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MRINAL SEN PRODUCTIONS

presents

একদিন প্রতিদিন  
EKDIN PRATIDIN  
AND QUIET ROLLS THE DAY

a MRINAL SEN film



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E K D I N P R A T I D I N



Photo no. 1

MAMATA SHANKAR plays CHINU



Photo no. 2

MAMATA SHANKAR



Photo no. 3

GITA SEN plays the MOTHER



Photo no. 4

SREELA MAJUMDAR plays MINU



Photo no. 5

GITA SEN and SREELA MAJUMDAR



Photo no. 6

SREELA MAJUMDAR

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## B I O G R A P H I E S

### GITA SEN

(plays the Mother in "EKDIN PRATIDIN")

Born in 1930. Spent major part of her life in acute poverty. Started as a group theatre activist, got involved in Indian Peoples' Theatre Movement which is the cultural wing of the Communist Party of India, acted divers roles in classics as well as in plays on contemporary social and political situations. After appearing in 5 small roles - 3 in Mrinal Sen's films - this is the first major role she has in Sen's film. She remains basically a housewife and in private life is Sen's wife.

### SREELA MAJUMDAR

(plays Minu, the second daughter, in the film)

Born in 1959. EKDIN PRATIDIN is her second film, her first being Sen's PARASHURAM (The man with the axe). She also passed through intense poverty and squalor. Now a group theatre activist. Also acts in radio plays. Since, in India, glamour plays a vital role in finding a place in the cinema, her chances of getting into regular film-world is bleak.

### MAMATA SHANKAR

(plays the breadwinner, Chinu)

Born in 1955. Basically a dancer and choreographer, she is the daughter of the famous dancer-choreographer Uday Shankar and niece of Ravi Shankar. Had her debut in Sen's ROYAL HUNT, followed by splendid performance in THE OUT-SIDES by Mrinal Sen. Has so far acted in a couple of other films. This is her third appearance in Sen's film.

### MRINAL SEN in National & International Festivals

- Thrice receipients of the President's Gold medals as the maker of the best national feature films.
- Twice adjudged as the best national director.
- Regular national award winner.

International Scene: His films are being regularly presented in  
International Film Festivals. Received so far

- Twice Silver Prizes at Moscow Festival 1975, 1979.
- Twice Karlovy Vary awards: Best actor 1972, Jury's special award 1978
- Critics awards: Fipresci, Cidalc (thrice).
- Served as member of the International Jury at Tehran, Mannheim, Nyon, Leipzig, New Dehli and this year at Karlovy Vary.



## B I O G R A P H I E S

### GITA SEN

(la mère dans "EKDIN PRATIDIN")

A passé une majeure partie de sa vie dans la pauvreté. Elle débuta avec un groupe de théâtre activiste, puis prit part à l'Indian Peoples' Theatre Movement qui est l'aile culturelle du Parti Communiste de l'Inde. Elle a joué divers rôles aussi bien classiques que contemporains, surtout dans des pièces à fond social ou politique. Au cinéma, on l'a vue dans 5 petits rôles - dont 3 dans des films de Mrinal Sen - et c'est son premier grand rôle. Elle est principalement une femme d'intérieur et dans la vie elle est l'épouse de Mrinal Sen. Née en 1930.

### SREELA MAJUMDAR

(Minu, la deuxième fille dans le film)

Née en 1959. EKDIN PRATIDIN est son second film, son premier ayant été le film de Sen PARASHURAM (L'Homme à la hache). Elle a aussi vécu dans une extrême pauvreté. Elle fait partie aujourd'hui d'une troupe de théâtre. Elle a aussi joué dans des pièces radiophoniques. Depuis qu'en Inde l'apparence physique joue un rôle aussi important pour décrocher un contrat, elle a perdu beaucoup de ses chances pour obtenir un rôle.

### MAMATA SHANKAR

(Elle est Chinu, le gagne-pain)

Née en 1955. Elle est danseuse et choréographe à la base. Elle est la fille du fameux danseur et choréographe Uday Shankar et la nièce de Ravi Shankar. Elle fit ses débuts dans le film de Sen LA CHASSE ROYALE, et poursuivit, avec une performance très remarquée, dans LES MARGINAUX, de Sen toujours. On l'a vue jusqu'à aujourd'hui dans 2 autres films, et c'est son troisième rôle avec Sen.

### MRINAL SEN dans les festivals nationaux et internationaux

- A reçu trois fois la médaille d'or du Président comme meilleur réalisateur national.
- Elu deux fois meilleur metteur en scène national.
- A reçu l'équivalent de l'Oscar en Inde.

Ses films ont été régulièrement présentés dans des festivals internationaux. Il a reçu jusqu'à ce jour

- Deux fois le prix d'Argent au festival de Moscou 1975, 1979
- Deux prix à Karlovy Vary, meilleur acteur 1972, prix spécial du jury 1978
- Distinctions de la critique: Fipresci, Cidalc (3 fois)
- A été membre du jury des festivals internationaux de Téhéran, Mannheim, Nyon, Leipzig, New Dehli et, encore cette année Karlovy Vary.

