reigned supreme over the nation's screen as the unfailing idol of the celluloid era for the past two decades. He has acted the hero against every important actress of the Indian screen beginning with the charming Devika Rani of the olden days to Meena Kumari of today.

He has been a perennial source of inspiration both to the rising youngsters and to the fading veterans of the screen. He has been a tower of strength to the star system whenever that institution was threatened with extinction as a result of failures of much fancied stars in much fancied films. While countless producers, directors, stars and heroines with whom he was associated sometime or the other have faded into obscurity, he has continued to shine with a blaze of glory in the film firmament.

BORN on October 13, 1911 at Bhagalpur, Bihar, Ashok Kumar Ganguly hails from a cultured Bengali family which had migrated from Nadia District in Bengal to Khandwa some hundred years ago. He was named Kumudlal. His father Kunjlal Ganguly is a renowned lawyer of Khandwa district in Madhya Pradesh. Though he is 80 today, this veteran of the Nagpur Bar has lost none of his legal brilliance and takes active interest in rendering free legal aid to the poor. He has the unique distinction of being a co-student of India's President Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the Presidency College, Calcutta, where they shared the same room in the hostel. And this old veteran treasures many an intimate story of the young days of the President.

Ashok Kumar is the eldest in the family of three brothers and one sister. As a child, he was rather shy and reserved. But he surprised everyone with his sharp intelligence. He had a brilliant educational career, and on his graduation with B.Sc. at Robertson College, Jubbulpore, Nagpur University, he was sent to the Presidency College, Calcutta, to study law. It was only natural that father Kunjlal wanted his eldest son to follow in daddy's footsteps, "so that grandpa's law books may be used," as Ashok Kumar jocularly puts it. Besides, the family astrologer had predicted that Ashok would become a judge. But Ganguly Junior had little attraction for law.

In his young days, he did not have the faintest idea of taking up a film career and never dreamt of achieving the stupendous fame that he has won today. When in school and later on in College, he had acquired a flair for photography. His experience as a science student developed in him a fasci-

nation for technical and laboratory work and his ambition was to become a technician. He used to visit the New Theatres studio quite often and took interest in the laboratory work. And one fine morning, in October 1934, he left the law College and came away to Bombay to meet Mr. Himansu Rai, the celebrated film pioneer, and procure a letter of recommendation from him to proceed to Germany to learn film technique. Himansu Rai had then just started the Bombay Talkies on the trail of the international renown that he won through his pioneering ventures *Light of Asia* and *Karma*. His studios at Malad had a batch of brilliant German technicians trained at the UFA studios and he advised Ashok Kumar to begin his career at the Malad studios before he went to Germany. Ashok's brother-in-law Shashadhar Mukerjee, that wizard of box office success, was already there at Bombay Talkies and he persuaded Ashok to accept Himansu Rai's advice. Thus Ashok began learning film photography under Josef Wirsching, the talented German cameraman. Then he was switched on to the laboratory where he acquired a practical knowledge of processing, developing, printing and editing films.

He tremendously enjoyed his work in the laboratory. He felt that he was on the right road of his career. Then something unexpected happened. Contented and happy, he used to hum some popular tunes in the laboratory. His soft musical voice attracted the attention of Himansu Rai and Kumudlal was told that he should play the male lead opposite Devika Rani in *Jeevan Naiya*. Of course, he had played a minor role in *Jawani ki Hawa*, the first picture of Bombay Talkies. But he did it for the mere fancy of it. Now faced with the serious question of becoming a regular actor, he was decidedly against it. He got his hair trimmed mercilessly in the close-crop pattern thinking that that would save him from becoming a film actor. Next day, when Himansu Rai saw it, he was taken aback. But he told Kumudlal that the hair would grow again and that he would wait for it. And after two months, Kumudlal faced the camera as Ashok Kumar along with Devika Rani. The scene depicted Devika Rani, the heroine, screaming for help to save herself from the clutches of the villain and Ashok was to jump on them through the window and rescue her. Lights were on, the cameras started cranking and came Ashok's turn to jump into the room. He did it with such a force that the villain, heroine and himself fell down. In the process, the villain's leg was broken and this mishap caused another four months' delay for Himansu Rai to proceed further with his shooting. As for Ashok, he felt that he should give up acting for ever.

IN *Jeevan Naiya*, he proved to be no match for the accomplished Devika Rani. Nevertheless, Himansu Rai flung a surprise by casting him again as the hero in *Achhut Kanya* which proved a great hit in the annals of Indian films. While Devika Rani won the hearts of millions as the Harijan girl, Kasturi, Ashok succeeded in making the impression that he had at last come to stay in the films. The film ran for 20 successive weeks in Bombay's newly constructed Roxy and for 59 weeks at Calcutta, creating unprecedented box office records and name for the stars. In this film, he sang the memorable



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love-duet "*Banki chidiya banke bun bun bolu*" with Devika Rani. Those were the days when stars sang their songs. And his other songs "*Kise karta hain murakh pyar pyar*" and "*Peer peer kya karta hain*" proved equally popular.

With this newly acquired recognition and fame, his parents and relatives, who in the beginning vehemently opposed his joining the films, reconciled themselves. In fact, they found that there were enough people to praise them for Ashok's success. They saw the picture *Achhut Kanya* at a nearby theatre and father Kunjlal liked his son's performance very well.

Achhut Kanya was followed by a series of polished entertainers starring the Devika Rani-Ashok Kumar pair. *Janma Bhoomi*, *Izzat*, *Savitri*, *Nirmala* and *Vachan* gave him the experience to acquire a new poise and his own distinctiveness as an actor. While acting in *Vachan* he was injured on the forehead during a sword fight—a faint mark of which is still there even today.

IMMEDIATELY after the completion of his work in *Vachan* in 1938, he went to Khandwa in response to a telegram from his father. At home he was told that it was time for him to get married and lead a settled life. He agreed to it and left the choice of the bride to his parents. Miss Shobha Bannerjee, daughter of Capt. Bannerjee I.M.S. of Calcutta, was chosen as the bride. And after marriage, they came away to Bombay. At the time, he was drawing a salary of Rs. 250 a month as against his original salary of Rs. 150. Here is something that would make our present-day stars gasp! Little did Ashok imagine then that he would be drawing six digit figures for a single role in the matter of another five or six years or so.

Marriage did not change the course of his career. He continued to work with Bombay Talkies. In the meantime, he had developed a sneaking desire to co-star with Leela Chitnis. And one day, just to tease him, Devika Rani presented him a specially taken photo of Leela Chitnis. In the short space of a year, by a peculiarly cinematic coincidence, he was cast opposite Leela Chitnis in *Kangan*. When the picture was half-way through, B.T. was overtaken by an irreparable tragedy in the death of its founder Himansu Rai. However, under the able guidance of Devika Rani and the team of workers trained by Himansu Rai, the B.T.-ship continued its journey to further glory. *Kangan* was completed and released in 1939. It ran for full six months in Bombay. Followed another jubilee hit, *Bandhan*, starring the same Ashok-Leela pair. Its theme song "*Chal chal re naujawan*" took fan-world by storm. Then came *Naya Sansar*, a story with a newspaper background, written by K. A. Abbas. Here Ashok had a new heroine, Renuka Devi, who had given a commendable performance in B.T.'s earlier hit *Bhabi*.

NAYA SANSAR opened a new chapter in his career. For the first time, he portrayed a character different from the modest sweet-mannered young suitor. He became a dashing debonair youth. After *Naya Sansar* came *Jhoola* which won new laurels for the Ashok-Leela pair. Then came another smash



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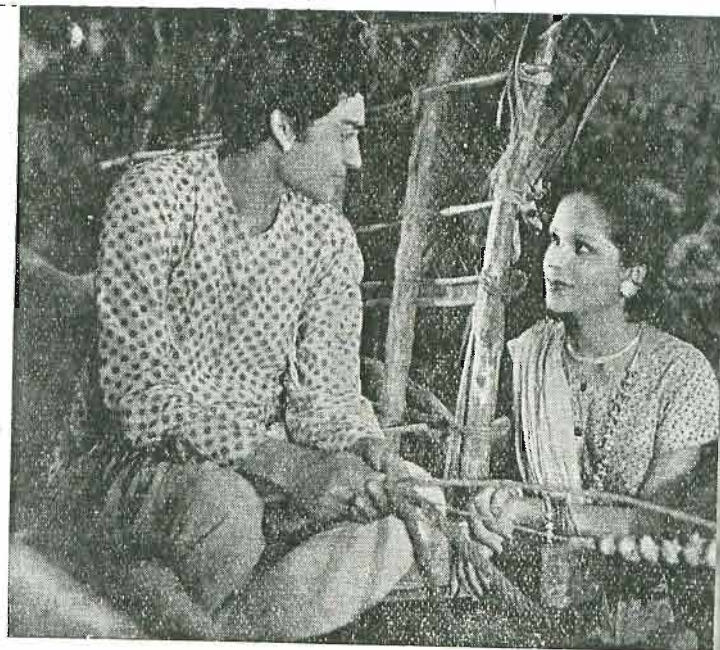
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hit, *Kismet* in which he portrayed the life of a lovable pick-pocket with Mumtaz Shanti playing the heroine. *Kismet* proved to be a picture with real *Kismet* as a money-spinner for B.T. It ran continuously for three years and eight months at Roxy, Calcutta, which is the longest record run for any picture produced anywhere in the world. And it was again *Kismet* which attracted Nargis, when she was a school girl, to sneak away to the Malad Studios to see Ashok and get his autograph. Little did they imagine then that they would be co-starring in a film within a few years!



Ashok Kumar and Devika Rani in the first major hit of Bombay Talkies "Achhut Kanya". The picture created box-office history by proving a phenomenal success.

After the formation of Filmistan Ltd. in January 1943, Ashok appeared in their very first picture entitled *Chal Chal Re Naujawan*, following the famous theme song of *Bandhan*. In this film, for the first time, he played a punch-packed rollicking role. He also realised another long standing desire—to star against Indian screen's beauty-queen Naseem who had impressed him tremendously by her captivating performance as Nurjehan in *Pukar*. In the wake of the success of CCRNJ he appeared in a chain of films for Filmistan: *Shikari*, *Sajjan*, *Eight Days*, etc.

He also began to free lance and appeared in Janak's *Angoothi*, Mehboob's *Humayun* and *Najma*, Debaki Bose's *Chandrasekhar* and many other films.

IN the meantime, Bombay Talkies, the institution where he began his career, was in doldrums. He decided to put it on its legs along with his friend Savak Vacha, the noted sound engineer. He totally gave up acting for some time and concentrated solely on B.T. Two successful films, *Majboor* and *Ziddi*, stabilised the B.T. studio.

Now Filmistan persuaded him to act in their *Samadhi*, and he won universal acclaim for his performance in it. Not only that, the picture gave Nalini Jaywant the long-awaited break after a lapse of many years. This marked the beginning of Ashok-Nalini pairing in the films and they appeared in an impressive array of films.

He won new recognition in histrionics by breathing life into the role of the frustrated lover in Nitin Bose's *Mashal*, produced under the BT banner. This was followed by other acting triumphs in Gyan Mukherjee's *Sangram*, a breezy, action-packed role, and in *Mahal* where he played a fascinatingly eerie character. Roles came to him aplenty. And, at one time, he had as

many as twenty-two contracts in his pocket. Some of the notable films of this period are Kuldip's *Adhi Raat*, M & T's *Nishana*, Ahluwalia's *Nau-Bahar*, Nitin Bose's *Deedar*, S. K. Ojha's *Naaz*, Talwar's *Khilari*, Bali Sister's *Raag Rang*, Gyan Mukherjee's *Shamsheer*, Chopra's *Afsana* and *Shole*. In *Afsana*, he played a double role. In *Deedar* it was a rare sight to watch the histrionic battle between him and Dilip Kumar. In *Bewafa*, he and Raj Kapoor were pitted against each other. In *Betaab*, he crossed histrionic swords with another great veteran, Motilal.

His other notable pictures include *Bandish*, *Bhai Bhai*, *Ek Hi Rasta*, *Sardar*, *Ragini*, *Karigar* and *Sitaron se Aage*. Among his recent outstanding films are *Savera*, *Baap Bete*, *Chalti ka Nam Gadi*, *Anchal*, *Masoom*, *Kala Admi* and *Kanoon*. In *Be Juban*, he co-stars with his son Aroop. In *Chalti ka Nam Gadi*, he shared acting honours with his brothers; Anup and Kishore.

