

7/22/1937 RAIVAAJA (THURSDAY)

MRS. HILDA AROMAA, A LONG-TIME AFTIVIST IN THIS FINNISH SOCIALIST CHAPTE4R, TRAVELLED TO NEW YORK CITY LAST SATURDAY TO BOARD THE BREMEN-EUROPA THAT SOON WOULD TAKE HER TO FINLAND VIA GERMANY. HILDA WILL STAY AT HER PARENT'S FARM NEAR TAMPERE WHERE HER VACATION WILL BE FAMILY ORIENTED.

{Hilda told me that when she stopped in Hamburg on her return trip, the streets were already full of brown shirted Nazi's. Little could she realize that in about five years her son having been trained in that language would be In the US forces in that country.} Roy-

11/13/1937 RAIVAAJA (SATURDAY)

HOME FROM FINLAND

Comrade Hilda Aromaa, who also spent the summer in Finland, returned on Tuesday, last week. {11/2} When this reporter spoke to her last weekend, she had about the same things to say of her visit as had the others who had also visited Finland last summer. Her comments differed in that she had stayed longer than the others, and being a theater person, she had had the opportunity to sample theater in Tampere and Helsinki as the fall seasons had opened. When I asked her what was the first play that she had seen, she replied it was "Pitkäjärveläiset" (The Long Lake folks) which was done at the Workers' Theater in Tampere. She also saw other plays there. "Juurakon Hulda" (Hulda from Juurakko) and several other new plays were in the repertoire of theaters in Tampere and Helsinki. I must say that interpretation there is truly a ripe art form. Whereas our local stages have to get along with our amateurs, not always casting the best choice for the role but rather who is available. In addition, the Finnish actors live their roles without excessive hand waving and temperament. How did you like "Pitkäjärveläiset"? It is an excellent play and we should perform it here in Maynard. How about "Juurakon Hulda"? It is considered a jewel in Finnish theater writing and is a great success in many Finnish theaters today.

Where in Finland did you spend most of your summer? In Toijola with my parents. From there I made visits not only Tampere and Helsinki but also to Jyväskylä, Kuopio, Savonlinna and Viipuri. I visited the Valamo Monastery a couple of times, going to their services, which were in both the old and new Russian. They did speak Finnish with the tourist visitors.

What did you make of public life in the cities? It was very good. People are neatly dressed in the restaurants and in other facilities things worked systematically, properly and with attention to detail. Finland is fast becoming a truly international tourist country where a half million foreigners stopped on their tours.

When I asked whether she had brought back any plays with her and would she being directing them here at our hall, she replied that once she can settle down to work, she would put up some of them for the enjoyment and edification of the local public.

"JUURAKON HULDA" ON TAISTO STAGE

WHEN COMRADE HILDA AROMAA RETURNED FROM FINLAND RECENTLY BRINGING WITH HER SEVERAL NEW PLAYS, THE TAISTO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MADE A DEAL WITH HER, PROMOTING STAGE PRODUCTIONS THIS WINTER. SHE PROMISED TO PUT UP "JUURAKON HULDA" FIRST; THE ROLES HAVE BEEN TYPED AND THE PLAY HAS BEEN CAST.

{The play "Juurakon Hulda" ("Hulda of Juurakko" or "The Parliament's Daughter" written under the pen name "Juhani Tervapää" was the first of many works by Hertta Kuusinen, who was born in Estonia but moved to Finland and became a leftist in many fields. In 1947 this play was adopted by Hollywood as "The Farmer's Daughter" with Joseph Cotten, Ethel Barrymore and Loretta Young in the cast. They made the young farm girl --- who comes to the city, works as a maid in the home of a Parliament attorney, goes to night school, runs for Parliament and wins--- into an American congressional candidate. (It was adapted into a TV show in 1963 with Inger Stevens, Cathleen Nesbitt and William Windom.) The play was wildly popular in Finland and then in Finnish America. By the winter of 1937-38 there were performances by New York City, Fitchburg and Maynard, all at the same time. Mrs. Aromaa conceived of a new journalistic trick to introduce the play to the local audience: she wrote notes to the leading character, thus revealing the plot of the play in little pieces.} --Roy--{ Available on You Tube}

11/30/37 TUESDAY RAIVAAJA

"Juurakon Hulda" cast! Please note rehearsals on Saturday at 2:30 pm, we will rehearse the first four scenes; Sunday, at 1 pm, scenes 1, 5, 6, 7. Everyone is expected to attend. Promptness above all else.