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OFFICIAL SELECTION IN COMPETITION  
CANNES 1980



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at CANNES

*press-attaché Marie-Christine Malbert*

*CACTUS FILM Eliane Stutterheim and Daniel Ori Palais Rouaze App. 708, Phone 38 36 43*

## CREW

screenplay and direction

MRINAL SEN

based on a story by

AMALENDU CHAKRABORTY

photography

K.K. MAHAJAN

sound

sound mixing

JYOTI CHATTERJEE

editing

GANGADHAR NASKAR

art designing

SURESH CHANDRA

production

MRINAL SEN PRODUCTIONS

world sales

MRINAL SEN PRODUCTIONS

CACTUS FILM EXPORT

Eliane Stutterheim, Daniele Ori

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35 mm - 94 min - 2600 m - 5 reels - 1:1.66 - Eastmancolor

original version : bengali

o.v. with english subtitles

o.v. with french subtitles

## CAST

SATYA BANERJEE

the father

GITA SEN

the mother

MAMATA SHANKAR

Chinu

SREELA MAJUMDAR

Minu

and

TAPAN DAS

UMANATH BHATTACHARYA

ARUN MUKERJEE

and others





### SHORT SYNOPSIS

Mrinal Sen's latest film, EK DIN PRATIDIN (And quiet rolls the Day) is set in Calcutta and relates, in a sinister, tumbledown abode, the distress and long hours of waiting of a Bengali family when Chinu, the eldest daughter, their only bread-winner, does not come home from office. Father, mother and the kids bemoan the fickleness of Chinu. They think of a thousand hypotheses. But while on her arrival, the tension subsides, the real drama persists : their total dependence (moral and pecuniary) upon her, the frustration that destroys them, their fury against themselves.

Sen himself has said, regarding EK DIN PRATIDIN, "that it's not just a feminist film but that across this story one explores the conflicts and contradictions of the middle class in India, who, suffering from acute insecurity, is heading inevitably towards its own destruction."

(Nasreen M. Kabir)



## SYNOPSIS

Hrishikesh Sen Gupta, once a petty clerk and now living an uncomfortable retired life, is the head of a 7-member family occupying two rooms in a weather-ravaged house built way back in the year of the Sepoy Mutiny.

The film describes the hourly accounts of a long wait in the household when one evening Chinu, the eldest daughter and the family's bread-winner, does not come back from her office. Calcutta being always an unpredictable city in its moods, the first two hours of the waiting do not cause much concern. When the parents begin to whisper worries between themselves and even express openly, Minu, the second daughter studying in the university, snubs them but feels somewhat uncertain within herself.

Time passes and the night grows. As the night deepens, tension mounts. Thus, spun over a few hours from early evening to late night, the film captures experiences with time that becomes increasingly oppressive.

Hoping against all hopes the members of the family still wait for Chinu while the people in the neighbourhood react in diverse ways. After a frantic search and an agonising wait till two hours before dawn it is clear that it is all over and that she will not come.

Now is the crucial time when, afraid of looking at the dismal future in the absence of the bread-winner, the members of the family hurl against one another revealing a truth that the picture of peace and harmony in a middle-class milieu is just a facade; the inside is all chaos.

While, thus, the family grows into a hell-house, one attacking the other and showing ugly teeth, Chinu comes home in a taxi. Instantly does the tension subside...



## TALK WITH MRINAL SEN



In twenty years as a film maker, Mrinal Sen, the most aggressively politically-motivated of Indian film directors, long considered as the Bengali "Jean-Luc Godard", has explored the subject of the ultimate poverty in India - a frank and brutal vision quite opposed to the humanism of Satyajit Ray, his old enemy.

His trilogy on Calcutta, INTERVIEW, CALCUTTA 71, PADATIK (THE GUERRILLA FIGHTER), has led him from the depiction of unemployment to that of leftist movement. But today Mrinal Sen is trying to escape from Bengali : he has made MRIGAYAA (THE ROYAL HUNT) in hindi, in 1976, and OKA OORIE KATHA (A VILLAGE STORY) in telegu, in 1977. The locale has changed, but Mrinal Sen's ardour remains.

These films are the work of a first rate director of international stature, if not fame. In those two films Mrinal Sen's personality explodes : an acute knowledge of oppression and poverty, a feeling of revolt and violence, a passionate love of life, a more and more confirmed style for films which draw their power from the physical presence of well-chosen and well-directed actors. Mrinal Sen substitutes the humanism of poverty with the unbearable fury of a scream.



MRIGAYAA (THE ROYAL HUNT) is an uncompromising demonstration of how the mechanisms of oppression work, using the metaphorical figure of the hunter and the hunted. The film is set in the hills of Orissa during British rule. Two men, a young native and the English administrator of the territory, both hunters, are brought together in an incongruous relationship.

An unequivocal rapprochement, to be sure : a world stands between the deep jungle with the village huts and the sumptuous residence of the Englishman (Mrinal Sen reminds us here of the tint and the colors - green - of Losey in THE GO-BETWEEN), a world separates the bow and arrows from the newest rifle.

The climax undertakes to shatter this illusion : the colonial administration rewards the traitor who has denounced a young revolutionary of the same village and condemns to death the native hunter who has killed the usurer, his wife's predator. The trial breaks down the masks : the colonial administration and its servants can indulge with impunity in the Royal hunt, the man-hunt. The native, imprisoned in a kind of cage, becomes the true game, the hunted.

OKA OORIE KATHA (A VILLAGE STORY) seems to go further towards revolt. The two main characters, a father and his son, live in a hut outside the village. Poor but free, the father has lived through too much to accept more oppression. If to work means further enriching people richer than he, then he refuses to work.