Ashok had been associated with Bombay Talkies right from its inception and served it with exemplary devotion. Beginning with photography and then in the laboratory, he played a small role in B.T.'s first picture *Jawani ki Hawa* and has since then acted in almost all the important pictures that have come out of B.T. Significantly enough, he gave an excellent performance in *Baad-ban*, produced on co-operative basis by the BT workers before the Malad studio closed down in 1954. It is also significant that every time B.T. faced crisis in its long career, he did his best to put it on its feet by providing financial aid and by producing successful films.

IN 1953 he started his own concern, Ashok Kumar Productions, and his first picture *Parineeta*, directed by Bimal Roy, was hailed as a masterpiece. In addition to giving AKP a flying start, it skyrocketed Meena Kumari as a front-rank star. In his second picture *Samaj*, he gave a brilliant performance as the tough but sympathetic truck-driver Dada.

In his subsequent independent productions, *Ragini* and *Kalpna*, also he gave likeable portrayals.

Thus whether it is the love-lorn youth or the gay intriguing pick-pocket as in *Kismet*; whether it is a fantastically dramatic character as in *Mahal* or the tough gangster as in *Samaj*, whether it is breezy comedy or a psychologically provocative theme, he has acquitted himself with distinction. And rightly, he has been applauded as India's top-most versatile hero and is unanimously accepted as one of the most dependable and finest actors of the Indian screen. Not only that, with his Midas touch, he lifts up co-artists acting with him to new heights of fame by imparting them all the confidence and encouragement. That is evident from the innumerable instances of artistes who have acquired top honours in films from Leela Chitnis to Nalini Jaywant and Meena Kumari.

There are hundreds of instances and ways in which he has given his colleagues the necessary confidence. To cite one, a new artiste who was playing the heroine against him kept on forgetting the dialogues due to nervousness arising from the fact that she was acting against one of India's top-most stars.

SHOK



Ashok
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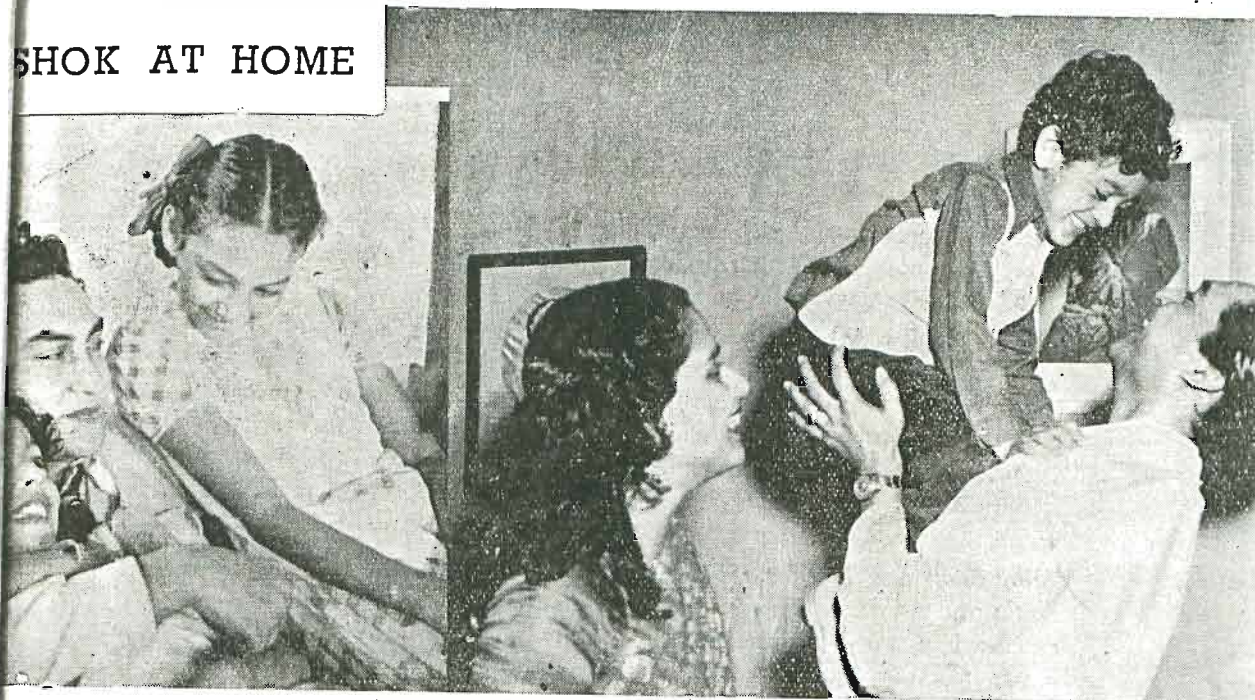
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ASHOK AT HOME



Ashok is a very cheerful person at home. Left : In this earlier picture, he shares a joke with his talented daughters Bharati and Roopa. Right: He lifts his mischievous son Aroop while his wife Shobha watches the jolly father-and-son duel with a smile of approval.

Realising the difficulty, he pretended that he too forgot the dialogues. "So you too forget dialogues?", she asked him with immense relief. "Oh yes", he replied with all the seriousness, and that instilled the necessary confidence into the newcomer. When sometime or other, he does forget the dialogue, he speaks his own words and these prove quite appropriate in keeping with the development of the situation. It is indeed a rare treat to watch him in action before the camera. The ease with which he renders many difficult situations is a tribute to his mastery over histrionics.

ONCE we discussed Ashok's various distinctive features as an artiste with the late Gyan Mukherjee. As an intimate friend of Ashok and as the director of *Jhoola*, *Kismet*, *Sangram*, and *Shamsheer*, Gyan knew Ashok sufficiently well. According to him the most striking feature about Ashok was the fact that as an actor he has no mannerisms. "Most of the artistes have their peculiar mannerisms and it is a great distinction that Ashok has none," Gyan said. "His acting is absolutely modern . . . With him on the sets, it is easy and quick to shoot even extremely difficult scenes . . . He has more camera sense, more 'taking sense,' more acting sense and more story sense than many a director. Hence, he is one of our best directors."

Camera-wizard Josef Wirsching, under whom Ashok learnt his first lessons in cinematography, told us that as a cameraman he considered Ashok the best man on the sets. "He is very nice to work with, you know . . . The question of retakes seldom arises . . . Mr. Ganguly on the sets means better team spirit is created and better team work is seen everywhere. Even in the little things that he does, there is a personal touch . . . It is my ambition to shoot a picture directed by him," said Wirsching.

Thus Ashok, who was pushed into stardom much against his will, by his

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consistent success and rich experience in the various fields of movie-making stretched across two eventful decades, has become a glorious movie-institution that has thrived with the passage of time.

Personally, Ashok does not like historical roles and prefers light breezy ones. As for action-roles, "You see, I am a born gangster. So such roles come to me easily," he said with a smile. When asked how he has consistently given polished performances, he explained: "The next picture is always better because I gain experience by the previous ones."

Recalling some of his interesting experiences with his fans, he said that Nargis who came to B.T. for his autograph was later his heroine in *Humayun*, *Adhi Raat*, and *Deedar*. Bina Rai, another ardent fan, was his heroine in *Shole* and *Sardar*. Dilip Kumar was another of his admirers and after he became a film star, both used to engage themselves in boxing.

Ashok loves boxing and cricket. He was the captain of the Nagpur University cricket team. Now, of course, he has no time to pursue cricket. But he does some boxing every morning to keep himself trim. He is very fond of painting and has a taste for landscapes.

He is a quiet, retiring type. Yet, he is a brilliant conversationalist, an amiable host and makes pleasant company. He is never moody. According to him, artistes can never complain of mood. He has a wonderful sense of humour. His laughter is free and infectious. All these qualities have won him admirers among his close associates and fellow workers on the sets.

At home, he is an obedient son, an affectionate father, a helpful and understanding brother and a loving and devoted husband. The Ashok-Shobha pair has proved to be an ideal married couple and is among the rarities of our filmdom. His eldest daughter Bharati is a brilliant student of music and has passed her music examination with great distinction from the London School of Music. Recently, she married a brilliant, young doctor of Bombay, Dr. Virendra M. Patel. Ashok boxes, wrestles and does all types of gymnastics with his children, particularly Aroop who appears to be not a mere chip of the old block but the block itself. Nonetheless, as a price of his stardom, he has been compelled to miss his children because of continuous day and night shootings. His younger brothers, Anup and Kishore, who when young used to mimic Ashok's acting to amuse family audiences at Khandwa, have distinguished themselves though no one suspected then that they would follow in the footsteps of their illustrious brother.

Ashok takes interest in astrology and palm-reading in so far as it engages his friends. As for himself, he is no believer in it. "Lots of predictions have been made about me. Nothing has come true . . . Some predicted that I would become a judge. Now look, where I have landed! Nobody predicted my foreign tour—perhaps, because it was arranged all of a sudden!", he explains.

He has a fascination for new cars and likes driving immensely. A discri-

(Continued on page 28)



BALRAJ SAHNI

BALRAJ SAHNI is perhaps the only film star in India whose life and career have been directly influenced by such national celebrities as Mahatma Gandhi and Gurudev Tagore. He enjoys the unique distinction of having worked at Shantiniketan and Sevagram for years together. Later in his life, the writings of Marx and Lenin, which he studied at length, have also left an indelible mark on his outlook. After seeing his performance in *Do Bigha Zamin*, *Aulad* and *Garam Coat*, people hailed him as the most proletarian among all our artistes.

Proletarian or whatever name one may give to his performance, the capacity to depict characters naturally and realistically has come to Balraj through his varied experience. He has been, in turn, a businessman, journalist, short-story writer, teacher, radio-announcer, chronicler to the Indian National Congress Sessions, amateur theatre enthusiast and finally, a film actor. "This variegated experience in different spheres of life has helped me tremendously in my histrionic career," he revealed to us. That is perhaps why he could play with ease and rare understanding such diverse human characters on screen as the struggling peasant Shambhu of *Do Bigha Zamin*, the blue-blooded Englishman of *Rahi* and the faithful domestic servant of *Aulad*. When young, Balraj did not have the slightest notion that he would ever become a film star. Born at Rawalpindi on May 1, 1913, he was educated in the best traditions of an orthodox Hindu family, as his father, Mr. Harbans Lal Sahni, was a staunch Arya Samajist. Seeing dramas and movies was not only discouraged but frowned upon.

LIKE all children, Balraj was interested in those juvenile circus acrobatics performed within the walls of one's own house. "They were my first lessons in acting," he proudly says. Once together with his brother, he 'made' a little victoria and got an old stuffed deer to pull it. And when a talented archer visited their town, the brothers were fascinated by his feats and tried their hand at archery also. These playful antics provided lot of fun and laughter for the family. But all the same, Balraj was an extremely shy child. When he was once called up to chant *mantras* or recite a little hymn on the stage at school, he trembled with stage-fright.

Only on one occasion in his early student days did he happen to see a drama. It was something about the Jalianwala Bagh massacre. Young Balraj was fascinated by the spectacle and he felt transported into a world of magic. He vividly remembers the first thrill that the stage gave him.

But it was at the D.A.V. College at Rawalpindi that he began to get his training for a modern way of life. Professor Jaswant Rai, (he was later the Principal of Gandhi Memorial College, Ambala) took personal interest in him. He encouraged Balraj to shed his narrow conservative outlook.

After passing his intermediate at Rawalpindi, Balraj joined the Government College at Lahore. There he received remarkable guidance from stage-lovers like G. D. Sondhi and A. S. Bokhari. The college boasted of a first-rate amateur theatre group where well-known plays of foreign authors were performed in Hindustani translation. Those were the days when girls did not come forward to act on stage and men played "beauty queens". Being quite handsome, the honour of playing some female roles in these dramas fell on Balraj. Thus, strange as it may seem, the popular proletarian hero of the Indian screen began his histrionic career as a stage-heroine!

Even at this period he had no real ambition for an acting career. Nonetheless, he carefully studied the technique of acting modern plays. He realised the basic difference between the traditional artificiality of the professional stage and the true-to-life realistic character of the amateur theatre.