"Hulda, dear! Now you are going out into the world, how far I do not know. I met you one Sunday morning in Juurakko for the very first time as you read a newspaper to grandfather Juurakko. You were bare footed, your hair in braids, a snow white apron. You read the world news to grandpa with such clear diction that it could have been an oration in the Messu auditorium. There was a gentleness in your matter-of-fact voice and in your gentle blue eyes. You curtsied to be formally and something in me returned the curtsy. From time to time I am going to tell the world about you, your place of employment and of your friend, Aunt Connie, of Miina, of your master. We are going to go through your life with great interest. Goodbye."

12/7/1937 TUESDAY RAIVAAJA

"Hulda, dear! Now you are in Helsinki looking for a job. I hear that you sat on a bench on the Esplanade. Coming from the Kämp Hotel, some very tipsy members of Parliament found you and you are now moving in parliamentary circles and you are a maid in attorney Soratie's house."

"Hulda, dear! Once when we met, you told me that when the Soratie family spoke pure Finnish, you could not really understand what they meant. I think that all our lives would be simpler, if the whole country had a chance to learn to understand all that is said and written in Finnish."

"Now you are attending the folk high school evenings. Your subjects have brought you interesting contacts. Not every family has an Aunt Connie or a Miina but your chance to further your education will be demanded from the family by future Hulda's and Tyne's."

“Don’t tire yourself, save some energy for the final classes. When you have earned a seat in Parliament, looking down from the balcony, I will be so proud of you and I’ll tell everyone that Hulda Juurikko is my friend. I’ll write again soon, goodbye.”

12/13/1937 MONDAY RAIVAAJA

THE PLAY HAS NOW BEEN SCHEDULED FOR PERFORMANCE ON JANUARY 8, 1938

“I’ll scribble a few lines so that you won’t think that I have forgotten you completely. Regards to Aunt Connie! Such Aunt Connies can be only be found as relics in back bedrooms of ancient families. Such Aunt Connies know the old family stories and are happy to tell them. Such aunts are considered pointless and unnecessary, their only purpose to work for their relatives.”

Regards to the attorney! He is a good man, a good worker and a liberal to boot. Regards to the professor. He is one of those who can laugh at the world and himself. Regards to that socialist Purtiainen who with his Savo accent represents the lower class when he says: “There’s color in that earth if you don’t deny it.” Write soon and tell me of your studies. Warmest greetings.”

12/18/1937 SATURDAY RAIVAAJA

THE PLAY IS POSTPONED DUE TO THE ILLNESS OF KUSTI AROMAA. HE HAS BEEN TAKEN TO MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL.

THE PLAY IS FINALLY PERFORMED ON FEBRUARY 27 AND MARCH 6, 1938
ADMISSION: 35 CENTS PRE-BOUGHT, 40 CENTS AT DOOR.

“JUURAKON HULDA”

A play in three acts and seven scenes by Juhani Tervapää

ATTORNEY KAARLE KUSTAA SORATIE	REINO VUOJÄRVI
PROFESSOR MAGNUS NORKO	KUSTI AROMAA
EDITOR PURTIAINEN	OTTO FONSELL
MUNICIPAL COUNCELLOR ALI-LEHTONEN	OSKARI HYTTI
HULDA JUURAKKO	HULDAH NELSON
MRS. CONSTANCE SANMARK (CALLED MUSTERI)	MARY SALENIUS
COMMERCIAL COUNSELLOR KAAVIO	EINO NELSON
MRS. KAAVIO	IMPI RIVERS
MISS KIRSTI KAAVIO	SIRKKA FRENCH
MISS MATERO, AN ACTRESS	HELEN MARK KETOLA
DOCTOR ALINEN	ARVI STABELL
MISS SINIJÄRVI	TAIMI VATTU
MIINA, A MAID	ELLI VUOJÄRVI
BANKER THORMAN	RUDOLPH SAARI
MRS. KRÖNENSTRÖM	IDA STABELL
A PAINTER OF HORIZONS	OSKAR KAUPPI