This independent hobo, who lives more or less from pilfering and petty thefts from gardens, has cut himself off from all intercourse with society, thus enabling him to protect his purity. When by chance he gets some money, he indulges in memorable drinking-bouts during which he showers insults on the village workers. Sen describes this excruciating poverty without pathos, in fluid scenes with subdued tonality, but highlighted with buffoonery disappears only to be replaced by sudden violence and provocation that go as far as beastly screams.

When the son decides to get married, the equilibrium is shattered. The father senses danger : the forming of a family unit is already the integration into society. The intrusion of the young woman, at first comical, quickly turns into drama. The father, followed by the son, fall into a complete parasitic life. The young woman ends up dying alone in the hut : the two men are left to beg to get the money for the cremation. The strength of this pitiless but intensely tender film reminds us at times of Kurosawa's work. This praise is rather guarded...



- *Mrinal Sen, you're first and foremost a bengali film maker...*

- I'm a bengali only by accident. Let's say that I'm a film maker who lives in Calcutta. Born in a middle class family, my first interest is in the period in which I live and in the way it affects the life of the workers and peasants. If I've chosen to make my first films in Calcutta, it's because this city looks like a projection of the international scene.

In 1959 I made a film, NIL AKASHER NICHEY (UNDER THE BLUE SKY), on the existing relations between the Indians and the Chinese working in Calcutta. I showed the struggle for independence while the Chinese on their side were struggling against Japanese militarism.

Aujourd'hui, I don't very much like this film, that I find too sentimental. Its aesthetic structure is loose but, politically, I don't disown it : I wanted to say that the struggle for independence was closely linked to the demonstrations and fights against imperialism.

Then, in 1960, I made BAISHEY SRAVANA (THE WEDDING DAY), a film which, through the story of two characters, tells of the famine of 1943 in Bengal that, in one year, made five million victims. This film was shown in Venice in 1960 and I still like it a lot.

Coming back to Calcutta, I portrayed the fate of the middle classes in three films that are not solely political films. In this trilogy on Calcutta, Calcutta is but a pretence : this city allows us to show the Indian socio-political scene, and, on a larger scale, the afro-asian socio-political situation. But one should not forget that India is an essentially agricultural country. I also wanted to depict the peasant world where poverty is defined in particularly sharp images.

- *Is that why you've made films in hindi, in telegu, and not in bengali ?*

- The market for bengali films is quite limited. Even for me, who make only low-budget films (and I think that austerity is a must for the king of films I make), it's very difficult to break even with a release in Bengal only. But films must have a wide circuit release and hit the largest audience possible.

That's how I came to direct films in hindi, the spoken language of the majority of Indians. I've also made a film in oriya, a producer having allowed me to deal with poverty and the exploitation of peasants, in all freedom, in that part of India.

Of course, it's always preferable to make films in one's own language. Otherwise, the pressure imposed on us is greater. But, anyway, my subject is poverty, exploitation, and I'm convinced that there aren't different



cultures of exploitation. It's therefore not impossible to make films in different languages. Thus, my last film is in telegu, a language which is completely foreign to me : I don't understand a word of it !

- *Indians often say that poverty in Eastmancolor is but an entertainment. Can you define your aesthetic view on poverty ?*

- My aesthetics depend on my main goal, which is to communicate, to see that my audience participate in and relate to the subject of my film. As film making is a technological art that makes use, at all levels, of a thousand gadgets, it's interesting to be able to communicate, with the help of a new vocabulary, and to make the chosen subject more effective. Beauty and ugliness can both be an aesthetic experience. As far as I'm concerned, to capture beauty, I've chosen to stress upon the most horrible phenomenon of our life : poverty.

In fact, black and white, like color, can be both romantic or realistic : all depends on the attitude of the film maker. The point you raised stems from the fact that the Indian film audience has been corrupted by very bad films that are all in color and far removed from Indian reality. This conditioned habit is unfortunate but one must go beyond it.

Today, it would be ridiculous to demand that a blood stain appear on screen in dark grey and not in red. I've seen african and latin-american film in color that are brutally frank on the subject of poverty and I know of swedish films in black and white that are quite romantic.

- *In MRIGAYAA and OKA OORIE KATHA (THE ROYAL HUNT and A VILLAGE STORY), the cry, the scream, seem to become the essence of a style...*

- The cry belongs to human experience, just like the whisper. There's screaming in my films when there's a need to scream, and whispers when there's a need to whisper. But from time to time I feel the need to surpass the boundaries of day-to-day life, to make a point forcefully. It is then imperative to stick to a logic that sustains that procedure : this must be made to appear spontaneous. My motto is : only that which is emotionally true can become aesthetically true.