After passing his M.A. with literature, Balraj was advised to join the flourishing family business. From 1935 to 1937, he travelled to every nook and corner of Kashmir and North West Frontier. But his interest was more in literature and other fine arts. In the meantime, he married Damayanti, the daughter of his college professor Jaswant Rai, who as we have mentioned, was the first to take him out of his conservative shell. Talented Damayanti was among the first few girls who came forward to play feminine roles on the Government College stage in Lahore. Naturally, a businessman's life could not have any attraction for such a couple.

"But the experience I gained here by coming in contact with an amazing variety of human types has helped me a great deal in my work as an actor", Balraj declares.

DURING his tours, whenever he came to Delhi, he stayed with his cousin, the famous journalist and columnist, J. N. Sahni. The association with J. N. influenced him considerably and Balraj started a weekly, *Monday Morning*, with his colleagues B. P. L. Bedi and Jag Parvesh with a small capital. The journal, however, did not become a commercial success and had to be closed down within six months.

Undeterred by the failure in his initial attempt in the journalistic field, he continued to write and gradually won recognition as a good short story writer in Hindi.

But short story writing and journalism alone could not answer economic needs. So he went away with his wife to Calcutta in search of new avenues of life. His father was upset at the news and knowing his son's financial position too well sent him a hundred rupees by T.M.O. and wired him to return immediately to Rawalpindi, failing which he himself would run down to



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BALRAJ SAHNI

Calcutta. Balraj was completely confused at the receipt of the telegram and did not know what to do. He had a brain-wave. He wrote out in the reply telegram that he had secured a job at Tagore's Shantiniketan and would return home during the Pooja holidays.

It was easy to wire that he had landed a job at Shantiniketan, but to secure one was a problem. Anyway, the couple decided to go to Shantiniketan and try. While they were pleading their case with Krishna Kripalani, who was in charge of the institution, Gurudev Tagore happened to come there to see his grand-daughter, who was married to Kripalani. Balraj then turned to Gurudev and requested that he and his wife should be allowed to stay there to justify their telegram home and that they would maintain themselves on the hundred rupees they had. Gurudev was moved at his story. He smiled and said: "Well, young man, you are richer than me. At least, you have got hundred rupees with you. I haven't got even that amount. But you need not spend that money for staying here. You will be given a job."

These words settled the problem for Balraj. From 1937 to 1939, he worked at Shantiniketan as a teacher of Hindi and English. Here also he had a chance to take active interest in play-production. In the meantime, Damayanti, who had completed her intermediate at Rawalpindi, did her B.A. there. During his stay in Shantiniketan, Balraj came in contact with celebrities like Nandlal Bose, Kshitimohan Sen, Gurudial Mullick and others.

TOWARDS the end of 1939, Shrimati Ashadevi Aryanayakam, a crusader for Gandhiji's scheme of Basic Education, happened to visit Shantiniketan. She picked up Balraj as one of the translators for the Basic Education Scheme, and Balraj and Damayanti shifted to Wardha. Here he was assigned the task of collecting the reports in English and Hindi for the Ramgarh Session of the Indian National Congress, which he also attended.

He had spent nearly nine months at Wardha when one day he was informed to his utter surprise that a foreign visitor, who had come to Gandhiji, wanted to meet him. He rushed to Gandhiji and found him conversing with Lionel Fielden, who was then the Controller of Broadcasting in India. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was also there. Fielden had tremendous respect for Gandhiji. Now that he was going to London to join the BBC, he wanted a Hindi announcer for BBC and was discussing whether Balraj could take up the job. Balraj had already some experience in India in broadcasting. Pointing towards Gandhiji, he said: "Here is my employer. You may ask him". Rather unwillingly, Gandhiji gave his consent. Soon Balraj and Damayanti flew to England. That was in May, 1940.

Balraj proved to be quite popular with the BBC by looking after the Hindi Section, relaying radio plays and interviews in Hindi. In the meantime, Hitler had let loose his blitz. Damayanti stayed at Stratford-on-Avon for a year and a half, and took a course in acting. Later she too joined the BBC. After four years stay in England, the Sahnis returned to India in 1944.



STAR PORTRAIT

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Balraj met one of his old friends Chetan Anand in Bombay, who revealed to him that he had chucked his teacher's job at the Doon School and had already played the hero in two pictures, *Meena* and *Anban*. Balraj was fascinated by the stories of his friend.

Balraj and Damayanti went away to Kashmir to meet their families. Chetan followed them and said that he had finalised plans for the production of *Neecha Nagar* with the co-operation of W. Z. Ahmed and that Balraj and Damayanti should play the lead. They accepted the offer, came away to Bombay immediately. Soon they realised that Chetan's plans had fallen through and with that came the problem of finding out a living. They found that they were almost stranded in Bombay.

Luckily, Prithviraj Kapoor gave an important role to Damayanti in his stage-play *Deewar*. As the scheming foreign vamp, Damayanti's role proved a sensational success which brought her some film roles as well.

AS for Balraj, he joined the Indian People's Theatre Association. He directed a popular play *Zubeida* written by K. A. Abbas. It had a distinguished cast headed by Dev Anand, Chetan Anand, Uzra Mumtaz, Hamid Butt and Abbas himself. Working in IPTA was a new experience for Balraj. He came to know the close link between the people and the open air dramas performed by the IPTA and realised the necessity for such a live contact if ever a really people's theatre was to develop in India.

In between, he played minor roles in Phani Mazumdar's *Justice* and *Dur Chalen*. Meanwhile, he got a new break as the associate director of IPTA's co-operative film, *Dharti-Ke-Lal*. He played a leading role with Damayanti in this moving saga of the Bengal famine.

In 1947, however, he faced calamities from many sides. He lost his life partner Damayanti who passed away after a brief illness. Came the historic Partition and his entire family was uprooted from their home in Rawalpindi. Towards the year-end, he got a role as the hero opposite Nalini Jaywant in Virendra Desai's *Gunjan* which completely flopped. 1948 was a critical year for him. By 1949, he was in jail for five months for taking part in a procession and had to attend his shooting for *Hulchul* under police escort.

Slowly things changed. Chetan Anand entrusted him with the work of writing the screenplay and dialogue for *Baazi*. By a peculiar coincidence, Zia Sarhady, who was then busy with the script of *Hum Log*, was staying in a hotel next-door to Balraj's place. Both became friends and used to discuss their respective scripts. The mutual understanding that developed between them led Zia to cast him in the main role in *Hum Log*.

Both *Baazi* and *Hum Log* proved very successful and Balraj's trying period appeared to be at an end. *Hum Log* gave him a good break as an actor and he secured important roles in Filmistan's *Badnam*, Manmohan's *Akash*, Abbas's *Rahi* and Asha Biswas's *Bazooband*. But it was the role of the ever-struggling peasant who yearns for a piece of land in *Do Bigha Zamin*

BALRAJ SAHNI

that sky-rocketed Balraj as a front rank star. Right in the wake of this success came his memorable portrayals in *Aulad*, *Garam Coat* and *Seema*.

Among his other noteworthy pictures are *Kathputli*, *Pardeshi*, *Bhabhi*, *Lajwanti*, *Chhoti Bahen*, *Satta Bazaar*, and *Heera Moti*. His recent outstanding films include *Bindiya*, *Nai Maa*, *Anuradha*, *Kabuliwala* and *Bhabhi ki Chudiyan*.

He tried his hand at film direction in *Lal Batti*.

BALRAJ likes to play all sorts of roles rather than being typed for a particular pattern of characters. He believes that to play any role to perfection the artist must know and understand the people. He must sympathise with their aspirations. It is only when an artist identifies himself with the type of people whom he portrays on screen that he will be able to deliver the goods.

Balraj is a prolific reader and his favourite authors make a formidable list. The notable among them are Tagore, Shakespeare, Premchand, Iqbal, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Krishan Chander etc. Among Punjabi writers, he adores Nanak Singh, Prof. Mohan Singh and Amrita Pritam. He devotes a considerable amount of his time to read current Indian and foreign literature.

In spite of his extremely busy work connected with his work in the films, he makes it a point to spend as much time as possible with his wife and children. His son Parikshit has already acted in Nitin Bose's *Deedar* while his daughters Shabnam and Sanober, who is from his second wife Santosh, make a likeable family. The Sahnis stay in a quiet bungalow at Juhu and enjoy nothing more than a hearty swim in the sea.

Balraj enjoyed his tour of the Soviet Union as a member of the film delegation during the Indian Film Festival held there. His superb performance in *Do Bigha Zamin* gave him this opportunity. According to him, he has been able to learn a great deal from the Soviet Union. On his return, he serialised his diary of the tour in a Bombay film weekly. It made very interesting reading. Lately he has visited Russia and other countries several times to take part in film festivals and youth conferences. Thus learning from his own experience, from the lives of our people and the experiences of other countries, Balraj seeks ever-greater heights as an artist.



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BHARAT BHOOSHAN

HAVING scaled the dizzy heights of nation-wide fame at their very first screen-appearance, few stars have struggled as hard as Bharat Bhooshan to stick to film acting till getting another break years later. In any other country a star, who took the film-world by storm through his masterly acting like Bharat Bhooshan's in *Bhakt Kabir*, would have ensured for him a top-rank among the higher-ups of screen-histrionics. But thanks to a paradox peculiar to the Indian film industry, after his sensationally successful film debut, Bharat had literally to starve in order to remain in the topsy-turvy profession of film acting. "But for the encouragement and inspiration I got from my wife, who stood by me as the sole companion in those trying times, I would have left the film-world with a broken heart," Bharat admits.

The fact that Bharat Bhooshan stood like a rock amidst those vicissitudes till he reached the top rung of the ladder again, is as much a tribute to his devotion to film art as the love and affection of his wife who proved a tower of strength to him when everything seemed to have been lost.

BHARAT had a craving for an artistic career since his childhood. Born on June 14, 1923, he is the younger of the two sons of Rai Bahadur Motilal of Meerut. The family had a unique tradition in the legal field. His uncle was Legal Remembrancer to the U.P. Government and then, for sometime, the Chief Justice of Malwa States. With such a background, Bharat was naturally expected to take up the legal career. He studied at Dharma Samaj Intermediate College, Aligarh, and obtained his B.A. at Meerut. Father had already prepared the professional ground for Bharat and as he was about to groom Bharat for a legal job in the Government, Bharat expressed a preference for an art career and against parental advice and opposition, he went to Calcutta, to seek a job. He had a flair for music and was a good singer himself at school and college.

After the usual initial disappointments, someone introduced Bharat to Director Kidar Sharma who gave him the minor role of a disciple in an Ashram in his *Chitrlekha*. But this was hardly a stable beginning for one who yearned for a permanent art-career.

Bharat Bhooshan could not secure any more contracts and, feeling frustrated, when he was about to return home, came an unexpected chance. Producer-director Sharma of Unity Productions, Calcutta, was on a look-out for a "saintly" face for his film-biography of Kabir. He had already made plans to cast that renowned singer of classical music, Pt. Omkarnath Thakur, for the title-role, but a meeting with the suave, soft-spoken Bharat made him change

his mind. After seeing Bharat's well-chiselled, sublime face Sharma said to himself: "Here is the Kabir I have been waiting for". A test was soon arranged. The late Mazharkhan, then an important star of Unity Productions, was also struck by Bharat's impressive personality and he himself prepared the make-up. Bharat appeared exactly as Director Sharma had visualised his Kabir for the screen.

DESPITE the fact that this was his first major appearance on screen, Bharat almost lived the role of Kabir. His moving performance was appreciated throughout the country. Those were the days of intense communal disharmony. The popular refrain of Bhakt Kabir's "bhajan"—"*Bhaj man Raam Rahim, Bhaj man Krishna Karim*" and the stirring message of communal unity implicit in the film lent it a national significance. *Bhakt Kabir* was hailed as a memorable milestone in Indian film industry. A new star rose on the horizon of filmdom in Bharat Bhooshan. He won many plaudits for the role. The Mayor of Calcutta presented him with a silver souvenir as a token of appreciation.