DIRECTED BY HILDA AROMAA SETTING BY REINO NIEMI

DECORATION BY IDA STABELL AND HELMI ELO
MAKEUP BY YRJÖ KANSANNIVA

THE PLAY IS SET IN THE SORATIE HOME, HELSINKI

THE PLAY WAS ALSO PERFORMED IN CANTERBURY, CONN, IN QUINCY
WORCESTER, NORWOOD AND IN MAYNARD FOR A 3RD TIME.

MARCH 2, 1938 RAIVAAJA WEDNESDAY

“JUURAKON HULDA”--- A GREAT SUCCESS!

Last Sunday even turned out to be a true migration to Taisto Hall when the local socialist chapter's theater group presented Juhani Tervapää's "Juurakon Hulda" to a crowded auditorium. The play is interesting and has a working class base that was obvious to all in attendance. The play is centered on Hulda Juurikko who arrives in Helsinki, leaving her farm family to work in Kaarle Kristian Soraniemi's home. The author has woven into the story all the events that take place in this home where Hulda remains for seven years. This play ends as many plays do with the marriage of the bachelor attorney and Hulda. The author has crystalized Hulda, that is, making her clearly class conscious mind question her duties as she waits upon the attorney and his political cronies. She is ready to respond with clear beliefs in defending the poor in Juurikko and the need to help them in their plight. In doing so, Hulda does not let the gentlemen flatter her, but rather with sweet yet biting comments turns back any attempts she considers perplexing.

In addition, Hulda is a progressive and uses all her spare time to further her education, even thinking of labor saving sources in her daily tasks. Hulda, even though she has taken business courses and studied at the folk school, is aware of her shortcomings in the Finnish language as she listens to the family and their guests discussing common issues. Slowly Hulda appreciates the efforts of the family around her to assist her in turning into a civilized and knowledgeable young lady who is turned into a social democrat candidate for Parliament.

The candidacy is soon cancelled for female voters in the party cannot accept someone whom the gentlemen have found on a Esplanade bench and who has had doubtful contacts with attorney Soratie. That is the crux of the play. The audience could have hoped that Hulda, who had gained such a strong understanding of social conditions that surrounded her, could have become a hero at the play's end by accepting Soratie's proposal with an insistence that he too had to work in behalf of the poor whom she had so strongly defended throughout her campaign. But this is a matter of taste, of course.

As to the performance, only good things can be said. Hulda was played by another Hulda, Huldah Nelson. In this difficult role Huldah soulfully conjured up all the hopes and suffering of a working girl. Her social awareness of the family's circle of friends, her understanding of her domestic duties, and above all her self-appreciation of her place in the discussion of social issues. In all these aspects, Huldah had become the right interpreter of the role. Although Huldah was born in America, she pronounced the Finnish language correctly, including the necessary stresses. Her costar Reino Vuojärvi created a true and believable version of the attorney Soratie role. A lot of stage experience and interest in their stage characters gave our men the proper tone. The agreeable and pleasant professor Magnus Norko was enacted by our old stage friend Kusti Aromaa, keeping the audience laughing at his high

flying word games. The representative of the “correct” party, Editor Purtianen, played by Otto Fonsell, put forth a great character who poured forth his “savo” dialect in his discussion of the duties of unspoiled country-folk delegates.

As Councillor Ali-Lehtonen, Oskar Hytti had a further interest in Hulda’s life rhythms as they were from the same home town and regarded her achievements with derision. Mary Salenius as Aunt Connie had to give advice on proper manners within the Soratie household had thought through her depiction of this conservative lady whose motto might have been: ‘let the women stay silent in the congregation’. The lesser roles, all of which had their importance in the development of the plot, must be noted. Let us say that good work is rewarded by our thanks. Still I must note that the role of Kirsti Kaavio was performed by Sirkka French so well that she can only be raised to a high tier of art. At the end of the play flowers were presented to the leading women of the cast as well as to director Hilda Aromaa.

COLLECTED BY ROY HELANDER MAY, 2021