- *Those two films show peasants and even natives of certain tribes. How do you choose your actors for these roles ?*

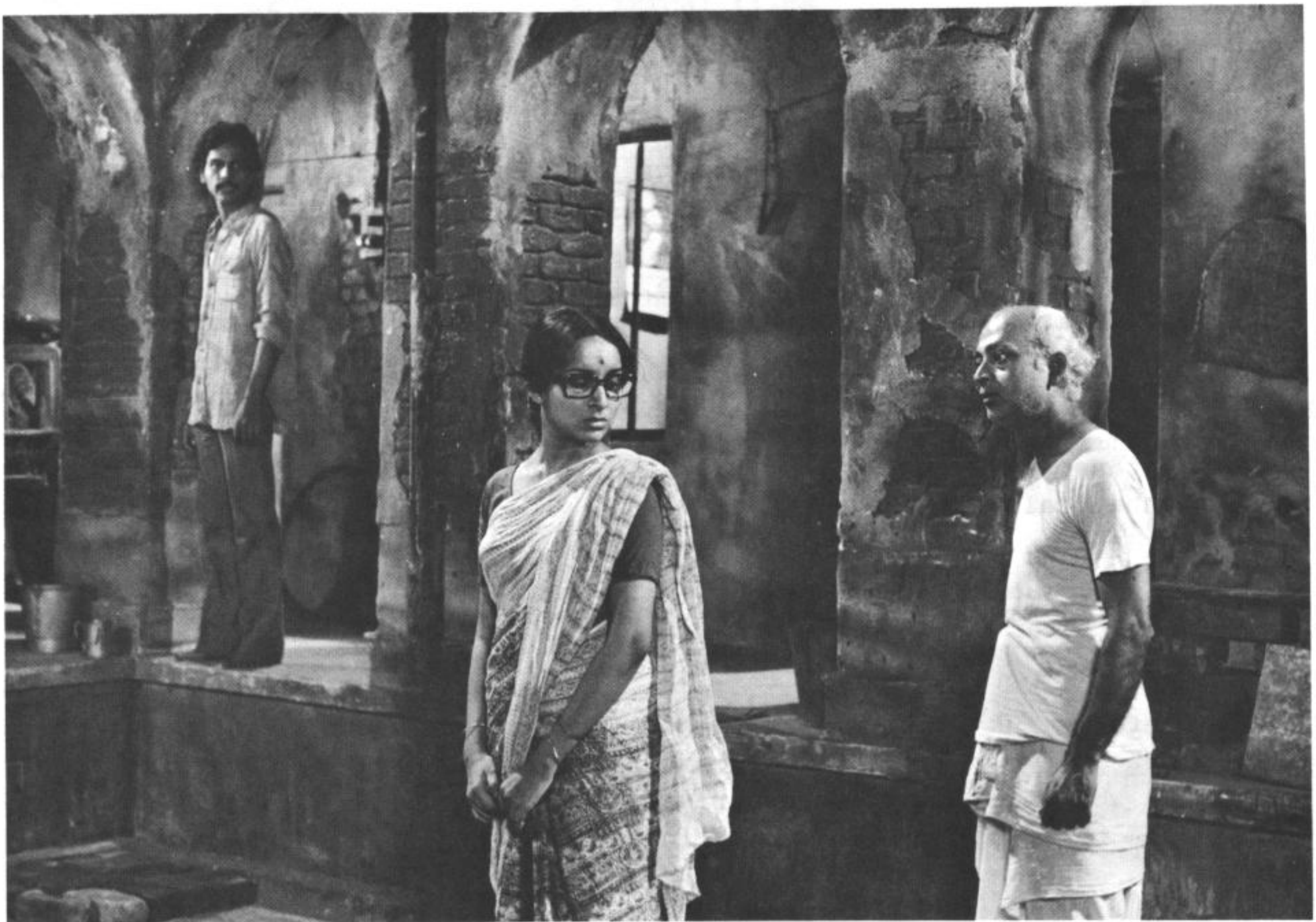
- I'd prefer to use only people picked from real life but that is unfortunately not always possible. So I cast actors who belong to theatrical companies or who have some film experience, but never screen stars : these actors would then look so outlandish in the environment in which I'd plunge

them that all credibility would be lost. Theatrical companies are legion in India, all very good with a lot of experience. Thus, often I cast new actors, chosen from these troops, in important roles, but if they go on to star in other films, then I avoid them.

In my last film in telegu, OKA OORIE KATHA (A VILLAGE STORY), half of the actors are the people of the village in which I shot the film. I don't think it's possible to teach how to act in front of a camera. I go about it this way : I read a scene, a dialogue, to the people and I watch the reactions on their face, picking out my actors accordingly. The main thing is to succeed in creating an atmosphere.

I then drive these actors on to create in terms of unwritten scenes. I give them a situation and ask them how they would react if they were involved in such a situation. I tape their views and the shooting follows according to what they have invented. In such cases it happens that I forget my script and go beyond it, in full knowledge of the risks involved.

*(Interview by Henri Micciollo,  
in Cinema 80)*





DISCUSSION WITH MRINAL SEN REGARDING "EK DIN PRATIDIN"  
(AND QUIET ROLLS THE DAY).

INTERVIEWER : Max TESSIER

M.T. - *In what conditions have you been able to produce a film like EK DIN PRATIDIN (AND QUIET ROLLS THE DAY) in today's context of highly commercial Indian films ?*

M. Sen - I produced it myself as I already had a distributor (for Bengal), but no producer and no money. So I had to borrow from various sources, put together all the money I could, and in the end the film has cost very, very little... but I'll not disclose the exact figure to anyone as producers would then ask me to make another film for the same price, and the distributors would want to pay less ! All my life I've had problems with producers, and each time I make a film, I ask myself if it's not going to be my "burial"; with each new film, my chances to make another one decrease rather than increase ! But I guess the situation has changed for the better, all the same, during the last four or five years, and unbelievable as this may seem, after this film, I've three or four producers after me, right now, with offers to make a film for them, besides my own projects, not commissioned; and this never happened before ! There's even one who called and asked me to make "a film for next year's Berlin Festival". I told him : "How could I make 'a film for Berlin' ?! I'll make a film as I think proper, to the best of my ability, without thinking of this or that festival." It's all very silly, but that's how things happen here.

