

PUNJAB ARTS FESTIVAL HONOURS YILMAZ GÜNEY



Gursharan Singh accepting photos of Yilmaz Güney.

By Our Special Correspondent

Jalandhar: On 26th January this year, when the Indian rulers and their officials were busy celebrating their "Republic Day" at a state-managed show in a stadium here, the people of Jalandhar witnessed another programme in Desh Bhagat Yaadgar Hall (a hall built in memory of revolutionary martyrs).

The programme was organised under the auspices of Punjab Lok Sabha Manch (Punjab people's cultural forum) with Gursharan Singh, an eminent and very popular Punjab dramatist, as its president. The programme featured revolutionary culture which had made its way into Punjab during the historic Naxalbari uprising of the late 1960s. By noon the hall was

packed to capacity with nearly 1500 revolutionary workers, democrats and cultural workers, hailing from all over the state. Many Nepalese workers also participated.

The programme began with the singing of the *Internationale* and lasted over 17 hours. It was comprised of revolutionary songs, poems and plays. The whole night-long session of plays was dedicated to Yilmaz Güney, the great revolutionary cinematographer. At the beginning of the session, all the men, women and children in the audience stood in their seats and observed two minutes of silence in memory of this great revolutionary artist. "Art is a weapon, art is an arm—art is a language....If you don't respect the

language of art then this weapon kills you." This quote from Yilmaz on art was written on a large decorative banner hung on the stage.

The hall echoed with revolutionary slogans as a set of photographs from Yilmaz's life and films (taken from *A World To Win*) was presented to Gursharan Singh, a man who some consider the Yilmaz Güney of Punjab. Gursharan Singh, who found it difficult to hold his emotions at this honour, expressed his resolve to work with even greater dedication and conviction for the revolution and called upon cultural workers all over the globe to learn from Yilmaz's spirit in their struggle for people's culture. ■