

**“NOW WE WANT MALAYS TO AWAKE...” THE MALAY WOMEN
TEACHERS OF JOHOR AND *BULAN MELAYU*¹**

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This paper considers the *Persekutuan Perempuan Melayu Johore (P.P.M.J.)* (Malay Women’s Association, Johor, the same organisation often referred to as the *Persekutuan Guru-Guru Perempuan Melayu Johore (P.G.G.P.J.)* (Malay Women Teachers Association, Johore), or the *Persatuan Guru-Guru Sekolah Melayu dan Sekolah Agama Negeri Johor*, and their monthly magazine, *Bulan Melayu*. (Malay monthly or Malay moon, a dual meaning utilised by authors).² The magazine was published in various forms between 1930 and 1941, however, this paper will focus on the first five years of its existence.

The context of British schooling and modernist Islamic ideas created the first formally trained women teachers, one of the few opportunities for Malay women who wanted to enter a profession. They were primarily middle class women, interested in the Malay *bangsa*, though they predate the nationalist movement.³ These women saw

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² Unless otherwise noted, all translations are author’s own.

³ Used here in the sense of race, community and nation.

themselves as the leaders of women. They were concerned with defining and fashioning a modern Malay Muslim womanhood, utilising the medium of girls' schooling. This movement of women teachers also helped to provide the agenda and training for the first women's movements, and the way that such groups dealt with issues including colonisation, Islam, and Malay identity. The P.P.M.J. urged greater control amongst Malay women over their own schooling and curriculum, but also supported colonial undertakings with regard to girls' schooling. They did not see the British as the "other" against which Malayness was defined and competed, but the Chinese instead.⁴ Agents of both continuity and change, these teachers presented radical ideas in terms of traditional Malay constructions of the feminine, so as not to upset the status quo. *Agama dididik Moden dibela* (while religion is taught, modernity is also accommodated) was their slogan, and represented the safeguarding of Malay identity while utilising the advantages of modernisation.

The historical and colonial context in which the P.P.M.J. and *Bulan Melayu* emerged was complex. The schooling system in Malaya consisted of a number of different types. Before the coming of the British, Malays attended the Quranic schools, teaching Arabic via the Quran, a type which continued throughout the period under study. British colonisation brought with it schooling in English, first through the mission schools, which remained the main provider for girls, and then through Government schools. Schooling in English for Malay girls remained far more controversial than that in the vernacular.⁵ The British also set up a Malay vernacular schooling system, and took increasing control of schools in the other vernacular languages of Malaya. There were some Malay girls' schools, but at least as many girls again attended the boys' schools.⁶ Vernacular schooling led to a segregated schooling system, institutionalising the plural society in the cultural sphere of education.

The location of the P.P.M.J. in Johor is also significant. The State had a history of the provision of schooling, in both English and Malay, under the patronage of its royal

⁴ The Chinese are presented as economically dominant aliens, and the British as having advantages to offer the Malays.

⁵ See Rex Stevenson, *Cultivators and Administrators: British Educational Policy Towards the Malays 1875-1906*, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975), and Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States *Education Reports* (Colonial Office).

⁶ Eg: Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States *Education Reports*, 1936

family, who retained more power than many others on the Peninsula. It was the inheritor of the Sultanate of Melaka, with the prestige accrued to that position. Johor was also close to Singapore, hence one of the first areas to have contact with new ideas and developments from that metropolis. Johor in the early twentieth century was exceptional in the ways that geography, religion, ideology and colonialism intersected. It was the first of the Unfederated Malay States ⁷ to be exposed to British colonialism, and the last to accept British control. ⁸ The state experienced rapid modernisation through British colonialism and Islamic modernism, and the dual secular and religious schooling system encouraged an increasing role for the Malay educated middle class in society and later in politics. Johor thus provided an ideal opportunity for the rise of a group such as the *P.P.M.J.*

The *P.P.M.J.* was founded in 1929, and continued to meet until the Japanese occupation in 1941. These women combined the British schooling system in Johor with a Malay-Islamic identity and sensibility. They absorbed the ideas of Islamic Modernist scholars, ⁹ and melded them to the British schooling system, British support and British money for their ambitious endeavours. Of paramount importance was the *P.P.M.J.*'s commitment to the shared importance of being Malay women, guiding and leading other Malays. Their eclectic ideas were one of the hallmarks of *Bulan Melayu*, a magazine that was part women's magazine, part educational publication and part newsletter, a tool for developing, expressing and disseminating their ideas.