- *Do you believe that EK DIN PRATIDIN will have a greater success here because the story is simpler and better structured than in your previous films, such as PARASURAM (THE MAN WITH AN AXE) or OKA OORIE KATHA (A VILLAGE STORY) ? What kind of audience does this film attract ?*

- To your first question I'd say yes, it's quite possible. And I believe this film can attract people from very different backgrounds. Up to now, as it hasn't yet been released in cinemas, it has been seen only by members of film societies, and by Calcutta's intelligentsia as well as by some students and ordinary spectators. All these people, often quite different, have shown positive reactions. Besides, they've liked the film on different levels, from quite diverse viewpoints, some from an interest in the "mystery-thriller" (the suspense of the missing girl who doesn't come back home), others finding in it symbolical and esoteric meanings. The "elitists" have said that the film was less didactic than the others, more sober, in mezzotint. Other people were more interested in the psychological relations between the characters, for example, between the two friends who set out to look for Chinu, the eldest



daughter : one of them, owner of the scooter, is more of a braggart, because he has a little more money than the other one, but he's less courageous. At the police station one of the policemen asks him if he's looking for the missing girl, and, right away, he backs down : "No, it's not me, it's my friend !", for he's afraid of being involved in the inquiry. Then, in the mortuary scene, he leaves, then comes back to get his friend, saying : "Come on, don't be stupid !" All these little touches, which are almost non-existent in current Indian films and which may seem unimportant, have not gone unnoticed by "ordinary" spectators, and I find this quite positive.

- *There's a very important scene, perhaps the most meaningful of the film. that was handled in a way that somewhat surprised me. It's the return of Chinu, which should have been the key-scene, the most powerful and which, in fact, is rather played down, as if it were an ordinary event : nothing really happens, while one would expect some kind of explosion, be it emotional. Why have you chosen this neutral approach ?*

- For me, the climax is internal, and its presence is undeniable even though I haven't exteriorized it. As a matter of fact, this is one of the most important and exacting scenes, not only of this film but of all my works. When that girl comes home in the middle of the night, which never happened before, just before she knocks on the door, her parents have a feeling that she'll never come back, that it's all over; and the attitude of the other girl, the younger sister, who criticizes her parents for their cowardice and exaggerated anxiety, is quite revealing : she makes as if she's not concerned, but in fact, deep down, she shares their anxiety. Her determination, her strength, are but skin-deep, and actually she goes to the hospital to verify her doubts. After the hospital scene, around three o'clock in the morning, she too feels abandoned and her heart quickens. She doesn't know which way to turn, but decides to adopt a "strong" attitude by starting to criticize the mother, and attack everybody, including herself !

As for the handling of the "return" scene, when the eldest sister comes home in the middle of the night, she could make a scene, but she finds it very difficult. So she just knocks on the door, composing herself, trying to appear very natural, unemotional. The mother, who has just declared that the family is "lost" because of her, feels obliged to assume that her daughter has had an "accident" or was involved into something. On the other hand, to quote Zavattini à propos of neo-realism : "We are not unaware of reality, but we are afraid to face it." In the film it's the same thing : everyone "knows", but nobody wants to face reality because they know that they've convinced themselves that if the girl is so late she must have been compromised by, or involved into, something, and it could not be the result of her own choosing, some kind of emancipation. They want to convince themselves that their good morals are safe and do not want to face reality : that's the reason why they elude this reality. If the girl had been involved in an accident, they would have had a satisfactory answer to her absence, but it's not so, and this upsets the old order of things.



- In fact, one never knows what really happened, and the whole film stands upon this voluntary desideratum ?...

- Yes, exactly. And, when she comes back, after the deadly silence that greets her, it's she who asks the first question : "What's the matter with you ? What's wrong ? I don't understand..." implying "I'm the one who feeds the family and who's responsible for you", but she doesn't say it. When she goes into the room with her sister, she opens the door, and, as the "bread-winner" of the family, must show a lot of patience. She tells her sister that her mother could have done something, whereas she hasn't done anything to look for her. She realizes how much she's indispensable to the family, in those three crucial hours. The internal tension I mentioned before is right here. As a spectator, I am satisfied with that sequence, because it affects me...

Of course, at the end, everything quiets down, but this is only on the surface. Beneath this, through the neighbours' reactions you can see a new set of values at work - for example, when that man tells the landlord who insists on the "decency" of his tenement : "I spit in the face of this kind of decency !" Nothing is taken at face value. If one is upset by the film, it's a success for me, I feel that I've succeeded, for anger springs from inside.

I was moved by a testimony yesterday : my scriptwriter told me that the wife of one of his friends, a schoolteacher, said to him, after the screening : "We knew of the existence of women's liberation movements in Indian society, the fact that various reforms in that direction have already been made, that we're enjoying a few privileges our ancestors would never have dreamed of, but it's the first time in my life that I've seen, in this film, that an Indian woman could command so much respect. I'm a soman, but I've never felt all the respect that the woman in the film could enjoy, and I feel very proud of this." This is the kind of reaction that fills me with pride.

