

21/09/2001

Battle continues over Padu Citra

Suraya Al-Attas

\* THEY'RE still at it! The "war" between Karyawan and three film associations - the Film Directors Association of Malaysia (FDAM), Film Workers Association of Malaysia (FWAM) and Artistes Association of Malaysia (Seniman) - over Padu Citra doesn't look like it's going to end anytime soon.

Padu Citra is a programme introduced by Finas (National Film Development Corporation) in 1996. Under it, every film worker in the country must register with any of the three associations, depending on their involvement in the film industry; an actor should register with Seniman, a director with FDAM and a cameraman with FWAM, etc.

Its objectives are to promote a sense of camaraderie among all artistes and film workers, upgrade the skills and level of professionalism of film practitioners and also create a strong infrastructure with which to identify the manpower required by the industry in a more effective manner.

The last few months saw Persatuan Karyawan Malaysia applying to become a member of Padu Citra. Initially, Finas remained non-committal. The only comment its director-general Shariff Ahmad would make is that the matter had to be brought up to the Finas board (of directors) before any decision could be made.

The sole "angry" voice then was Seniman, which issued several statements via its president Abu Bakar Kassim, saying that Karyawan didn't qualify as it wasn't a film association and didn't represent only the film community. Soon, FDAM and FWAM were heard echoing Seniman's sentiments.

Despite these strong objections, Deputy Information Minister Datuk Khalid Yunus went ahead and announced the inclusion of Karyawan in Padu Citra early this month. That FDAM, FWAM and Seniman were surprised by this piece of news is putting it mildly.

They argued that the decision was made without going through the normal procedures. One film-maker said: "Finas could have at least called us (the three associations) for a meeting before coming to a decision, especially since it knew how we felt. It does look like Finas got its arm twisted by certain quarters."

But the associations are not letting the matter rest. As soon as the announcement was made, they presented Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad with a memorandum, rejecting Karyawan's admittance to Padu Citra.

And so the "saga" continues ...