In the wake of nationwide popularity, Producer-director W. Z. Ahmed of Shalimar Pictures signed up Bharat for two of his ambitious films, *Shree Krishna Bhagwan* and *Rangila Rajasthan*. Bharat migrated to Poona and was later joined by his wife. Then started the most critical period of his life. The affairs of Shalimar Pictures were soon in the doldrums and pictures announced with a big fanfare could not go on the sets. After months of uncertainty and chaos, W. Z. Ahmed left for Pakistan. Bharat Bhooshan, who had made a wonderful start with *Bhakt Kabir*, had to undergo a trying spell of obscurity and heart-breaks. His two films were kept half-finished. What was worse, hopeful of his contract with Shalimar, he had earlier refused an offer of a "saintly" role from Bengal's famous director Debaki Bose. The scuttling of the Shalimar ship left Bharat in mid-stream. He and his wife were at Poona. "There were not days but months when I had neither work nor money. But for my wife's sympathy and encouragement, I don't know what I would have done," he says remembering those critical days.

After a gruelling struggle, he started getting roles in films which were by no means noteworthy. As a newcomer to Bombay, he had to start his screen career almost all over again. It was during this period that Bharat Bhooshan, the celebrated Kabir of Indian screen, had to act in films like *Kisi ki Yad*, *Bhai Bahen*, *Sohag Raat*, *Bebus*, *Chakori*, *Uddhar*, *Chitwan*, *Ek Tha Raja*, *Thes*, *Ram Darshan*, etc. to keep the home fires burning.

HOWEVER, his performance in *Ankhen* impressed people. But it was Bombay Talkies' *Maa*, directed by Bimal Roy, that gave him the necessary lift. There was an intensely human background to Bharat's memorable portrayal in this picture. In life, he was deprived of mother's love at an early age. No wonder, in *Maa*, he breathed life into his character, opposite Leela Chitnis who acted the title-role.



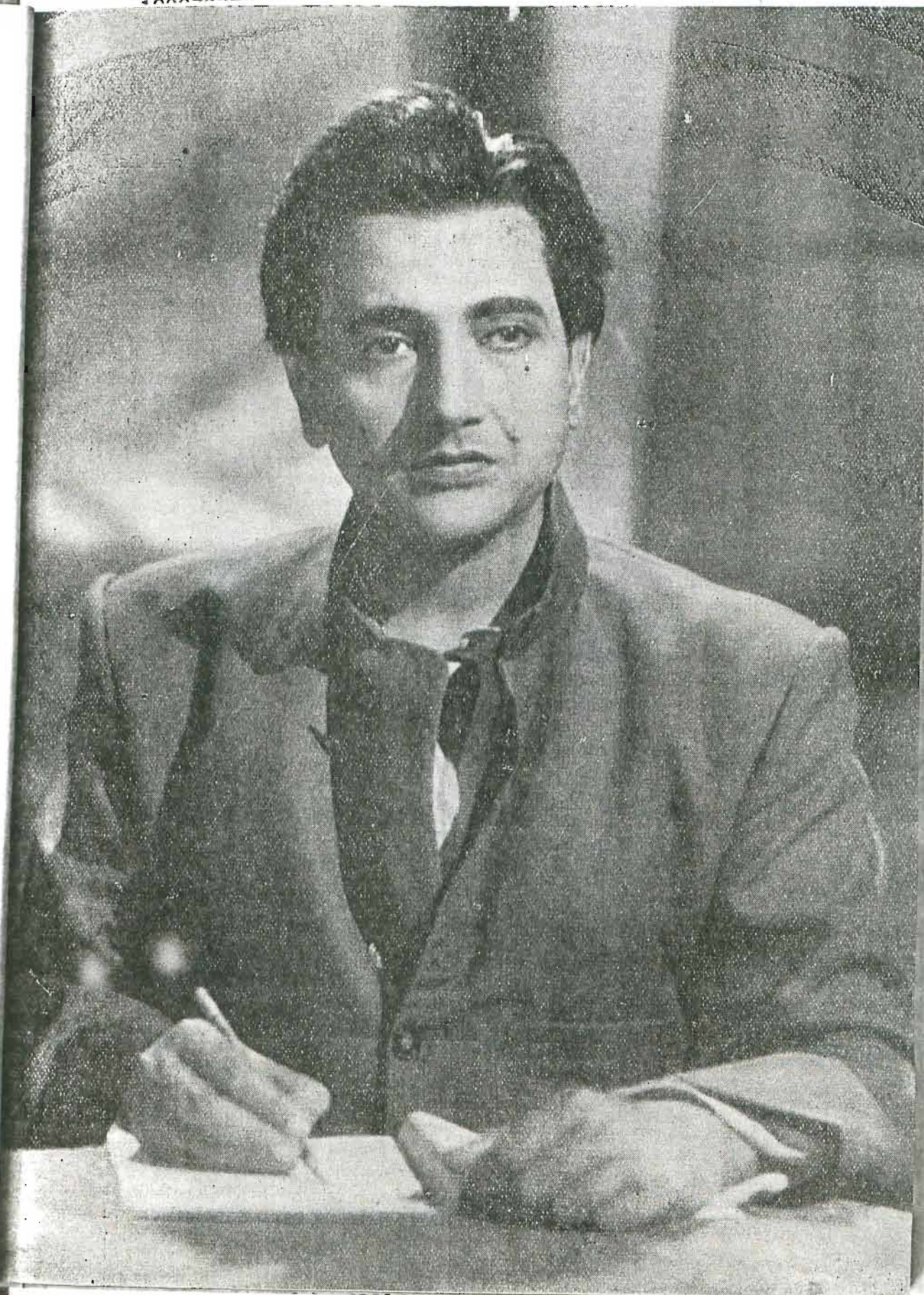
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Followed *Anandmath*, *Paheli Shadi*, *Hamari Duniya*, *Farmaish* and *Ladki*. But the biggest break of his career came in Prakash Pictures' *Baiju Bawra*, directed by Vijay Bhatt. The film proved a roaring box office hit and established Bharat Bhooshan among the top stars. Followed the title-roles in Vijay Bhatt's *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu*, which earned him the "Filmfare" Award for the best acting, and Sohrab Modi's *Mirza Ghalib*, the screen-biography of the celebrated Urdu poet, which won the President's Gold Medal in the State Awards. Bharat Bhooshan had staged a glorious comeback and how!

His impressive line-up of pictures includes *Pooja*, *Shabab*, *Meenar*, *Basant Bahar* and *Kavi*. In the last-named, he at last got the opportunity he had declined while working at Shalimar Pictures, Poona—to work in a Debaki Bose picture. Bharat's other notable pictures include *Amanat*, *Sohni Mahiwal*, *Kal Hamara Hai*, *Gateway of India*, *Champakali*, *Teen Bhai* and *Chandrakanta*. His recent ones include *Rani Roopmati*, *Sawan*, in which he played a double role, *Mahakavi Kalidas*, *Barsaat ki Raat*, *Angulimala* and *Ghungnat*.

DESPITE all his success, Bharat has remained unbelievably modest. Once a role has been assigned to him, he throws himself heart and soul into it. He makes a deep study of his characterisation. For *Chaitanya*, he spent considerable time in studying all the available literature to make the role a success. His wife also helped him a lot in doing that research.

When Bharat had realised almost all his dreams about an art-career and when he was riding high on the surging tide of screen-popularity, he got a terrible set-back in life. His wife, who had stood by him through all his trials, passed away on Nov. 12, 1954 after giving birth to a daughter. The loss proved unbearable for Bharat. Both of them had known each other since their childhood at Meerut. Their first child, also a girl, was born in 1953, ten years after their marriage. The responsibility of bringing up the two kids fell on Bharat and he has been discharging that duty admirably.

He spends most of his spare-time in reading books. He has a well-kept library and his favourite authors include Kahlil Gibran, Ibsen, Eugene O'Neill, Hemingway and James Joyce.

LIKE all stars, Bharat has many interesting experiences during his screen career. Among these he feelingly recalls an incident after the release of *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu*. He was taken to a 'math' of Chaitanya in Calcutta. Here the reception he got made him realise the potentiality of the film medium. People vied with one another in touching his feet. It brought tears to his eyes. It was a glorious tribute to his performance in the picture.

A young girl fan took a fancy for him after *Baiju Bawra* and expressed a desire to marry him, taking him to be a romantic type like Baiju. Bharat asked her to see *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* where he played an ascetic. That did the trick! The girl recovered her poise and got happily married to someone else.

As a child, Bharat's favourite hobby was horse-riding. Once he narrowly missed being crushed under a mare after the naughty creature had thrown him



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Chandra, better known as R. Chan-
dra, who is today in film produc-
tion business and an important
active member of the I.M.P.P.A.,
and the Editor of the Journal of the
Film Industry.

ONE of Bharat's childhood
ambitions was to personally
meet Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. Once,
as a lad of nine, he had rushed to
have a glimpse of Panditji at Ali-
garh Station, but due to the stam-
pede of people, he could not see
anything in the midst of the milling
crowds on the platform. Panditji's train passed away to his great disappoint-
ment.

Twenty-three years later he more than made up for this missed chance
when he was received by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru at New Delhi in
1955 after the State Awards function in which his starring vehicle *Mirza Ghalib*
won the President's Gold Medal as the best feature-film.

From the run-away youth in search of an art-career to one of filmdom's top
stars, Bharat Bhooshan has made the grade in his characteristic modest way.
And what does this successful star say today about the film career?

Well, his reply is no less characteristic of the man: "I love this art-form and
also the people connected with it."

Mild-mannered and gentle to the core, Bharat Bhooshan is far from the
loud, back-thumping glamour-laden film idol of popular conception. Rather, he
strikes one as a self-effacing intellectual who has strayed into the tinsel world
of the movies.

There is a finesse about his manners which strikes one as a hallmark of
good breeding. His polished Urdu phonetics have a delicacy all their own. His
laughter is rare, but hearty.

In *Chunghat*, his time-honoured reputation as "a costume hero" was hard
put to test and he has come out with flying colours in the intricate social role.
He has once again proved that his speciality is not only dreamy poets and devo-
tional saints. He is equally at home as an "earthy" social type.

No doubt, with his serious approach to work, Bharat Bhooshan seems to be
destined for still higher honours.



Bharat Bhooshan is a sombre type, and it is rare to find him bursting into a hilarious laughter. Here he is enjoying one such moment with star-friend Chandrashekhar.

ASHOK KUMAR (Continued from page 16)

minating film-goer, he makes it a point not to miss outstanding international films. He likes the acting of Ronald Colman and Spencer Tracy. He has read all the monumental works of Pudovkin on acting, direction and film technique. He has also gone through the full course of London Dramatic Arts. He enjoys nothing more than reading and re-reading Shakespeare.

Whenever he snatches some off moments from his heavy studio schedule, he goes to his favourite holiday haunt, Khandala. During the outdoor shooting of *Shamsheer*, we had the opportunity to accompany him to Khandala and the pleasant time we spent in his company gave us vivid glimpses of his genius as a socially conscious artiste. His cheery disposition lends an air of disarming informality everywhere. Indeed, with Ashok on the set, the whole unit gives one the impression of one happy family.

As a child, Ashok was rather shy and reserved and did not mix easily with people, but his intelligence had taken people by surprise even then. His one great ambition was to travel and see far off countries.

HE treasures many a pleasant memory of his tour of Europe and the Soviet Union following his visit to London and Egypt for the location shooting of S. K. Ojha's *Naaz*. In London, he was given a special reception by India's then High Commissioner, Mr. Krishna Menon. The press boys were surprised at his modest remark: "I am no heart-throbber".

After finishing the shooting of *Naaz*, he had a hurried trip across Europe. He was much impressed by Prague, found Sweden to be a prosperous country, liked art treasures and marble curtains of Italy's St. Peter's Cathedral. Paris appeared to him no longer the gay Paree of yore. "There was no sparkle in the eyes of the people and the laughter was unreal." He was appalled by the destruction of Warsaw and other cities. He attended the film festival at Warsaw and made a speech though no Indian film was shown there.

His hectic tour of the Soviet Union which he visited in response to a special invitation has left vivid memories. The Soviet people were as simple as we in India. He flew over Leningrad and stayed in Moscow for eleven days. He was tremendously impressed by the Soviet stage-craft. The devices on stage for fade-in, fade-out and super-imposing were really wonderful. The plastic make-up which was in vogue there fascinated him. He regrets immensely that he did not have the time to go and see the great Pudovkin at that time though he heard the news on the radio that Pudovkin was ill. Pudovkin, he holds, was an outstanding genius of the film. He has read all his important works. And his pet ambition is to follow the path trailed by Pudovkin as best as he could.