(Calcutta, January 22, 1980)

(Views recorded by Max Tessier)



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## MRINAL SEN      biography

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Born in May, 1923 in East Bengal now Bangladesh, studied in East Bengal until 1940. Came to Calcutta to study Physics. Got interested in Sound Recording, put himself in touch with a movie studio, worked as an apprentice for a few months doing the most unprocreative maintenance job and then discovered that his interest was in something else. He left the studio and started reading on film aesthetics, very clumsily though, and began to write on the same. His writings were of very little interest to the average film goers but were liked by the serious readers. Financially his condition was, however, far less than just inadequate.

As a student Sen made contact with the Communist Party of India (CPI). Subsequently it grew more intimate than ever but he was never a card-carrying member.

During 1943-47, in the most adverse political, social and economic situations of the country, Sen found himself attracted to a new cultural movement initiated by CPI, popularly known as Indian Peoples' Theatres Association. Until 1950 Sen moved from place to place - sometime as a proof-reader, sometime as a subeditor-learner of an unknown or just known newspaper, sometime loafing about or giving private tuition to young students and almost always writting on films for the cultural organ of CPI.

Around this time he translated into bengali the posthumous czech novelette "The Cheat" by Carel Capek and also wrote a book on the life and art of Charlie Chaplin.

In 1956 Sen could find a moneybacker and made his first film which, in his own words "should not have been made at all".

In 1959 Sen made his second his film emphasising on the thesis that the Indian struggle for national liberation during the British rule was inseparable from the liberal world's fight against fascism. The story dated back to 1933-37 when India, on one hand, was having toughest time with the British India, on one hand, was having toughest time with the British colonisers and, on the other, militarist Japan attacked China. The film was a financial success and, to quote Sen himself, was a half-success artistically.

Since then Sen had been making films deriving his inspiration from the world around him where the desperate millions of his country, having known humiliation and degradation, have been fighting continuously to find a reasonable world to live in. Sen is now a regular filmmaker, writes his own scripts and is always in frantic search for his moneybackers. According to him, he has very rarely had a second experience with his producer unless he is compelled to produce his own film.

Sen is now actively associated with the Film Institute of India working as a visiting teacher and an adviser. To Sen, it is a two-way traffic, his visits to the Film Institute, giving the students his own experience and his tolerance and taking much of their youthfulness, impatience and arrogance too.

According to a recent statement by Sen, he, as a filmmaker, is not ashamed of using film as a propagandist's medium as long as it remains emotionally active and therefore artistically valid.





MRINAL SEN      filmography

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- 1956    RAAT BHOORE / night's end (or : the dawn)  
1959    NEEL AKASHER NEECHEY / under the blue sky  
1960    BAISHEY SHRAVANA / the weddingday  
1961    PUNASCHA / over again  
1962    ABASHESHEY / and at last  
1964    PRATINIDHI / the representative  
1965    AKASH KUSUM / the daydream  
1967    MATIRA MANISHA / two brothers  
         language : oriya  
1969    BHUVAN SHOME  
         language : hindi  
  
1970    ICHNAPURAN / the wishfulfilment  
         languages : hind and bengali  
1971    INTERVIEW  
1972    CALCUTTA 71  
         with Geeta Sen  
1973    PADATIK / the guerillafighter

INTERVIEW, CALCUTTA 71, PADATIK are the "Calcutta Trilogy"

- 1974    CHORUS  
1976    MRIGAYA / the royal hunt  
         language : hindi - color  
         with Mamata Shnakar  
1977    OKA OORIE KATHA / the story of a village  
         languages : telegu and hind  
         with Mamata Shankar  
  
1978    PARASURAM / the man with the axe  
         with Sreela Majumdar  
1979    EKDIN PRATIDIN / and quiet rolls the day  
         with Geeta Sen, Sreela Majumdar, Mamata Shankar

Mrinal Sen's new film EKDIN PRATIDIN is one of the major works of the new Indian cinema but to be properly understood it needs to be placed in the context of Indian cinema as a whole, both new and old. Paradoxically there is no such thing as an "Indian" film within India itself and the "new" Indian cinema is at least 25 years old.

India, as most people are aware, is the largest film-producing country in the world having reached its highest production of all time in 1979, over 700 films. In reality, the Indian cinema is not one but a multitude of regional centres producing films in 22 different languages for vastly different states. These films do not cross language borders except in rare instances and the cinema of West Bengal in the north is shown less in Tamil Nadu in the south than, for example, Swedish films are shown in Italy. Sen is primarily Bengali filmmaker, though he has worked in other regions and in other languages, so his films, like those of fellow Bengali Satyajit Ray, are rarely shown outside his own state. The traditional centre of the commercial film industry is further south in Bombay (in the state of Maharashtra) and the Hindi-language films produced there have been the most popular with the biggest audiences. This is the cliché Indian cinema of song, dance, romance and (for Western tastes) garish sets, plots and colour. The intellectual centres like Calcutta in the north and Bangalore in the south with long literary traditions have made great films but have not created an industry to match that of Bombay. Production, however, has been shifting focus greatly in recent years with state subsidies in the southern states helping to change the cinematographic pattern. This year the Bombay-produced Hindi films fell to fourth place in number with three southern states taking the lead, Kerala with Malayalam-language films, Karnataka with Kannada films and Tamil Nadu with Tamil films. There are now more cinemas in Bangalore than in Bombay while Madras, the film capital of Tamil production, is making big-budget star-studded productions that rival those of Bombay in cost and quality.

