

UK focus on third world cinema

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THE major gain of every film festival emerges in the exciting people you meet — some reputed, others virtually unknown. In that respect Filmotsav '84 was no different, and one of the most interesting persons I happened to come across was a young lady from Great Britain, Ms. Parminder Vira.

It was at the Seminar on African Cinema held at the Air India Auditorium that I noticed her distributing a well designed booklet on the Third Eye Festival held in London during October-November 1983. I realised that very little was known to us in India about this festival which, with the passing years, would

surely become a major event. I therefore sought an appointment with Parminder to know more about the Third Eye Festival.

This festival was inaugurated by Prema Karanth whose Kannada film "Phanyamma" was selected as the inaugural film. Prema Karanth and N. V. K. Murthy read papers during the

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five-day symposium in connection with the festival. Though the focus of the Third Eye Festival was on Third World Cinema, the most prominent place was given to Indian cinema, and even the festival brochure carried an Indian motif in the form of an Indian Dalit woman. The other films from India that were screened included "Bhavni Bhavai", "Manthan", "Akrosh" and "Sadgati".

Parminder Vira, at the young age of twenty-seven, is the art adviser to the Greater London Council under whose auspices the festival was held last year. Parminderspoke to me of the different ethnic groups now settled in the U.K. The Greater London Council operates on different levels, and its Arts and Recreation Committee felt that though the Third World was so rich in the field of arts, these works remained relatively unknown. The Council set about to rectify this lacuna, and set up a fund of one million pounds for this purpose. The first step was to organise the Third Eye Festival in London.

Parminder told me that thirty-one feature films and thirty-three short films from Asia, Africa, North America and Latin America were screened and were well patronised by all sections of Londoners, Europeans, Asians and Africans. The five-day symposium was a major achievement, bringing together film makers and film lovers alike. This provided an excellent opportunity to film makers from the Third World to identify the common problems of distribution, exhibition and finance. The question of co-productions also came to the fore.

connection with the festival. An elaborate programme of screening of Third World films is being worked out. These screenings will be held in Community Centres, Universities, film societies and also at cinemas. An attempt will be made to see that the directors of the films being screened are present, so that the screenings may be followed by discussions. The objective is to introduce Third World cinema in different parts of the UK.

Incidentally, it was Parminder herself who thought of the name Third Eye Festival, and if more is to be heard about Third World cinema in the years to come, the credit will go to dedicated people like Parminder Vira who are tackling the issue with missionary zeal.



Ms. Parminder Vira.

SYMPOSIUM TOPICS

The topics that were tackled at the symposium were "Structure of the Film Industry", "The Politics of Cinema" and "Representation of Women in Third World Cinema" among others. Haile Germa presented the keynote address.

A provisional Executive Secretariat has been set up in London to do the spade work towards the ultimate formation of a Third World Film Makers' Association, and from India Shyam Benegal and Mrinal Sen are on the Advisory Committee. Parminder is the co-convenor along with June Givanni.

The aim and purpose of such an association will be to promote the development and dissemination of films which reflect the aspirations of the masses in the Third World. The committee will also work towards the advancement of the racial, sexual, economical, linguistic, cultural and religious liberation from oppression and domination. The very first step in this direction would be the establishment of an international symposium of Black and Third World film makers. The next Third Eye Festival is scheduled to be held in 1985.

Parminder is working on the establishment of a film library to store films from the Third World. Meanwhile, the Greater London Council has sanctioned thirty-five thousand pounds for the publication of a book covering the symposium held last year in

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