It was in the fitness of things that his consistently good acting in his countless film assignments won him the Sangeet Natak Akademi's coveted annual Award in 1959 for best acting. The Award was presented by India's Vice-President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan at a special function at New Delhi.



BINA RAI

BIRTHDAYS have evidently brought many happy returns to Bina Rai, the smart and sweet-tempered charmer of the Indian screen. She was born on July 13, 1932, and since then many an important event in her life has taken place on her birthday. She got her first film contract on July 13, 1950 and her first film was released on her next birthday. Again, it was on her birthday in 1952 that she was engaged to the popular hero of the Indian screen, Premnath.

There are very few cases in the history of filmdom where enthusiastic screen-aspirants have risen to stardom by replying to advertisements calling for actors and actresses. Bina Rai happens to be one such rarity. In 1950, Producer-director Kishore Sahu offered Rs. 25,000 through *Filmindia* for an educated and cultured girl to play the heroine in his *Kalighata*. Hundreds replied to this advertisement and among the numerous candidates called for the screen-test, Bina Rai impressed Sahu with a couple of other girls and was assigned the feminine lead in *Kalighata*. And this event marked the turning point in ambitious Bina's life.

BORN in a respectable middle class family at Lahore, Krishna, (that is Bina's real name), evinced a great liking for films from childhood. She was a regular film-goer with her parents and collected photos of her favourite movie stars like all film fans. Thanks to her liking for music, that popular singing star of the Indian screen Khurshid was her idol. Her father Mr. Sarin, an official in the Western Railway, encouraged her in her pursuit of the fine arts and she learnt music and dancing. She had her education first at Lahore and on passing the matriculation, she joined the Isabella Thoburn College at Lucknow. She was quite popular at college dramatics and cultural gatherings.

All through her educational career, she continued to take a live interest in films. When she replied the *Filmindia* advertisement in her youthful fancy to become a film star, she never took it as a serious attempt to stardom. When the call came for the interview, she was busy with her intermediate examination and could meet Kishore Sahu only after a month. Her parents had not the slightest inkling about her efforts to join the films and, therefore, her selection to play the heroine in *Kalighata* came to them as a rude shock. They vehemently opposed the idea. But Krishna's threat to go on hunger-strike exerted just enough pressure on her parents to bring them round to her viewpoint. "But this should be your first and last film," they warned her. And when we met her on the sets of *Kalighata*, Bina appeared slightly nervous but excited at the sudden realisation of her dreams. To our query how she found the film-world and its people, she said: "The people with whom I am working have been



Bina Rai, Premnath and their son Premnath Jr. enjoy a musical interlude at home. The junior created a new record by appearing before the movie-camera within less than six hours of his birth.

nice and I enjoy working with them." When asked whether she disliked any particular aspect of film-making, she at once quipped: "I have never been used to hating things."

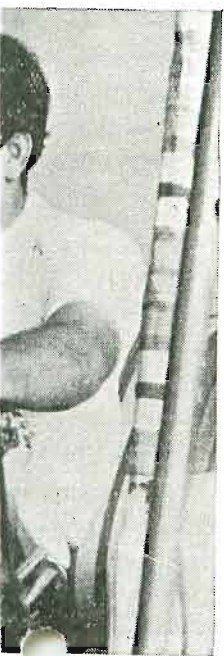
WITH the release of *Kalighata*, Krishna Sarin shot up into stardom as Bina Rai through her captivating performance. Thus, Bina Rai is one of those singularly fortunate to rise to stardom and fame without the inevitable struggles and heart-breaks. Parental opposition too cooled down with her successful debut. She got the main roles in *Sapna*, *Sangam*, *Aurat*, *Shole* and *Anarkali* and thus attained a maturer command over histrionics.

While on the sets of Varma's *Aurat*, Bina and her hero Premnath fell in love with each other, their romance leading to their engagement on July 13, 1952. Their marriage on September 2, proved a popular event of filmdom. Here it is interesting to recall a hearty tete-a-tete we had with Premnath in 1951 much before he was cast opposite Bina Rai.

"Will you marry a film star?" we casually asked.

"No, never," was Prem's quick reply.

"Are you opposed to marriage?"



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Premnath in 1951

"Oh, no. I like children very much. But about getting married I am a bit confused to make up my mind. . . . An astrologer has told me that I will be getting married in October-November (1952). So I am waiting," he explained.

Well, the astrologer proved very nearly correct and Prem proved to be wrong—he did marry a film star after all. Their marriage was to take place on November 21, Prem's birthday. But as both were invited to America as members of the Indian Film Delegation, their wedding was arranged earlier to enable them to spend their honeymoon in the U.S.A.

After their marriage, Prem floated his independent film concern, P.N. Film Unit and produced *Shagufa* and *Prisoner of Golconda* (in Gevacolor) with Bina as the heroine. The release of *Shagufa* coincided with the birth of their first child, Premnath Junior. Incidentally, Prem Junior has the unique distinction of facing a movie-camera within six hours of his birth. Daddy Premnath wanted a few shots of a new-born babe for his *Prisoner of Golconda* and for this purpose the Gevacolor camera was specially taken to the materniy home.

More than any other film, it was *Anarkali* that stabilised Bina's reputation as an accomplished star. Her other important pictures include *Gauhar*, *Sardar*, *Madh Bhare Nain*, *Insaniyat*, *Durgesh Nandini*, *Hamara Watan*, *Malika*, *Bandi*, *Chandrakantha* and *Talash*. She has staged a wonderful come-back by her memorable performance in *Ghunghat*, which has won her the "Filmfare" Award.



DAVID

YOU and I can never forget John Chacha, because he is such a nice man. He is affectionate, affable and extremely honest although a boot-legger. We did not in the least hate the lame John Chacha for boot-legging. Life was like that. We saw John Chacha and life in the raw in R. K. Films' *Boot Polish*. David, a doyen among our character actors, won the "Filmfare" Clare Award for his masterly portrayal of this lovable character.

David Abraham is a splendid sportsman in life. He plays good cricket and is capable of playing the ball and holding the bat as the situation would warrant. This versatile adaptability David has acquired through years of experience in his multifarious activities. For David, life has been a series of struggles and battles.

Yes, David Abraham is versatile. Besides being an accomplished actor, he is a brilliant conversationalist, a gifted speaker, a sportsman, a gymnast, legal adviser and a Freemason. More, he writes poetry. He has written a collection of poems which he has titled "Little Dew Drops" and has characterised its ever-growing contents as "attempts at versification." He has acted as a referee at Asian Games, officiated as a judge at world olympics, given running commentaries at sports-meets. He is connected with many sports associations in Bombay in various capacities. He has served as a master of ceremonies at countless functions. His sparkling wit and devastating asides at parties and social get-togethers have unfailingly proved to be the life-giving nectar of all such occasions.

HAILING from a talented Jewish family that settled down in Kolaba District of Bombay State as early as the fifteenth century, David Abraham was born on June 21, 1909 at Bombay. Unfortunately, he lost his father at the age of five. His elder brother brought him up and he is full of gratitude to his brother who has been a friend, a guide and a great source of inspiration. Consequent of the continuous stay of many centuries in Maharashtra, his family has adopted some of the finer traits of Maharashtrian culture.

Rare, indeed, is a child who is at the same time, interested in such diverse subjects as physical culture, literature, dramatics and dancing. David, however, was such a kid. He began his education at the St. Joseph's School, Bombay. His interests varied from athletics to aesthetics. He prophetically chose his career at the age of eleven. It all happened thus. The elder brother was a gifted actor, a critic, a producer of amateur plays, a school teacher and a histrionic inspiration for young David. One day he took the youngster to the Coronation Theatre to witness a religious Jewish drama in Marathi written and staged by

DAVID

Joseph David, a maestro of dramatics in Bombay. After the first act, the elder brother took David back-stage and introduced him to Producer Joseph. "Well, what would you like to be when you grow up?", asked Producer Joseph David.

"An actor," replied teenager David Abraham instantaneously. But it took sixteen years of hazards for David to attain his aim.

His family wanted to groom him for a legal career and he was trained for the Bar. David's main interest in young days was physical culture and he was a regular visitor to the Akhadas. His family was physical-culture-minded and some of his elders excelled at athletic feats. "I managed to get every possible prize in the college except scholarship," David says with a smile. He used to write for various magazines and has won a number of prizes in elocution contests.

His main interests in college were sports, amateur dramatics and elocution. He was a student member of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee and worked in the early-thirties with that idol of nationalist youths in India, Yusuf Meherally. He graduated with literature from Wilson College in 1930. Followed a period of "glorious unemployment for seven years" as he puts it. Of course, he could have got a job in the Government Service. But being a staunch patriot, he did not care for it even under most critical circumstances. During this period, apart from political activities, he flirted with law, organised athletic clubs and indulged in amateur theatricals. As an amateur artist, David made an appearance before movie cameras in 1930 in a silent film called "Cyclone Girl." It was produced by Sagar Film Co. and directed by D. P. Mishra. To his great disappointment, actor Yakub discouraged him at that time and advised him "Vakili Kar" ("Be a lawyer"). This was a period of trial for David because despite all his intensive efforts, he failed to get a job to his liking and had to manage to live on a pocket expense of Rs. 10 per month.

HOWEVER, the famous character-actor S. B. Nayampally (who knew David from 1926 as both of them were the disciples of the same physical culture *ustad*) managed to sponsor David into the world of film-acting. With his bald head, Nayampally thought David would make an ideal professor on screen. He introduced him to Producer-director M. Bhavnani and at last David's jobless period came to an end. On January 18, 1937, he got the starting salary of Rs. 75 and made his debut in Bhavnani's *Zambo*. David vividly remembers his early days in films. "I was a beaten man when I joined the movies. Therefore, I had to start from a scratch and had to work, plod along and fight my way up inch by inch." In between playing roles in pictures, he acted as a clapper-boy, a continuity clerk, assistant director and production manager and acquired a thorough grasp over different branches of film-industry. The grooming that he got under Bhavnani proved very useful to him. He passed the L.L.B. in 1940 and in the same year came the first real break of his career. His role of Mr. Sharma in Bombay Talkies' *Naya Sansar* brought him into limelight though he received only Rs. 300 all told for it. Then came B.T.'s great hit *Kismet*. This



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picture brought him further credit as an artist but monetarily, he was none the better.

But by then, the name David had become a hall-mark for inspired acting and his versatile talent found good scope in the variegated pattern of his screen roles. He has acted in more than 75 pictures and given a number of outstanding performances but he says his best is yet to come. David has a dislike for those milk-and-water type of roles and prefers to portray rough, intricate characters. Of his earlier roles, he likes his performances in Kanu Desai's *Geet Govind* and P. K. Atre's *Tasweer*. His portrayal of the machiavellian Shakuni in *Draupadi*, produced and directed by Baburao Patel, ranks amongst his best performances. His performances in *Boot Polish* and K. A. Abbas's *Munna* stand unexcelled. With all this, he is not a monied man. He would have been if he had insisted on strict payment from some of our producers. His other notable roles include *Panna*, *Naya Tarana*, *Dharti ke Lal*, *Nal Damayanti*, *Chandni Raat*, *Ladli*, *Samadhi*, *Sargam*, *Hamara Ghar* etc. Among his many recent performances, his portrayal of Munjal Mehta in Prakash's *Patrani* stands in a class by itself. His recent pictures include *Barkha*, *Bindiya*, *Pyar ki Pyas*, *Kanoon* and *Mem Didi*, in which he gave a topping performance.

HIS tastes and hobbies are varied. He is fond of ball-room dancing, sport is in his veins, books are amongst his best companions and athletics is still his craze. A man of punctuality and regular habits, everybody including our film producers have no occasion to complain about David.

In his flat at Parel, his well-kept library catches your eye at once with its impressive array of some of world's top-most and rarest authors and in the adjoining room are the imposing lezims, dumb-bells and other physical culture devices. David and all members of the Abraham family zealously care for the well-being of their mind and physique.

David is always a much-sought-after man whether it is a film-role, a social get-together or a sports-meet. He takes delight in describing himself as "a very normal, snail-paced individual with no strong likes or dislikes" and says the major portion of his time is still spent on the struggle for his existence and of those who depend on him.

