DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
national university of singapore

Departmental Seminar

TITLE

SPEAKER
Dr Chua Ai Lin
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Day, Date, Time, Venue
Wednesday, 19 March 2008, 3 pm, ADM-04-17

Abstract
The social history of inter-war Singapore has seldom been looked at through the lens of modern consumer technologies, such as the motor car, cinema, radio and gramophone records, which had become embedded in the everyday experiences of the city by the 1920s. For middle-class, English-speaking Asians of diverse ethnic backgrounds, modernity was a self-consciously articulated aspect of their shared identity, and bolstered the sense of community based on their common political demands as Asian British subjects in colonial Singapore.

Early twentieth century popular culture in Singapore is an field rich in primary sources. This research project was based upon a wide variety of English-language publications from Singapore, such as daily newspapers, commercial directories, entertainment periodicals, student magazines, associational newsletters and cinema programmes, most of which have never before been identified by historians and are not found in local repositories.

About the Speaker
Chua Ai Lin is a Teaching Assistant in the Department of History at the National University of Singapore where she teaches Singapore history. She recently completed her Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge, upon which this seminar is based. Her Ph.D. research builds on the work of her M.A. thesis entitled ‘Negotiating National Identity: The English-Speaking Domiciled Communities in Singapore, 1930-1940’ (Department of History, National University of Singapore, 2001). Her article, ‘Imperial Subjects, Straits Citizens…: Anglophone Asians and the Struggle for Political Rights in Inter-War Singapore’ appears in Paths Not Taken: Political Pluralism in Postwar Singapore, edited by Michael Barr and Carl Trocki (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008 forthcoming).

For enquiries, please contact the Department of History