The *P.P.M.J.* had a number of aims and objectives, all of which promoted education closely linked to schooling for girls and women. The first of these objectives was to increase the opportunities for formal schooling in the Malay vernacular system, and

⁷ Malaya under the British was divided into three main administrative units. The Straits Settlements (Singapore, Melaka, Penang and Province Wellesley) was a Crown colony; the Protected States, which became the Federated Malay States (Selangor, Perak, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang), was administered by the British as a federation, and the Unfederated Malay States (Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis and Terengganu) continued to be run on an individual basis.

⁸ Moshe Yegar, Islam and Islamic Institutions in British Malaya: Policies and Implementation, (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1979) p46.

⁹ Malayan Islamic modernists laid emphasis on the education and schooling of girls and women, and their roles in the family and Malay society.

involved setting up new schools and persuading parents to send their daughters there. This secular schooling was to be complemented by religious schooling in Islamic principles (in practice, often outside the formal schooling system). This would allow an education in line with Western ideas of progress, but retaining Islam as its moral core, and emphasising Malay identity. The *P.P.M.J.* also sought to increase the involvement of Malay women in the provision of schooling, and to encourage a sense of community. They also sought the establishment of a training college for Malay women teachers, modelled on the Sultan Idris Training College.¹⁰ Finally, both the magazine and the association as a whole worked as a means of disseminating information on teaching methods and techniques.

The purpose of these changes was to improve the position of Malay women in society and of the Malay *bangsa* as a whole. *Bangsa* was sometimes defined in relation to an international context. For instance Japan and Turkey were seen as exemplars of modernisation without loss of identity. However, improvement was usually measured closer to home, in comparison and opposition to the Malayan Chinese.¹¹ Women would contribute to the *bangsa* by becoming better mothers and nurturing and educating better children, and also by taking greater but still gender appropriate roles in society, such as becoming teachers and leading and organising other women and raising the position of the *bangsa*. The *P.P.M.J.* encouraged a proactive role for Malay women, and an opportunity to define and fashion a modern Malay Muslim womanhood.

Bulan Melayu:

A key insight into the ideas of these teachers was *Bulan Melayu*, was published between 1930 and 1941.¹² The gaps in its publication seem to be due to the illness of

¹⁰ The SITC was the training college for Malay male teachers. The Malay Women's Training College, established in Melaka in 1935 was intended as the female equivalent, though it was less academic in nature.

¹¹ The 1931 Census returned more Chinese (1,709,392) than Malays (1,644,173) across Malaya. C.A. Vlieland, British Malaya: A Report on the 1931 Census and on Certain Problems of Vital Statistics (London: Waterlow and Sons Limited 1932).

¹² Monthly issues with some breaks until Feb 1938, then quarterly until 1941, then bi-monthly until the Japanese Occupation. Surviving issues are rare, and are scattered between different repositories. I have been unable to acquire a full set, and am still

Ibu Zain, the editor and most frequent contributor until 1940.¹³ Zain was the Supervisor of Malay Girls' Schools in Johor, and later a politician, leader of *KI UMNO*, and a Malaysian national heroine. *Bulan Melayu* was her project, and *B.M.* was one of the main vehicles for expressing and publicising an agenda.¹⁴ It was based at the Sekolah Perempuan Ngee Hang in Bandar Tinggi, Johor Bahru, and all those involved in its creation participated on a voluntary basis. This and illness eventually took a toll on Zain, and she retired as editor. *B.M.* published a wide range of authors, male and female, members and non-members, teachers and others, though where possible it focussed on the works of *P.P.M.J.* members. *B.M.* was published in *Jawi*, a form of Malay written in an alphabet primarily derived from Arabic and with strong Islamic links, rather than *Rumi*, the Romanised Malay championed by a number of British administrators.¹⁵ The Malay vernacular press tended to continue to publish in this script. In addition, *B.M.* included words from Arabic, English, Dutch and even French.

The magazine referred to itself as “*majalah perempuan*”, “women’s magazine”.¹⁶ This was the major difference which set it apart from other teachers’ magazines, and as late as 1938 it still advertised itself as the only monthly Malay women’s magazine.¹⁷ Initially the cost for subscribers was \$4.00 per year (or f6.00), though by 1935 the cover listed yearly costs at \$2.00.¹⁸ While contributors came from a variety of

missing parts of 1939 and 1940, and all of 1941. Almost all references to *B.M.* in English language works stop at 1935, for an (as yet) unknown reason.

