

## 'Against Multiple Hegemonies: Radical Malay Women in Colonial Malaya' by Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied *Journal of Social History*

In this paper Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied (Malay Studies) seeks to fill the gap in the literature on radical activism in colonial Malaya through a detailed analysis of a Malay radical women's movement, the Angkatan Wanita Sedar (AWAS).

Although much has been written in the last few decades about Malay political activism during post World War II Malaya, radical female groups that emerged during those eventful years, and their efforts to carve autonomous spaces within emerging projects of national liberation has suffered from considerable neglect. By blending the use of colonial and vernacular sources to contextualize the activities of AWAS within the changing social and political landscapes of its time, this article shows



that female radical activists in post WorldWar II colonial Malaya were confronted with multiple hegemonies that worked to stifle their development. These hegemonies originated, first, from within their own society in the form of customary conventions and practices associated with class differences. AWAS also had to contend with censure and disciplinary actions from their male compatriots, who regarded them as threats to male dominance in radical politics. Finally, AWAS came under the watchful eye and proscriptive measures of the colonial state that sought to regain its control over its Asian subjects in an age of decolonization. The members of this radical collective struggled to overcome these hegemonies by drawing upon a whole array of relationships and connections to advance their cause, albeit with limited success.

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