



Film legends rich in name but not in the pockets

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KUALA LUMPUR: Tan Sri P. Ramlee, Saloma, Datuk Aziz Sattar, Datuk Sarimah Ahmad, Mariani Ismail and Latifah Omar — these are among the big names who gave all they had to the Malay film industry, for almost nothing in return.

Several of them, including P. Ramlee, whose real name was Teuku Zakaria Teuku Nyak Puteh, even died a pauper while their production companies were said to have raked in millions in profits.

Sarimah, 69, who became famous for her roles in films like *Ali Baba Bujang Lapok*, *Ibu Mertuaku* and *Tiga Abdul*, said it was unfair for the companies to exclude them from the profits as the films were made from their efforts and talents.

"It is very sad. We are being excluded from receiving what is rightfully ours. The companies made millions but they did not even consider to give us a share.

"People think that my friends and I, who are considered legends in the film industry, are rich. But the title alone can't feed us. We are just asking for what is ours," she told *New Straits Times*.

She said requests for help from

granting the rights to television stations to air the films, like what they are doing now. DVDs of our films are being sold everywhere or shown online.

"We have made a lot of sacrifices for the industry. I even acted in *Tiga Abdul* while pregnant. At least, consider all the sacrifices we have made for the companies."

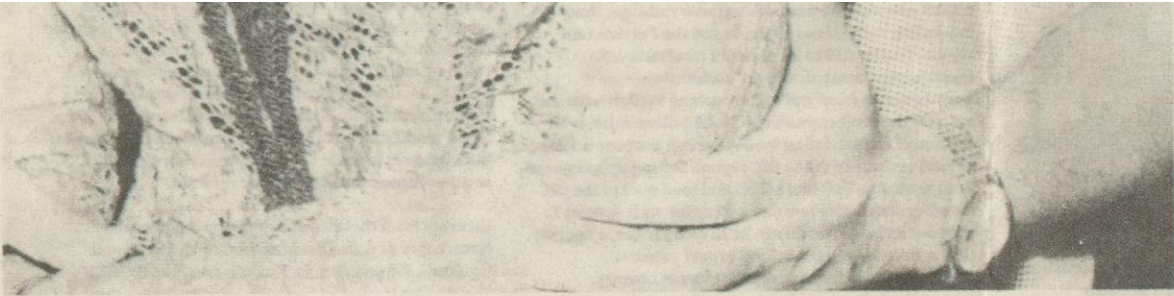
Aziz, 86, said the production companies were being heartless as they did not consider the welfare of their actors and actresses.

"They only think about profits. Just because our contracts did not say anything about royalties, they cut us out from the profits, saying the films are owned by the companies.

"Did they think that the films can be sold if not because of our efforts? When P. Ramlee died in 1973, Shaw Brothers gave his wife Saloma only RM1,000. That was not even enough for his burial, gravestones and prayer ceremonies.

"How much are they making now from the man's talents? His films have been shown thousands of times on television, sold on DVDs, both locally and internationally," said Aziz, who had already given up hope of getting a share of the profits.

Karyawan president Freddie Fernandez said there was nothing much



The late Tan Sri P. Ramlee and Latifah Omar are among the legendary Malay film stars who were not compensated well for their efforts.

'He deserves to profit from his fame'

KUALA LUMPUR: Born Teuku Zakaria Teuku Nyak Puteh @ Ramli Putih in Penang on March 22, 1929, legendary actor Tan Sri P. Ramlee starred in and directed 66 movie titles until his death at the age of 44.

He started his career in the film industry at the age of 19. The man whom everybody said had a big heart climbed the ladder of popularity through his multiple talents in acting, singing, directing and song and

script-writing.

Among his famous films were *Bujang Lapok*, *Pendekar Bujang Lapok*, *Madu Tiga*, *Labu Labi*, *Nasib Si Labu Labi*, *Tiga Abdul*, *Do Re Mi* and *Ibu Mertuaku*.

His passing on May 29, 1973 from a heart attack shocked the country and left a hole in the film industry.

In recognition of his contributions to the country's entertainment industry, P. Ramlee was awarded the

title Tan Sri in 1990 and Datuk Amar in 2009 by the Sarawak government. These were presented to his adopted daughter, Dian.

Despite his priceless contributions, P. Ramlee was said to have been not well compensated by the production company he served, and died a pauper.

His granddaughter, Najua Nasir, 25, said the actor had received only a one-time payment from Shaw Broth-

times.

She said requests for help from several parties, including government departments, came back empty as the contracts signed did not mention anything about royalties.

"During those days, we were only paid a salary of about RM170 a month. For each film we starred in, we received a bonus of between RM250 and RM500. And that was it.

"If they want to talk about agreements, the contracts only stated payments from films shown in cinemas. They did not say anything about

Malaywan president Freddie Fernandez said there was nothing much that could be done legally but the companies should compensate the stars as it was morally and ethically the right thing to do.

"The companies should consider the contribution made by their actors and actresses. If not for these men and women, they would not have raked in the profits they are enjoying now.

"If the stars are no longer here, it should be given to their descendents. Part of the money belongs to them."

“THE COMPANY MADE A LOT OF MONEY FROM MY LATE GRANDFATHER'S EFFORTS BUT IT ONLY PAID HIM A SMALL AMOUNT BACK THEN.”

— Najua Nasir, 23
granddaughter of Tan Sri P. Ramlee

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Badan Warisan Malaysia president Tun Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid with some of the pictures at the 'P. Ramlee: The Man' photo exhibition yesterday. — NST picture by Mohd Khairul Helmy

Catch a glimpse into star's life

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KUALA LUMPUR: If a picture tells a thousand words, then the "P. Ramlee: The Man" photo exhibition is set to reel fans in with thousands of stories on the country's most beloved entertainer.

Sixty photographs celebrating the legendary icon is on display, including still shots of his films from 1949 to 1973, as well as more intimate im-

ages of him as a director.

The photos are from Badan Warisan Malaysia president Tun Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid's personal collection, as he has a life-long admiration for the late entertainer.

"P. Ramlee is a genius and a multi-talented and accomplished artiste. He's a singer, composer, songwriter, actor, director, scriptwriter, and producer all rolled into one.

"In his lifetime, P. Ramlee showed what a boy unschooled in music and

in the performing arts could attain — a symbol of the eternal genius of music, acting and directing," said Ahmad Sarji.

The exhibition is being held in conjunction with the re-launch of Ahmad Sarji's two biographies on P. Ramlee — *P. Ramlee: Erti Yang Sakti* (1999) and *P. Ramlee: The Bright Star* (2003), which he co-wrote with Dr James Harding.

The reprints are available in a box-set priced at RM79. They cover the

star's films and songs, on-screen life, and other related information.

"I think another biography should be written about P. Ramlee, as there are many other aspects of him that have yet to be uncovered. There are many humorous incidents or anecdotes surrounding P. Ramlee," said Ahmad Sarji.

Organised by MPH and Badan Warisan Malaysia at the latter's office in Jalan Stonor, the event was launched yesterday by MPH manag-

ing director Datuk Ng Tieh Chuan.

Also present were Tan Sri Jins Shamsuddin and Mariani Ahmad, who once starred alongside P. Ramlee.

Admission to the exhibition, which runs between 10am and 6pm from Monday to Saturday until July 16, is free.

Those interested can call 03-21449273 or email heritage@badanwarisan.org.my for further information.