Though belonging to the aging, over-fifty group, he still retains that juvenile enthusiasm and youthful zest for life.

"A Dreamer, Poet, Painter,
A Singer and Lover wild,
I'd like to be but God's truth
I'd love to be a child."

This is what he has written about himself in his *Dew Drops*. Nothing could be more true of David, the man.

A stalwart among our character actors, he modestly says, "I have still to give an outstanding performance." Fascinated and happy with life, David's ambition is to "portray real roles and to work till the last day of my life."

Nannohan (1)
Savitri (2)
Chetan (3)
Kanta (4)
Heidi (5)



DEV ANAND

NO ONE could have ever imagined that a boyish-looking censor clerk who could be seen hanging on to over-crowded tram-cars and trains and who sometimes joined the never-ending queue of office-goers from Churchgate Station to Ballard Estate would one day become one of the leading film stars of the country. To the thousands of screen-struck youths of the country, whose star dreams have ended in gutters, the story of Dev Anand should be a significant pointer.

Dev's film career actually begins with his literally gate-crashing into the sacrosanct chambers of a movie magnate and bagging a hero's role. But then the story of his entry into films has not been as smooth as it sounds.

SON of a nationalist-minded lawyer of Gurdaspur in East Punjab, Dev was born on September 26, 1923. His only assets before he got a break into the movies were his good educational background and his smiling face. He had his early training at a Convent School in Dalhousie and then joined the Government College at Lahore. "College life in Lahore in those days was really enjoyable. It was full of life, gaiety and fun. Compared to that, the college life in Bombay appears insipid," Dev recalls with nostalgic fervour.

On passing his B.A. with honours in 1942, Dev applied for a post in the Navy and was almost selected but for his father's strong nationalistic leanings which made Dev an undependable element for the officials of the British regime. This made Dev come down to Bombay in search of a job only to be confronted everywhere with that bug-bear of all unemployed men—the "No Vacancy" board. He met an important film producer and waited for the promised film role for months together in vain. In the circumstances, he was compelled to take up a job as a clerk in the Censor department. It was a war-time creation and the dull, unpleasant task of opening other people's letters got on Dev's nerves but he had to stick to it for his bread.

STILL dreaming of a film career, he used to regale his friends with his attractive rendering of Saigal's melodies. In the meantime, he took part in amateur theatricals and his acting in I.P.T.A.'s *Zubeida* and his brother Chetan Anand's *Gaon* gave him the necessary training and self-confidence. And soon, one day he took courage into both hands, and managed to land himself in the office of Mr. Baburao Pai, who was then the chief executive of Prabhat Film Co. of Poona. Mr. Pai was at first taken aback by the impudence of this youthful gate-crasher, but Dev's suave, gentle manner impressed him and he signed him up for a major role in Prabhat's *Hum Ek Hain* which was the maiden

directorial assignment for writer P.L. Santoshi. That was in July, 1945. Its theme advocated communal and national unity. *Hum Ek Hain* introduced four new faces—Dev Anand, Rehana, Rehman and Ramsingh.

Acting before movie cameras did not turn out to be as easy as Dev had originally thought. Often, he felt terribly nervous on the sets, particularly while facing accomplished veterans like Durga Khote. His spells of fright at times unnerved other members of the production unit. For a moment, he felt he would have to bid an abrupt good-bye to the film world. But he gradually rallied, shed his initial nervousness, braved the glare of arc-lights and the entire array of bewildering clap-trap of a studio. He expresses deep gratitude to Durga Khote for the guidance and encouragement she gave him which instilled into him all the courage needed to become a film hero. "She was a tower of inspiration to me in those embarrassing moments," says Dev today. "But for her sympathy and understanding, I would have run away from studio sets and given up hopes for a film career."

Hum Ek Hain was released and among the new faces Dev appeared the most promising. His salary jumped from Rs. 400 to Rs. 1,500 a month. He also played the lead in Prabhat's *Age Badho*. But being the war boom era for the Indian film industry, Dev felt that it would be more advantageous for him if he took to free-lancing instead of sticking to one studio at a limited contract-figure. And the once censor-clerk, with a dreamy look in his eyes, launched himself into the prosperous world of film stars. He was very soon co-starred with the leading ladies of the filmdom.

DURING his hectic film career, he has played a number of versatile roles but his portrayals in Phani Majumdar's *Hum Bhi Insan Hain*, Navketan's *Baazi*, Afsar, *Andhiyan* and *Taxi Driver*, Guru Dutt's *Jaal*, Abbas's *Rahi*, Paul Zilla's *Zalzala*, B.T. Workers' *Badbaan* deserve special mention. It was the success of *Andhiyan* that took him to the Soviet Union as a member of the Indian Film Delegation. His other notable films include *Insaniyat*, *C.I.D.*, *Funtoosh*, *Paying Guest*, *Barish*, *Nau Do Gyarah*, *Solva Saal*, *Kalapani* and *Love Marriage*. His memorable performance in *Kalapani* won him the 1959 *Filmfare* Award. He had won the F.J.A. Critics' Award in 1956 for his work in *Munimjee*. His recent notable films include *Amar Deep*, *Manzil*, *Kala Bazar*, *Jali Note*, *Bambai ka Babu* and *Hum Dono* in which he acts a double role.

The popularity of his role as *Taxi Driver* in *Baazi* inspired his elder brother Chetan Anand to build up the plot of his production around the same character and the picture was titled *Taxi Driver*. He looked so realistic in the make-up that once during outdoor shooting near Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay, he was mistaken for a real taxi-driver by a foreign visitor. The tourist hailed Dev in the usual manner and asked him to drive the taxi to Marine Drive. Dev obliged at once. Little did the occupant of the taxi know that the man at the wheel was not a professional chauffeur but Dev Anand, the well-known Indian film-star.



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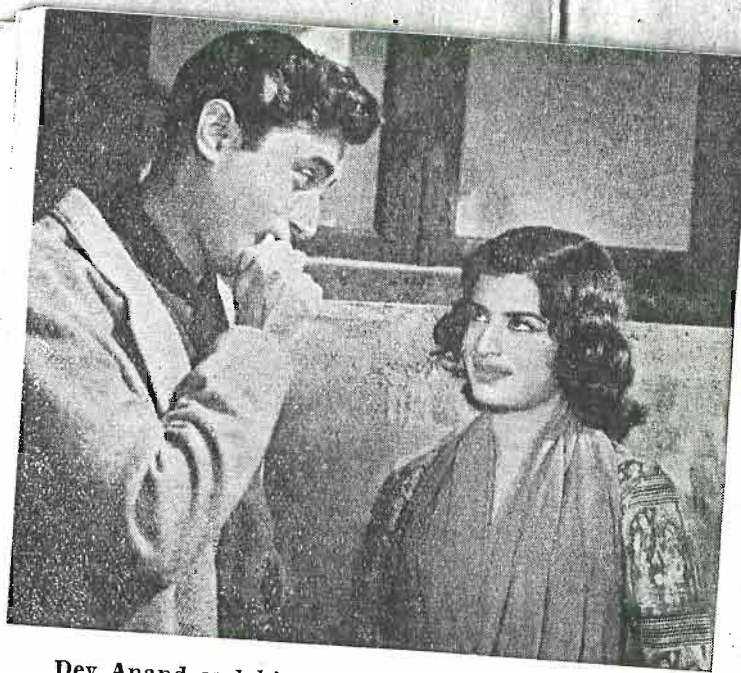
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Dev Anand and his star-wife Kalpana Kartik. Their wedding was as quiet an affair as Dev himself!

AN important event of his life took place during the shooting of *Taxi Driver*. His romance with his leading lady Kalpana Kartik culminated into their secret marriage on January 3, 1954. Kalpana, who in private life is called Mona Sinha, belongs to a cultured family of Punjab and is a cousin of Chetan's wife, Uma. She made her first screen appearance in Navketan's *Baazi*. Many had hinted at the growing friendship between Dev and Kalpana then.

The Dev-Kalpana marriage was as quiet an affair as Dev himself. Both Dev and Kalpana were made-up for their respective roles in *Taxi Driver* for the night shooting. Suddenly they asked leave from Producer-director Chetan Anand and retired for some time to an adjoining apartment where the Registrar of Marriages and a few close friends were present. The ceremony was brief and solemn. The announcement about the wedding, however, was made months afterwards. With such a quiet untrumpeted marriage, he lived up to his reputation as one of film-dom's unassuming and publicity-shy boys. Their residential bungalow "Iris Park" is situated in picturesque surroundings at Juhu. Their son Suneel accompanied them as 'the youngest delegate' to the International Film Festival at Karlovy Vary in 1956. They have also a daughter whom they call Devina.

HE is soft-spoken and his good, gentle manners have earned him the title of the "softish one" from his studio-colleagues. During his off moments, he likes to go for a swim, read books and play tennis. He has a great regard for literary classics and their creators, and openly admits that he has been considerably influenced by at least two of them: Irving Stone's *Lust for Life* and Romain Rolland's *Jean Christophe*. His reading taste is varied. He is equally at home with Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamozov*, Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* and Maupassant's intensely human short stories. He is an interesting conversationalist and despite all his modesty can rattle off a good speech as he did on several occasions after his return from Soviet Union as a member of the Indian Film Delegation. He takes an active part in the discussions about story and allied branches of Navketan's productions. He feels that the success of a picture depends on "how you treat and present the main theme." He believes that the Indian film-goers are interested in realistic films as is evident from the current trend of productions. He is very hopeful about the younger set of people who have entered the film-industry in its different branches and feels confident that the future of the film industry is in their hands.

(Continued on page 56)



DILIP KUMAR

HAILED at various times as the matinee idol of millions, the eternal lover of the silver screen and the heart-throb of countless feminine fans, Dilip Kumar, one of the top-most favourites among our stars, is unbelievably jovial in real life.

During the last one decade, he has blazed a new trail as film-world's tear-stained hero and has almost become a synonym for a frustrated lover of the Indian screen. Such a reputation is, of course, not without its advantages. "Fans are rather kind to me and don't harass me at all because they feel I am a grief-stricken person (*"Dukhi Admi"* in Dilip's own words) and, therefore, should be left alone", he told us.

He has created new cloth fashions among the youths in sartorial simplicity and the new vogue of the now famous Dilip Kumar hair-style. In spite of his nation-wide fame as film-dom's most popular glamour-boy, he appears to you more as a meditative philosopher and a sportsman than a swollen-headed celluloid celebrity.

Unlike that unruly tuft of hair on his head, he is both disciplined and calm. His manners at once strike a sympathetic chord in your heart and his gentle, dignified way of dealing with people makes you wonder whether he ever indulges in the luxury of losing his temper.

Though completely engrossed in his screen-work since more than a decade, he has not lost his interest in finer things of life like sports, music, poetry and literature. He can still admire Mushtaq Ali's delightful cover drives and C. K. Nayudu's sizzling sixers; he can go into raptures over Dhyanchand's hockey and Bade Ghulam Ali Khan's *thumris*; and he is in his heavens with the poetry of Omar Khayam, Ghalib and Faiz. Contrary to general belief, films were not at all a craze with him when he was young. Till he reached the age of 14 and came down to Bombay, he had not seen a single picture.

BORN at Peshawar on December 11, 1922, in a middle-class family, Dilip was brought up in Deolali from the age of six. His father Ghulam Sarwar Khan had extensive business associations with Central and Southern parts of India in connection with his fruit-trade. Dilip is the third in line in a family of six brothers and six sisters. His real name is Yusuf Khan.

While schooling in Deolali, young Yusuf had no particular fancy for motion pictures. In those days, he had great love for football and was the secretary of the school football club. His daily absence from home in the evening was not liked by his father who objected to his craze for football. Father desired that Yusuf should take more interest in Chess, which was the favourite

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game of the Khan family. Yusuf, therefore, found out a compromise formula. Early in the evening he would sit for Chess, then withdraw from the game putting his brothers in his place so as to reach the football ground in time for the game. On returning home, he would again join up the all-absorbing Chess-match at home.

During his stay at Deolali for eight full years, Yusuf did not see a single film, surely a record very few film-stars could claim.