¹³ Ali bin Ahmad, *Majallah Guru – The Magazine of the Malay Teachers*, (PhD Thesis, Monash University, 1975).

¹⁴ Though Zain also wrote for other publications and had a significant role within the schooling system. Other significant figures such as Sharifah Fadhlun binti Abdul Hamid are also associated with the publication.

¹⁵ As *Jawi* remained one of the official scripts in the Unfederated Malay States, this is perhaps not surprising. Considering the dual nature of schooling in Johor, *B.M.*’s audience would have been fluent readers of the script. Other publications such as *Majallah Guru*, which present themselves as specifically pan-state, also published in *Jawi*.

¹⁶ *Bulan Melayu* 1.1.

¹⁷ *ibid*, 1938.

¹⁸ Malay dollars. *Bulan Melayu* 1.3 and 3.1. Considering that other publications advertised in *B.M.* cost as little as 15 cents, this was not particularly cheap, but nor was it prohibitively expensive. An average female teacher’s salary ranged between 300 and 600 dollars per annum. As a Supervisor, Zain’s salary of \$1440 in 1930 and

backgrounds, the editor and organisation were quite definite about their target audience: Malay women teachers, primarily in Johor but also elsewhere in the Peninsula and even in Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei. However, while ideas of identity based on colonial boundaries were beginning to form, there were still tensions among authors about whether the women of the *P.P.M.J.* were primarily women of Johor or of Malaya.

When the writers of *Bulan Melayu* discussed Malay life and identity, they did so in the context of a Malay/Islamic identity.¹⁹ The two have become so entwined that it is often difficult to separate where one finishes and the other begins.²⁰ It is significant that the women of the *P.P.M.J.* identified themselves primarily as Malays, rather than as part of the global Muslim community.²¹ *B.M.* also mentions an important development in Malayan/Malaysian Islam: the qualified female Quran teachers.²² This was another path to female further education.²³

Islamic Modernism

Islam was integral to the sense of self identity of the women of the *P.P.M.J.*, but they were more than willing to criticise interpretations of Islam which argued against the schooling for girls which they sought. In fact, like the Islamic modernists, they used the rhetoric of Islam to argue for the rights of women to be educated. Islamic Modernism pioneered forms of reform such as educational institutions and mass education, political liberalisation, decolonisation and the establishment of periodical

\$1920 in 1935 made her the best paid Malay female teacher in the State. Johore Service and Leave (Arkib Negara Malaysia – Johor, Fail Peribadi 13/1715).

¹⁹ This makes it extremely difficult to discuss Malay *adat* without Islam, and vice versa. When the women of the *P.P.M.J.* talk about their own identity, it tends to be in terms of Islam rather than *adat*.

²⁰ The form taken by Malay Islam in the 1930s was significantly different to the later Middle-Eastern influenced revivalist movement.

²¹ This is a generalisation, as there were some occasions where a global Muslim identity was presented as important, and where examples such as Kartini in Indonesia were presented as examples to be emulated. Eg: *B.M.* 2.3 p91.

²² Eg: *ibid*, 2.2 and 2.3. These are Minangkabau women from Negeri Sembilan, an area with a strong matrilineal tradition.

²³ A discussion of this important development in Malayan Islam is outside the scope of this paper.

presses throughout the Islamic world.²⁴ Broader concerns with schooling for girls linked Zain closely to the ideas of modernists such as al-Hadi, who in turn was heavily influenced by Qasim Amin and other Egyptian modernists. Turkey was also a source of ideas and influence, and the role of Singapore, just across the Causeway, as a centre for Arabic language publication is also significant.

Zain and al-Hadi also had personal links. In 1930, al-Hadi expressed his hope that the women leaders from Johor would explain to Malay Muslim women the rights and responsibilities of true Muslim women under true Islamic teachings. Zain herself wrote to al-Hadi, stating that she hoped that his book, *Alam Perempuan*, would open the eyes of Muslims who did not grant women the rights dictated by Islam. She stated that it would be a great advantage for Muslim women if they became aware of these Islamic rights and their duties towards their community and country.²⁵ One of the ways that this would take place would be through appropriate schooling.