Mrinal Sen, therefore, while recognised as a major filmmaker in all parts of India by film cognoscenti, is not a national filmmaker in the way that a director in another country would be. He is, however, one of the few Indian filmmakers to work in different states in different languages including Hindi (BHUVAN SHOME), and the south Indian language Telugu (OKA OORI KATHA). He is also the only Indian filmmaker who can be said to have been involved in all three phases of the development of the new Indian cinema over the past 25 years. This development began in West Bengal in 1947 with the founding of the film society movement by Satyajit Ray and Chidananda Das Gupta and bore fruit in 1955 when Ray produced his first film, PATHER PANCHALI. Although it was greatly admired abroad, PATHER PANCHALI's greatest impact was in its home state where a new Bengali cinema began to emerge. Sen made his film debut the following year, 1956, with RAAT BHOORE (The Dawn). He did not really begin to attract attention, however, until the



1960s when he acquired a reputation as one of the most polemical Indian filmmakers mixing political and social ideas with cinematic experimentation. His 1965 film AKASH KUSUM (The daydream) (Up in the Cloud) started a two-month controversy in the journal THE STATESMAN with 50 correspondents participating including both Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen.

The second phase of the development of the New Indian cinema originated when the government began to subsidize quality cinema through the Film Finance Corporation. The first filmmaker to be funded in this way was Sen for his breakthrough Hindi-language film of 1969 BHUVAN SHOME. It was this film which created Sen's international reputation after it was screened in the Venice Film Festival and it led to his becoming the best-known Indian director after Ray through such controversial early 70s films as INTERVIEW, CALCUTTA 71 and PADATIK (The Guerilla Fighter). The second wave was centred on Bombay and threw up a large number of new talents, not all of whom could make commercially viable films but whose work in total had an amazing revitalizing effect on the moribund cinema of ideas. Among the many important new filmmakers were Mani Kaul who made the 1970 USKI ROTI and the 1973 DUVIDHA, Girish Karnad with the 1973 KAADU. Awtar Kaul with the 1973 27 DOWN and M.S. Sathyu with the 1974 GARM HAVA. These films were screened at international festivals, where they began to attract attention for Indian filmmakers other than Ray and Sen, and they also made a considerable impact at the 1975 New Dehli Film Festival. For the most part, however, they were not financial successes being too serious and arty for the entertainment-seeking mass audiences. It was left to another new filmmaker without Film Finance Corporation subsidy to find a way to reconcile art and entertainment. This was Shyam Benegal whose brilliant 1974 ANKUR (The Seedling) was popular with both audiences and critics and a big hit at the Berlin Film Festival. This was followed by the equally successful NISHAANT (night's end) and a splendid children's film CHARANDAS CHOR.

The third phase of the development of the New Indian cinema brought another geographical shift, this time to the southern states of Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Subsidies from these state governments not only encouraged local filmmakers but attracted the best filmmakers from other parts of India. Once again Mrinal Sen was in the forefront of activity making one of his best films to date OKA OORIE KATHA (A Village Story) in Telugu for Andhra Pradesh while Benegal made ANUGRAHAM (The Boon) for the same state. One of the results of the shift south was the revelation of another group of talented new filmmakers, especially B.V. Karanth with CHOMANA DUDI (Chomana's Drum) and Girish Karnad with ONDANONDU KALADALLI (Once upon a Time) in Karnataka, and G. Aravindan with THAMPU (The Circus Tent) and KUMMATY (The Bogeyman) in Kerala.

Finally it is worth considering the historical importance of Sen's EKDIN PRATIDIN as probably the most critical examination yet made of the role of



women in Indian society. There have been many films about the oppression of Indian women but been none with the determination to show just what being a "modern" independent woman in India today really means. Sen has not opted for the usual easy solutions of such films with their martyred mothers and wives but carried the discussion further into the double standards of judgement presently in effect in India, even in liberated circles. As the grandmother says in the film, it is indeed a terrible thing to be born an Indian woman.