On coming to Bombay, he joined the Anjuman-E-Islam High School at Bori Bunder and shone more on the sports-ground than in the class-room. He played cricket, hockey and football and did not miss any big sports event in the city. The sports-loving Yusuf was an average student at school and one of his school-mates used to prove quite useful when examination stared them in the face. By some peculiar method, that school-chum had mastered the art of getting solid tips on the eve of examinations. He used to pass on these to Yusuf and no wonder both of them got through examinations with comparative ease. It is still a mystery to Yusuf Khan how and from where those tips reached his friend.

On passing the matric examination, he joined Wilson College and studied science. "I was an inconspicuous boy at college and mostly kept aloof," he says recalling his under-graduate days. In fact, during his college career he had not a single girl friend, another unbelievable aspect of a person who was one day destined to become a matinee idol on the silver screen.

Besides taking part in college sports, (his top favourite was football) young Mr. Khan became known for his well-written essays in English. In one of his essays on "Christmas" preserved by one of his college classmates, Yusuf Khan, then the first year student at college, wrote: "In X'mas the special movie attractions help to remove the rest of the money from one's pocket." One wonders how the famous star now feels on re-reading this statement in his college essays written in 1941. At that time, he did not dream that later on he himself would be in some way instrumental in "removing the rest of that money" as a top-most film-star.

He often provided a target for some good humoured jokes from his colleagues and professors for his bashful nature. Dressed mostly in simple pyjamas, shirt, coat and a cap, he earned a reputation among his friends for forgetfulness. He used to invariably lose his cap and his college note-books in the class at regular intervals. He was also regular in filling the football in the class-room and the professor would say: "Mr. Khan, you can do better justice to it if you go to the sports-room."

"Yes, that was an easy way of getting me out," he admits.

From his college days onwards, he had the same peculiar hair-style as today. At the sight of his unruly tuft, his professor's usual remark was, "Will you young fellows raise a subscription so that Mr. Khan can have a hair-cut?"

Yusuf Khan was fond of Western films, and with couple of college friends,



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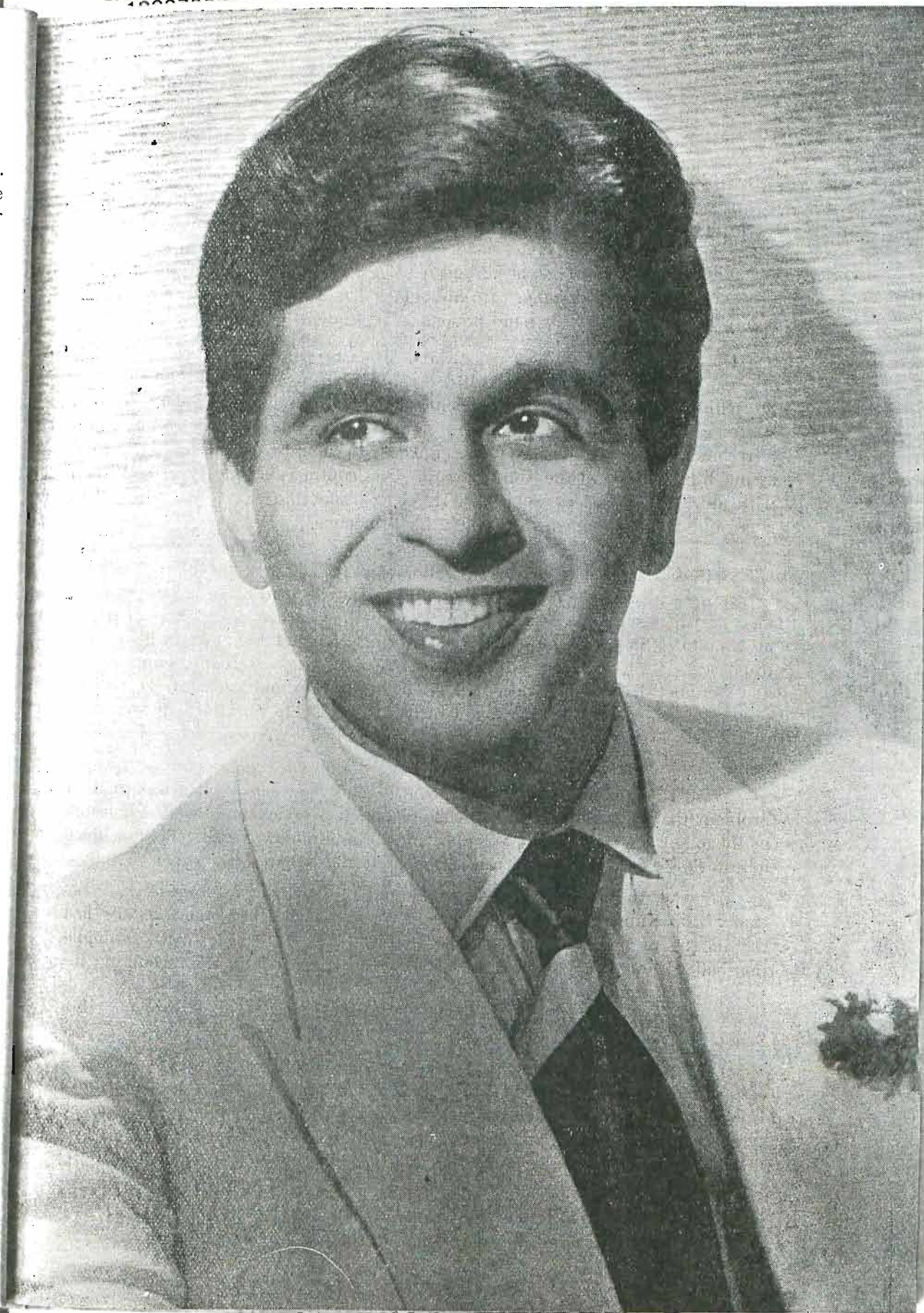
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DILIP KUMAR

he used to sneak into a cinema-hall during afternoons. His favourite seat in the theatre was the extreme left-hand corner and he felt that was the best angle to see a picture.

AFTER studying science at Wilson College and Khalsa College, Bombay, he decided to start earning. He thought he must not merely carry on the family business but try his hand at some other independent profession.

He left Bombay for Poona in search of pastures new and took up the job of a canteen manager with the British Army. Those were the days of war and life with soldiers partly satisfied his craving for an adventurous career. He was started on Rs. 35 a month, stuck to it and very soon he got a contract to run a refreshment room in the army mess. Business became brisk soon and he earned as much as Rs. 800 in the third month. The contract lasted a year and then with the Field Relations Scheme in force, it came to a close. He returned to good, old Bombay with a respectable bank balance.

IN those days, the executives of Bombay Talkies were on the look-out for new faces and Devika Rani, the chief executive head of B.T., happened to meet the handsome, well-built Yusuf through the courtesy of a common friend at Nainital. She was impressed by him and engaged him even without the usual screen-test. He was cast as the hero in B.T.'s *Jwar Bhata*, opposite the new heroine Mridula. He accepted the offer with hesitation because he had no pretensions at any time for a film-career. According to him, he had seen only two Indian pictures, Mehboob's *Ek Hi Rasta* and B.T.'s *Basant* before he joined the screen.

What screen-name should be given to this new film recruit was another problem that faced the Bombay Talkies' bosses. Three names were suggested in the beginning: Jehangir, Vasudev and Dilip Kumar. Devika Rani's choice fell on Dilip Kumar though Yusuf Khan preferred either of the other two.

Anyway, the final choice was made and the shy, modest Yusuf Khan became Dilip Kumar, the celluloid hero. "When I faced the camera on the first day on sets of *Jwar Bhata*, I felt like a student who had come to the examination-hall without any preparations whatsoever," he confessed recounting his maiden appearance before a movie camera. And, moreover, there was no advance information here like those eve-of-exam tips at Anjuman-E-Islam High School!

Devika Rani felt that this newcomer had a lot to learn in the matter of acting and he too realised that she was not quite wrong. Director Amiya Chakrabarty encouraged him to pick up the rudiments of acting by his patient, sympathetic handling.

When *Jwar Bhata* was released, remarks of critics were not particularly kind. "Stick to your hockey, Yusuf," a college friend of his said while reviewing his debut in a film-magazine. "A camera-shy youngster," wailed another film-critic. But those in film-acting gave him all the encouragement. After the pre-



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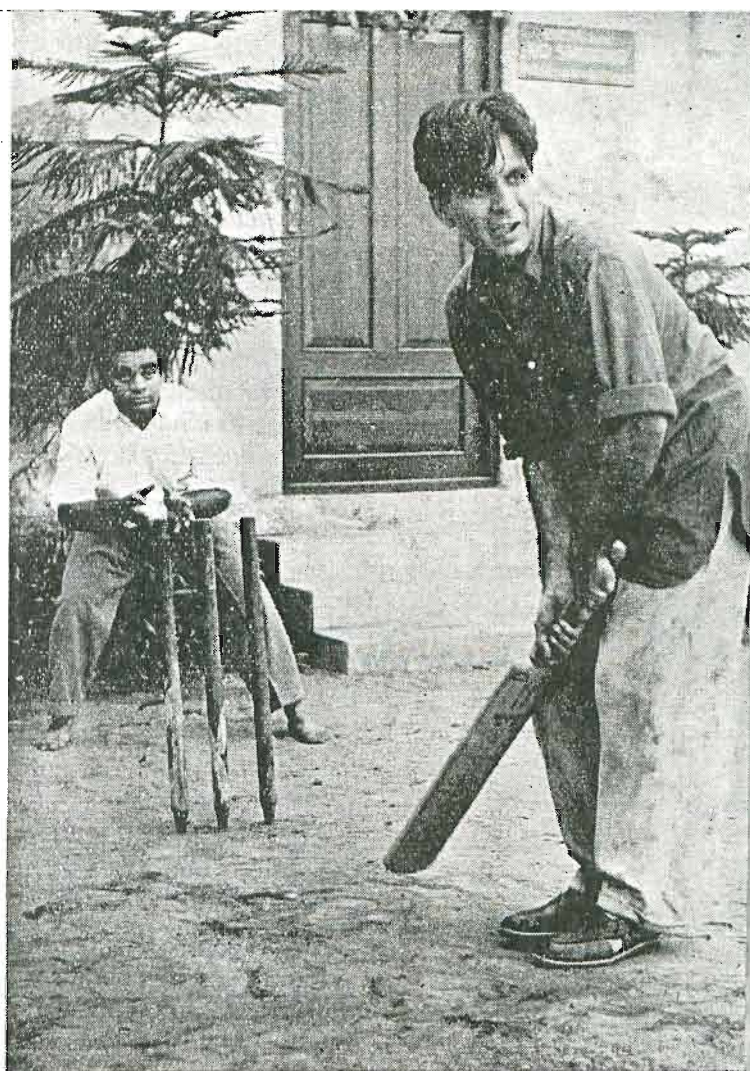
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wanted another film-
ent. After the pre-

miere of *Jwar Bhata*, veteran Moti-
lal went so far as to pat him up and
said: "You are quite good. Stick to
it." And Dilip stuck to it. He was
on a two-year contract with Bom-
bay Talkies on a monthly salary of
Rs. 625.

The break that the late Amiya
Chakrabarty gave him through this
film has not been forgotten by
Dilip even today. Nearly eight
years after *Jwar Bhata* when we
met him on the sets of *Daag* which
was being produced and directed
by Chakrabarty, Dilip recalled his
early days before the film-camera.
"There goes the man who picked
me up. He helped me a lot and he
has been kind to me always," he
told us pointing his finger towards
Director Amiya Chakrabarty who
was busy arranging a shot at the
other end of the set. Dilip has
great respect for Amiya Chakrabar-
ty whom he affectionately called
"Bhaiya" (brother).

Jwar Bhata was followed by
Pratima directed by Jairaj for
B.T. Then came *Milan* directed by
the veteran maestro of megaphone,
Nitin Bose. The story of *Milan* was
adapted from Gurudev Rabindra-
nath Tagore's literary master-
piece "The Wreck." It was indeed
an education for Dilip to act in
Milan. "Working under Nitin Bose gave me a new conception about acting.
From him I learnt the basic essentials of histrionics. Before that my idea of film-
acting was 'turn this side,' 'smile' and 'heave a sigh of relief' and such trite ex-
pressions. It was in *Milan* that I realised the subtleties of little gestures and
nuances and I am grateful to Nitin Bose for his extremely useful grooming," he
recalls.