An awareness of gendered differences continued throughout *Bulan Melayu*.²⁶ Allah had made men and women differently, ran the argument, with different roles, and this difference should be maintained. This should not be a reason to deny girls and women schooling. Educating women would not turn them into men, just as “hens can not become roosters”.²⁷ *B.M.* and the *P.P.M.J.* walked a fine line: advocating, inspiring and supporting change in favour of female schooling, but without antagonising existing groups and power structures in Malay society. Like all of the teachers’ organisations of the time, the *P.P.M.J.* was single sex, allowing a degree of female autonomy not always available in mixed company. In addition, even the most conservative religious figures acknowledged the rights of women to be active

²⁴ Charles Kurzman (ed) *Modernist Islam: A Sourcebook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

²⁵ Ibrahim Bin Abu Bakar, *Islamic Modernism in Malaya: The Life and Thought of Sayid Syekh Al-Hadi, 1867-1934*, (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1994) p153.

²⁶ Since throughout this period a significant number of Malay girls continued to attend boys’ schools and complete the same unmodified curriculum, these later arguments required public emphasis to smooth the way for girls’ schooling.

²⁷ *Bulan Melayu* 1.3 pp54-44. This is a Malay proverb, the implications of which would have been well known to readers.

amongst other women and in women's concerns.²⁸ This they ran less risk of alienating the status quo.

In view of these arguments, one interesting case study from *Bulan Melayu* is marriage in the Malay community, one of the main reasons given for removing girls from school.²⁹ Interestingly these articles were aimed at a readership who were the "mothers of daughters" rather than those who were getting married themselves.³⁰ Zain's main emphasis was on the issue of inequality in marriage.³¹ If education and schooling were left open only to men, then women would be left ignorant and reliant, having to follow their husband's guidance rather than being able to make decisions for themselves.³² Schooling was essential so that women, as cultural guardians and as the first educators of children, could decide for themselves what was right and wrong. In addition, there seems to be little direct discussion on the effects of divorce, or much on one of the main concerns of the Indonesian women's movement, polygamy.³³ As the women of the *P.P.M.J.* identified as an Islamic women's group, this absence is not particularly surprising, and in line with similar groups in countries such as the N.E.I./Indonesia.

However, there are substantial differences between Zain and Kartini, to whom Zain is often compared. *B.M.* discusses "*Raden Kartini*",³⁴ and Zain is sometimes presented as a Malaysian Kartini.³⁵ Perhaps a better example would be the life and work of Rahma El Junusia of Indonesia, who in 1915 founded the first *sekolah agama*, a

²⁸ Howard M Federspiel, Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth century Indonesia, (Ithaca/N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970) p149.

²⁹ This was one of the primary concerns of the Indonesian women's movements, with which the *P.P.M.J.* had much in common. However, it is not the latter's main concern, except where it intersects with education.

³⁰ *Bulan Melayu* 1.11/12.

³¹ Rather than an overt emphasis on polygamy, for instance. This may well have been a method of attacking polygamy, as it was argued that the practice is only allowed if multiple wives can be treated completely equally. In practice, it can be argued that this is impossible.

³² This opened up a route for Western influence in Malay culture and family life with which Zain did not necessarily agree.

³³ See Susan Blackburn, Women and the State in Modern Indonesia, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) for the Indonesian equivalent.

³⁴ This is an error: *Raden* is a male title.

³⁵ Asiah binti Abu Samah, Emancipation of Malay Women 1945-1957, (Thesis, University of Malaya, Singapore, 1960), p46.

mixed religious school with modern curriculum. She went on to found the *sekolah diniyah puteri* at Padang Panjang, a modernised religious school for girls.³⁶ Like the women of the *P.P.M.J.* would later do, she travelled and persuaded families to send their daughters to school. She founded the union of the Islamic women teachers of Indonesia (the *Perserikatan Guru-guru Agama Puteri Islam Indonesia, P.G.A.P.I.I.*), and in 1955 was elected a member of the first Indonesian Parliament. Nonetheless, the public image of Kartini as an Indonesian woman dedicated to the schooling of girls provided a powerful example for the women of the *P.P.M.J.*³⁷