London, May 1980,

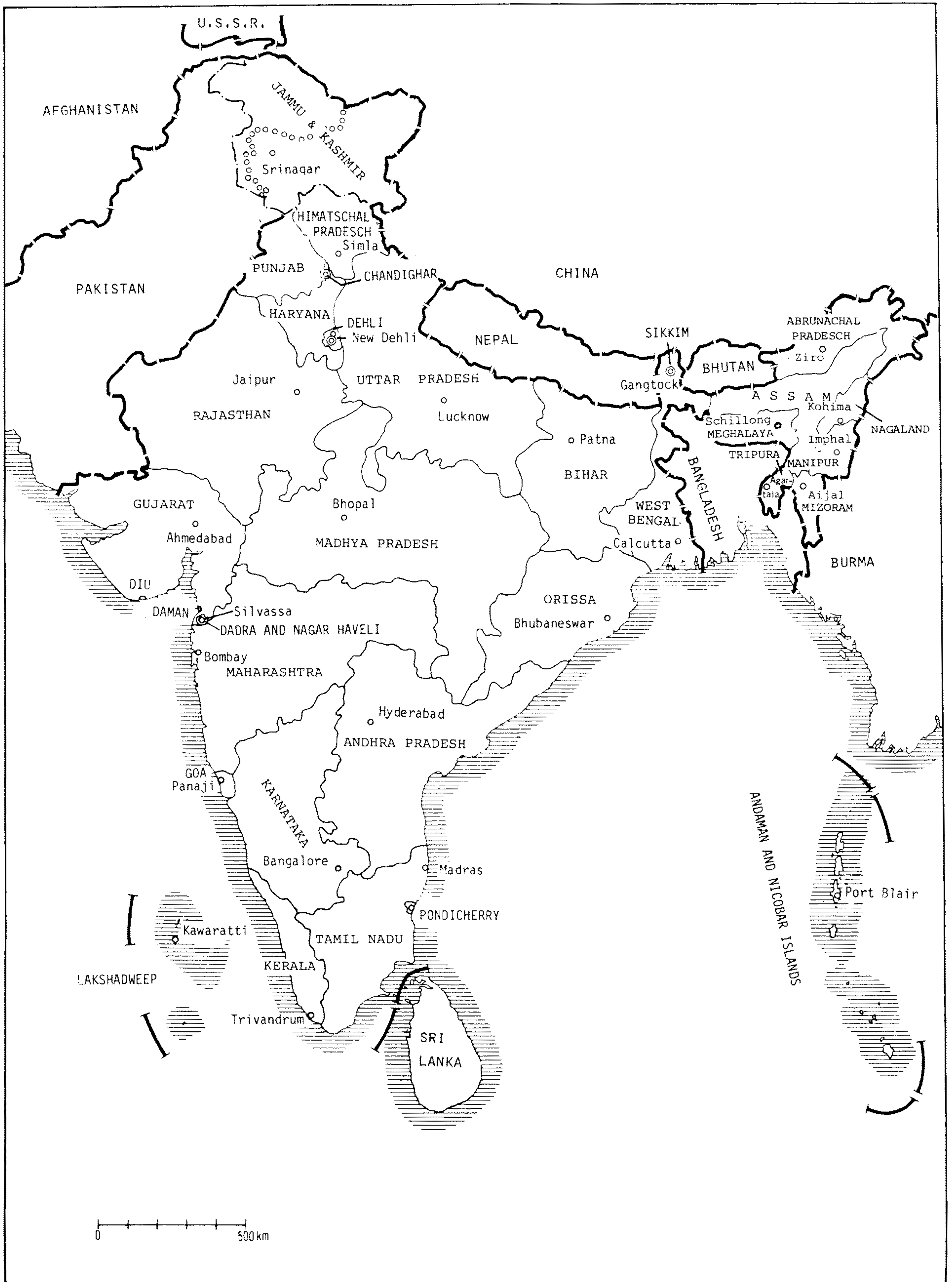
Ken WLASCHIN







# I N D I A





<u>ETAT / STATE</u>	<u>CAPITALE / CAPITAL</u>	<u>LANGUE / LANGUAGE</u>	<u>CINEMA CENTRE</u>
<u>habitants / inhabitants</u>	<u>habitants / inhabitants</u>		<u>studio- and lab facilities</u>
ANDRHA PRADESH 47'100'000	Haiderabad 1'800'000	Telegu, Urdu	Telugucinema: dominated by the formula's Hyderabad, of succes, like Hindicinema
ASSAM 16'900'000	Gauhati 123'000	Assamese, Bengali	No: cinema is improvised, shooting outdoors technicians and actors on other jobs
WEST BENGAL 48'700'000	Calcutta 8'000'000	Bengali	First prodigy of India's regional cinema Calcutta
BIHAR 60'800'000	Patna 500'000	Hindi	*
GUJARAT 30'000'000	Ahmedabad 1'800'000	Gujarati	Gujarati cinema dominated by Hindi cinema. Hindi for the urban, Gujarati for the rural audience
HARYANA 11'000'000	Chandigarh 240'000	Hindi	*
HIMACHAL PRADESH 3'600'000	Simla	Hindi, Pahari	*
JAMMU & KASHMIR 5'000'000	Srinagar 410'000	Kashmiri, Dogri, Gojiri, Urdu, Bal- ti, Dardiro, Pahari	
KARNATAKA 32.000.000	Bangalore 1'700'000	Kannada	Kannadacinema Bangalore
KERALA 24'000'000	Trivandrum 410'000	Malayalam	Malayalamcinema Trivandrum, Chritralekhasstudio's
MADHYA PRADESCH 46'100'000	Bhopal 400'000	Hindi	*
MAHARASHTRA 55'200'000	Bombay 6'000'000	Marathi	Marathicinema: like the Gujaraticinema dominated by Hindifilms, where Marathi films are oriented towards the rural public Filmcitycomplex in Goregaon outskirts Bombay  * Bombay is the centre of the Hindicinema, which is known as the indian (national) cinema
MANIPUR 1'200'000	Imphal 110'000	Manipuri	
MEGHALAYA 1'100'000	Shillong	Khasi, Janti, Garo	
NAGALAND 600'000	Kohima	Assamese, Bengali	
ORISSA 23'900'000	Bhubaneswar 110'000	Oriya	Oriyacinema
PUNJAB 15'000'000	Chandigarh 240'000	Punjabi	Punjabicinema
RAJASTHAN 25'000'000	Jaipur 620'000	Rajasthani, Hindi	*
SIKKIM 210'000	Ghangtok 15'000	English, Bhutia, Lepsha, Nepalese	
TAMIL NADU	Madras	Tamil	Tamilcinema: commercialoriented, in Madras the largest Studio's / labs of India, also used by Telugu and Malayalam filmmakers
TRIPURA 1'700'000	Agartala	Bengali, Tripuri Manipur	
UTTAR PRADESH 95'000'000	Lucknow 900'000	Hindi	*