MILAN established Dilip as a star who could really act and it proved the
turning point in his life as an actor. Then he waited patiently for a really
worthwhile role and finally played the patriot martyr in Filmistan's *Shaheed* di-
rected by Ramesh Saigal. His performance in *Shaheed* won him universal
praise and people felt Dilip Kumar had come to stay on the silver screen.
Came Wadia's *Mela* and Shaukat Hussain's *Jugnu* and established him as a po-



Despite the make-up and grease-paint, Dilip Kumar enjoys nothing more than a merry game of cricket along the studio compound in between the "takes" of his pictures. Here he is seen batting on the improvised studio-pitch during a shooting interval with comedian Mukri serving as an unrehearsed wicket-keeper.

pular hero with a box-office pull. The combination of Kamini Kaushal and Dilip Kumar in *Shaheed*, *Nadiya Ke Paar*, *Shabnam* and *Arzoo* made them a very popular romantic team of Indian screen.

With more acting successes like Dharamsey's *Anokha Pyar*, Mehboob's *Andaz*, Nitin Bose's *Deedar*, and Asif's *Hulchul*, he became the rage of film-audiences. With his intensely moving facial expressions and with overwhelming pathos highlighting his roles, he touched the very core of people's hearts. With his tear-jerking portrayals, he was acknowledged as the unrivalled master of the tragic touch.

He was not only acclaimed as a people's Hamlet; he was accepted as someone who approximated to people's ideal of a lovable hero: sad, dreamy, delicate and yet far from being a celluloid sissy. People who came to see him had the unique experience of shedding tears and yet yearning to see more of his inspired acting. Audiences went home emotionally shaken but satisfied and keenly aware that Dilip Kumar reflected in himself so much of the social character in a little world of their own.

He rose to newer heights of sublime tragedy in Ranjit's *Jogan*. In a self-effacing role that required him to act with the maximum restraint, he literally breathed life by his sensitive portrayal. Mehboob's colour picture *Aan* brought him international laurels and he further consolidated his reputation as Indian screen's top favourite through *Babul*, *Footpath*, *Tarana*, *Sangdil*, *Daag*, *Shikast*, *Amar*, *Azaad*, *Uran Khatola* and *Insaniyat*.

His performances as a blindman in *Deedar* and as a liquor-addict in *Daag* were veritable gems of acting. In fact, his portrayal in *Daag* earned for him the Clare Award. No less outstanding were his performances in Zia Sarhady's *Footpath* and Daryani's *Tarana*. In *Azaad*, he surprised all by his pleasant portrayal of a comedy role.

His other notable films include *Devdas*, *Musafir*, *Yahudi*, *Naya Daur*, *Madhumati* and *Paigham*. Among his recent acting triumphs are *Mughal-E-Azam*, *Kohinoor* and his own independent production *Gunga-Jumna*. He has also won the Filmfare Awards for his acting in *Devdas*, *Azaad*, *Naya Daur* and *Kohinoor*.

DESPITE his heavy pre-occupation with studio-life, he is very much attached to his family. After the death of his parents in 1949, he shares the burden of looking after family affairs. He lost his elder brother Ayoob in 1953 and now they are six sisters and five brothers. According to Dilip, one seldom feels lonely with a big family and such a nice company gives one the sense of social solidarity. His younger brother Nasir Khan is the only member of the family to follow in the footsteps of the elder brother.

His residence at Pali Road in Bandra, where he has shifted from the old family house situated nearby at Mala, is always full of friends and visitors. This, though a glowing tribute to his popularity, gravely upsets his daily schedule. He has a tender heart with a sneaking regard for the suffering and the less privileged. He, therefore, gives equal attention to everyone who calls on him whether it is a top-rank film-star or a poor chaprassi. A common



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Chokha Pyar, Mehboob's became the rage of film-lovers and with overwhelming core of people's hearts. He is the unrivalled master

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Ranjit's *Jogan*. In a maximum restraint, he has booted his reputation. *Path, Tarana, Sangdil*,

as a liquor-addict in *Daag* earned for him performances in Zia Sarbajit's all by his plea-

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is very much attached to. In 1949, he shares the other Ayoob in 1953. Dilip, one seldom sees one the sense of only member of the

has shifted from full of friends and gravely upsets his mind for the suffering of everyone who passes. A common

friend told us that on the quiet he arranges free medical aid for many poor people in the neighbourhood.

His dress is very simple. Mostly he puts on a white or cream shirt and light-coloured trousers. It is a rare sight to see Dilip Kumar wrapped up in a close-fitting coat and neck-tie.

There is certainly a method about the alleged madness of his thick, overgrown tufts of hair and his specialised way of keeping them in a peculiar position. "The much-maligned Dilip Kumar hair-style is more a creation of necessity than any new fangled vogue of fashion," he startled us with his low-down on his much imitated hair-style.

To illustrate the point, he combed his hair in different styles—standing before the mirror in the studio make-up room. While demonstrating his difficulty in doing so, he explained that though he would very much like to have different hair-styles in different pictures, it was not possible because the moment he starts acting, his stiff hair comes down easily in the same ruffled, unruly pattern over his face. And if he tries to keep it in any new fashion, he has to restrain his movements in acting to keep the hair in that way. As this would seriously affect his mobility of action, he has stuck to the present style. It is, of course, not his fault if film-fans try to imagine themselves as *Chhota* Dilip Kumars by not only taking it as a hair-style but also by imitating it on a mass scale.

In 1954, when film-stars in Bombay took out a procession for the relief of flood victims and moved about in the main thoroughfares of Bombay, Dilip Kumar, who stood in a truck shouting for help (not for himself but for the flood-victims), was richer by at least one hundred combs at the end of the day. His fans had presented him these combs to keep his unruly hair in respectable shape!

He gets a huge fan-mail but has neither the time nor the inclination to reply to all. Once in a way, he scribbles a few lines in reply to sensible fan-letters. Once he appointed his younger sister to look after his fan-mail on Rs. 100 a month, but she got engrossed in her own work and chucked up the job.

Dilip Kumar may be a hero to the rest of the world but his younger sister cares two hoots for his stardom and makes big fun of the elder brother which, of course, is a privilege of every little sister.



Dilip, one of the top tragedians of Indian screen, is unbelievably jovial in real life. He helps Raj Kapoor in picking Ashok's pocket at a happy get-together of film personalities.

At home, Dilip is a very informal, very generous soul and does not rule the domestic roost like an elderly Fuehrer. The same air of cordiality and disarming informality characterises his behaviour on the sets.

HE brings warmth and a new life to the humdrum studio-atmosphere with his abundant sense of humour. Cricket is a game after his heart and in between "takes" he plays cricket with a tennis ball in the studio compound with those present. It's a sight for the gods to watch Dilip Kumar in his grease-paint and make-up batting on an improvised pitch in the studio compound with a gusto that even Mushtaq, Imtiaz, Umrigars and Nayudus will envy. Besides his unorthodox batting and bowling with the tennis ball, his impromptu cricket commentary is a treat for the ears.

It sometimes runs in a *La Talyarkhan* manner: "Here's Bedser bowling in the Test match to Yusuf Khan now 94 not out . . . only six runs short for his century . . . well done India against England. Yusuf Khan plays cautiously . . . a delightful innings . . . Bedser bowls and another glorious four . . . Haji Malang Bawa . . . two runs short of century, now here's a big hit and . . ."

"Come on Dilip, be ready for the take," comes the voice from the director and Yusuf Khan, the Test player of his imagination, again becomes Dilip Kumar, the film hero, back on the sets.

To outside observers, his tennis ball variety of cricket in between 'takes' appears some inconsequential fun, but he does so for a very legitimate reason. As he took pains to explain it to us, besides giving him some diversion from the monotony of the studio routine, this merry game of cricket helps him a lot in relieving the emotional tension of acting and after loosening both his limbs and his nerves in an easy game of cricket, he faces the next shot with renewed vigour and freshness. Once during outdoor shooting for a picture at Indore, he had a very enjoyable cricket practice with such stalwarts of the game as the great C. K. Nayudu, Mushtaq and Sarwate.

HE loves classical music and admires the concerts of celebrated *ustads* like Faiyaz Khan, Bade Ghulam Ali, Wilayat Hussain etc. He tried to learn violin but gave it up for want of time. At home he prefers to listen to symphonies. He believes that he would be able to give a more-inspired performance on the sets provided there is background music in tune with the situation. Of course, he realises it as impossible in the present circumstances, as it involves serious technical problems. He has a flair for singing. He sang his own lines, in a duet with Lata Mangeshkar, in *Musafir*.

He likes lawns, fresh flowers and the lush greenery of the countryside. The garden in his compound is his haven of escape. During off days, he likes to go to Poona. The place has some nostalgic memories for him of his pre-film career. Unlike other stars, he has no particular fascination for pets.



He likes company, but one or two at a time and that too select friends. He just abhors a crowd which would merely sit around and gossip for hours together about nothing particular or which would keep glued to its seat discussing anything from social scandals to the latest model of electric cooker. "I like solitude and can stand it for months together, but with books and an occasional choice friend," he claims.

At college, Dilip's favourite poet was Shelley and during his spare-time now, he reads plenty of English, Urdu and Persian literature. His pet authors range from Thomas Hardy to Bernard Shaw and Somerset Maugham to Maupassant. He takes scholarly interest in current literary trends and it is an unforgettable experience to hear him reciting some memorable bits of Urdu poetry from Faiz and Ghalib in his gayer moments.

He is an interesting conversationalist and could discuss with equal ease subjects varying from war and peace, and growth and development of different civilisations to oriental philosophy and problems of film-industry.

He surprised the members of the World Press at Karlovy Vary Festival in 1956 by ably putting forward the case of the Indian film industry with authentic facts and figures at a press conference.

"Yes, I do believe artists should mix with people, study and understand things properly," he said answering our question. "The company you keep, books you read, the things you discuss—all these go to give you that temperament of an accomplished artist."

"I have not achieved that temperament", he modestly added, "I have to put more effort and I realise that it is a difficult and a most strenuous job."

He believes that people who have made good in film-industry are those who have actually done floor work and he cited the examples of Shantaram, Chandulal Shah, Mehboob, Kardar and S. Mukerjee. Many people belonging to royal families have at different times approached him for film-production and he has always advised them to invest in business they knew.

ON the much-discussed question of his marriage, his remarks are no less illuminating. When pressed to give his opinion about the matter, he told us with a dreamy look in his eyes that his conception of a wife was "somebody who would give solace and peace, a soothing company when one returns home after a day's hard work...someone to look forward to when you work...I may look conservative but I prefer such a person to a film-star. However, I don't know how it is all going to shape up for me..."

We told him that he was far too reserved to take any initiative. When he is reminded how shy he was at the time of his first picture *Jwar Bhata*, his ready reply is: "Even now I am not so terribly gallant."

Thanks to his reputation as a *dukhi admi*, fans don't trouble him much but still he has some memorable experiences. Once, while he was getting into a car from Cricket Club of India, a small crowd collected and tore up bits of

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his shirt as souvenirs. His fans belong to all sections and all ages. Not long ago, audiences at a local variety entertainment show were surprised to see an old lady of 50 approaching Dilip and asking for an autograph. When the perturbed Dilip politely asked her why she had taken the trouble of walking up to him instead of sending the child who wanted the autograph, she blushing confessed that she had no children and that the autograph book belonged to her.

FAR from making him swollen-headed or self-complacent, success and fame have mellowed his personality and he still takes enormous pains to bring life and realism in his acting.

In *Daag* there was a scene where the drink-addicted hero rushes to the closed liquor shop in a frantic, breathless manner. Before facing the camera for this shot, Dilip started running round the sets. His behaviour intrigued us. He ran about for some time and then entered the set panting and heaving. And cameras started cranking. When we saw the performance on the set and later on, this scene on the screen, we were struck by the natural effect of breathlessness he had succeeded in creating by actually running before the 'take'. Far from taking the trouble of actually sprinting before the shot, any self-complacent actor would have remained content by creating an artificial gasp before the camera, but Dilip's sincere effort to portray the scene realistically gave us some inkling about the secret of his success as one of filmdom's most talented actors.