British Education

British schooling for Malay girls provided the women of the *P.P.M.J.* not just with an education and employment, but with some of the tools they desired to improve the position of the *bangsa*. *Bulan Melayu* devoted significant space to the formal curriculum of Johor Malay girls' schools. The curriculum played an integral role in shaping the educated Malay womanhood the *P.P.M.J.* desired. It also reflected a range of traditional and modern skills, and illustrated the way these teachers emphasised certain areas and downplayed others, providing a valuable insight into the priorities of the organisation. At its heart were the academic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, and the more practical components of domestic science, sewing, childrearing, hygiene, and handicrafts.³⁸

Hygiene and health for schoolgirls were discussed and encouraged in the pages of *B.M.* Infant and maternal mortality was still a significant problem, and Zain and the *P.P.M.J.* regarded improvement in this area as one of the primary goals of female education. *B.M.* also included regular articles on disease, labour and nutrition.³⁹

³⁶ Cora Vreede-De Stuers, *The Indonesian Woman: Struggles and Achievements*, (The Hague: Mouton and Co, 1960) pp72-3.

³⁷ Kartini is an interesting example, considering her fervent opposition to polygamy, a subject generally avoided by the *P.P.M.J.*

³⁸ I accept that to some degree this is an artificial division. However, it appears so frequently in sources and historiography that I will continue to use it as a useful way of conceptualising this area.

³⁹ Eg: *Bulan Melayu* 1.7 and 1.8. This area is discussed in depth in the colonial context by Manderson (Lenore Manderson, *Sickness and the State: Health and Illness*

Closely linked to the teaching of hygiene was domestic science, also known as domestic economy. Cooking was not the only practical skill taught in the Malay girls' schools. Other crafts taught included sewing and crochet.⁴⁰ Many of these skills could also change the earning potential and position in society of Malay women, providing a greater degree of economic independence (bearing in mind traditional forms of Malay women's economic involvement).

One part of the school curriculum which did not appear much in *B.M.* was sport and physical education. As vigorous exercise for Malay girls was still a controversial topic, it is likely this was a tactical omission, an area which it was easier not to emphasise.⁴¹ When it does appear, it is part of discussions about a well rounded personality and education. The English proverb "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" is cited in a discussion of gymnastics, and sport appears again in an article on the need for girls to have a hobby.⁴² The *P.P.M.J.* also advocated segregation between the sexes in sport. Zain and B.M. did not simply repeat the curriculum verbatim. Some areas were emphasised, others played down, according to their importance and relevance to these Malay women.

The Bangsa

The women of the *P.P.M.J.* identified very strongly with their ideas on what it meant to be a Malay woman, and what role these women should play. *B.M.* was referred to as a new voice for the women of Johor, as a bringer of light to overcome the night of Malay ignorance and apathy: "The time has arrived!"⁴³ The *P.P.M.J.* was prepared to fight when necessary, "...filled with one issue, one plan for Malay women. Now we

in Colonial Malaya 1870-1940 (Cambridge/Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁴⁰ For needlework there were even specially qualified instructors. See Johore Education Reports.

⁴¹ Al-Hadi links this attitude to Malay backwardness, and argues that physical education for both sexes is one of the things which helped Britain to become great.

⁴² *Bulan Melayu* 1.6 and 1.11 respectively. While his name is not mentioned, the latter discussion has all the hallmarks of Cheeseman's work. For another example see Chorus, *The Journal of the Singapore Teachers Association*. (Singapore, Malaya Publishing House Limited) Vol II No 1, August 1935, p23.

⁴³ *Bulan Melayu* 1.1.

want Malays to awake...”⁴⁴ Men and women must work together for the benefit of boys and girls.⁴⁵ This call for better education was described as “universal”, but it was still targeted at the main audience of *Bulan Melayu*: the women and girls of “*bangsa Melayu*”.⁴⁶

To some degree, this identification was a demonstration of the plural society at work. The concern of these women was with Malay female education and schooling first and foremost. It was seen as the key, the best, if not the only way forward for the Malay community as a whole. Together with the strong Islamic identity of these women, and official British vernacular education solely of Malays, this Malay focus served to exclude the other ethnic groups of Malaya. Sometimes *B.M.* went even further. Direct comparisons are made with the other ethnic groups of Malaya, particularly the Chinese. Authors argued that the Malays were being left behind in comparison due to their own laziness.⁴⁷

Should this situation just be accepted, asked Zain? “Hah! Malay women are not ready to admit defeat!” This is the country of the Malays. How many *Rajas* and *Datuks* have we produced? We will do so again. The Malays themselves will make things right.⁴⁸ With the aid of Allah, Malays will succeed. As the white people say, “Where there is a will there is a way”.⁴⁹ Malays required a “consciousness towards Malays in order to start working towards security.”⁵⁰ This was a campaign for the privileging of Malays, with political overtones, and inherently hostile to other inhabitants of Malaya. However, overt criticism of the British did not appear in the pages of *B.M.* The British were presented more as allies than as enemies at this point in time. This

⁴⁴ *ibid*, 1.3.

⁴⁵ *ibid*, 1.3 p53.

⁴⁶ *ibid*, 1.1.

⁴⁷ *Bulan Melayu* 1.3. This has interesting resonances with Alatas’s discussion of the “lazy native” (Syed Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the image of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th century and its function in the ideology of colonial capitalism*, (London: Frank Cass and Co, 1977) and also with the writings of Mahathir (Mahathir bin Mohamad, *The Malay Dilemma*, (Kuala Lumpur: Federal Publications, 1970).

⁴⁸ *Bulan Melayu* 1.1 p11.

⁴⁹ *ibid*, 1.2. Initially this read “When there is a will there is a way”, but someone has crossed out “when” and substituted a handwritten “where”.

⁵⁰ *ibid*, 1.1.

may well have been strategic, as these women sought to be proactive within the British-run schooling system.

Bulan Melayu also published articles with an international focus. Zain's first editorial was about the modernisation of Japan, and how this had been achieved without the loss of Japanese culture and ways of life.⁵¹ Here was an example to Malays of what could be accomplished if due care was taken, she stated. The advances of Western civilisation did not have to overwhelm all that was good in a nation's culture.⁵² This was not the only time that B.M. would discuss Japan.⁵³ Inspiring stories of women from other countries were also a favourite, including "Raden Kartini" of Indonesia.⁵⁴ These articles ended with an inspiring appeal to Malay women to do the same for their sisters and nation. While to some degree Malay loyalty remained to their own Sultan and race, there was also some consciousness of the position of the Malay States as a part of Britain's empire. The readers of B.M. were informed of the death of King George V by a full-page black-bordered notice, expressing the sadness of loyal Malay readers at this unfortunate event.⁵⁵ These and other articles with an international focus aimed to ensure that the modern educated Malay woman should have knowledge of world events and situations outside her own immediate experience.⁵⁶

Bulan Melayu was one of the primary ways that the women of the *P.P.M.J.* expressed their vision for Malay womanhood. Malay women would serve as the first religious, moral and general educators of their children, for the betterment of the *bangsa* as a whole, in both a local and international context. The *P.P.M.J.* placed significant emphasis on Islam and Malayness as commonalities between Malay women, and argued that religious and secular schooling together would help create the modern

⁵¹ *Bulan Melayu* 1.1. This was not the first time that Zain had expressed these views. See also Ahmad, *Majallah Guru* (1975).

⁵² It could however replace undesirable aspects – such as not allowing women to be educated.

⁵³ Eg: *Bulan Melayu* 2.1 p13, on the beliefs of Ancient Japan. Considering it was the Japanese Occupation which finally ended the publication of *B.M.*, this admiring emphasis is not without some irony in retrospect.

⁵⁴ *ibid*, 2.3 p91. For British examples, see *ibid*, 1.1 and the likes of Flora Klickman.

⁵⁵ *ibid*, 3.11.

⁵⁶ For example, *ibid*, 1.10 discussed the contents of the North China Daily News.

Malay woman. This focus was a reflection of the plural society in Malaya at the time. These women sought to be proactive, to take advantage of new opportunities for Malay women, even within the colonial context. They aimed through schooling to fashion modern Malay Muslim women, able to take part in a Malay modernity.

The women of the *P.P.M.J.* did have some impact. The organisation provided an opportunity for Malay women to develop and articulate skills and ideas. Their agenda was slowly being met: in working with British educationalists, Islamic modernists, carrying out their own activities, and founding and teaching in schools, an increasing number of Malay girls were receiving schooling, both secular and religious. The Japanese Occupation in 1941 saw the end of the *P.P.M.J.* and when the British returned the energies of these women were subsumed into the nationalist struggle. However, the women teachers of Johor went on to involvement in the women's movements, the anti-colonial struggle, and politics. Their concerns as expressed in *Bulan Melayu* continued to resonate throughout their own lifetimes, and beyond.