

1 Kongsi Tiga

Security and Insecurity on Hajj Ships

Muslim Indonesians wake up!
The light of consciousness has thrown its rays
into your bedchamber, to wake you from
your long and quiet sleep.¹

On the morning of 14 December 1928, 688 hajj pilgrims lined up in Batavia's port of Tanjung Priok waiting to board NSMO's SS *Melampus*, which – over the course of two to three weeks depending on the weather – would transport them to Jeddah for the start of the 1928–29 hajj season.² At 9:00 am, shaykhs or pilgrim brokers who worked together with Kongsi Tiga's agents toured the ship and marked out areas for pilgrims assigned to their care for the entirety of the voyage. Pilgrims were each given a number directing them to their assigned space below deck and received by their assigned shaykhs, who escorted them to the living quarters they would occupy for the coming weeks. Joining 105 others already onboard who had embarked in Surabaya and Semarang, the spaces below deck were quickly filled: each pilgrim was entitled to 1.5 square meters (16 square feet) in a space at least 1.8 meters (5.9 feet) in height.³ After unpacking the few belongings deemed “essential” for the voyage – which could not exceed 0.3 square meters (3.2 square feet) of deck space per person – the remaining luggage was registered, labeled, and stowed away for the duration of the trip. By 1:00 pm everyone was settled and medical inspection and document verification began.⁴

Pilgrims were led to a room in groups of ten, where they were met by the ships' doctors, Harbor Master (*Havenmeester*), NSMO's shipping agent and staff, and a group of nurses. After being divided into men and women, the

¹ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken: Geheime Rapporten en Kabinetrapporten, 1868–1940, nummer toegang 2.05.19, inventarisnummer 325.

² I wish to thank Oxford University Press for allowing previously published research to be included in this chapter. Kris Alexanderson, “‘A Dark State of Affairs’: Hajj Networks, Pan-Islamism, and Dutch Colonial Surveillance During the Interwar Period,” *Journal of Social History*, 47, no. 4 (2014): 1–21.

³ J. Eisenberger, *Indië en de bedevaart naar Mekka* (Leiden: M. Dubbeldeman, 1928), 126.

⁴ Ibid., 157.

nurses rolled up the pilgrims' sleeves and sanitized their upper arms. A male doctor in the case of the men and both a female and male doctor in the case of the women, administered inoculations against typhoid fever, cholera, and smallpox – obligatory precautions for all pilgrims embarking from colonial Indonesian ports after 1926. A vaccination official recorded the inoculation and stamped each pilgrim's passport. The pilgrims were then led to a long bench, where the vaccinations were given time to soak in and dry; they sat under the watchful eyes of an inspector who ensured pilgrims did not rub or touch their upper arms. The pilgrims continued on to passport control, where each pilgrim was required to show their travel pass (*reispas*) obtained from local government authorities prior to the journey. One by one, tickets and passports were carefully reviewed and approved. The entire process was completed by 4:00pm, when the ship finally departed for Jeddah.⁵

For many men, women, and children on SS *Melampus* this was their first time leaving Southeast Asia and they traveled on a ship filled with hundreds of fellow passengers, all sharing a confined space at sea. Hajjis' intimate exposure to a varied population onboard, all nevertheless united in their religious duty to fulfill the fifth pillar of Islam, introduced them to new experiences, identities, and ideas. This exposure was further intensified upon their arrival in the Middle East, where thousands of hajjis from diverse geographic, ethnic, and economic backgrounds converged, including Muslims free from European colonial rule and others active in nationalist struggles against imperialism in other European colonies. In the eyes of the Dutch colonial authorities, the incorporation of Indonesians into such a concentrated and unpredictable group of Muslims was troubling.

Both the Dutch colonial administration and Kongsi Tiga assumed hajjis could not be trusted to withstand the influence of subversive people and ideas they might encounter while abroad and feared returning hajjis might contaminate colonial Indonesia by spreading subversive political ideas learned abroad. Hajjis were considered simultaneously vulnerable to and complicit in the spread of pan-Islamic, anticolonial, and nationalist ideologies, which the Dutch suspected were circulating freely across hajj maritime networks. Controlling hajj networks was, therefore, necessary not only for practical and economic reasons, but also to maintain Dutch political authority within colonial Indonesia and both the Dutch colonial government and Kongsi Tiga worked together to police hajj maritime networks. As the pilgrims on SS *Melampus* experienced even before leaving Tanjung Priok, hajj ships were

⁵ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Nederlands Consulaat (1873–1930) en Gezantschap (1930–1950) te Djeddah (Turkije/Saoedi-Arabië), nummer toegang 2.05.53, inventarisnummer 158, 11 January 1929.

highly regulated and policed spaces.⁶ Kongsi Tiga safeguarded Dutch colonial hegemony across global maritime networks by regulating hajji behavior onboard, policing interactions between passengers, and managing onboard space according to imperial hierarchies of race, class, and gender. The trans-oceanic mobility of pilgrims during the interwar period was particularly threatening to Dutch authorities and controlling Kongsi Tiga ships, therefore, became a fundamental aspect of pilgrim transport.

The Hajj Pilgrim Ordinance of 1922

Throughout much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Dutch colonial authorities viewed Indonesian Muslims with suspicion and considered the hajj a possible threat to Dutch power.⁷ Some in the Dutch administration – most notably professor of Arabic at Leiden University and government advisor Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje – became highly knowledgeable in Islamic language, society, and culture, promoting religious freedom for Indonesian Muslims and, if somewhat counterproductively, arguing against colonial control and interference with the hajj and the Indonesian or Jawa community living in Mecca. But for most in the administration, the hajj continued to be seen as a nuisance and its political undertones were questioned.⁸ This distrust and underlying disapproval of Islam made the pilgrimage more difficult for hajjis and prohibitive travel regulations were established in 1825, 1831, and 1859.⁹ The transition to steamshipping and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 proved these travel restrictions largely toothless as hundreds – and by the interwar period tens of thousands – of Indonesian pilgrims traveled by ship to the Middle East each year. Despite these growing numbers, Dutch shipowners were slow to make serious improvements on their pilgrim fleets. Beginning in the 1890s, the colonial administration's attempts to increase regulations on safety and standards within pilgrim shipping – reflective of the Ethical Policy's

⁶ While Kongsi Tiga and the Dutch administration considered regulations necessary for ensuring safety onboard, this chapter investigates the less obvious reasons behind and implications of maritime regulation. Michael B. Miller, "Pilgrims' Progress: The Business of the Hajj," *Past and Present*, 191 (2006): 189–228.

⁷ Jan van der Putten, "Of Missed Opportunities, Colonial Law and Islam-phobia," *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 34, no. 100 (January 2006): 345–362.

⁸ Eric Tagliacozzo, "The Skeptic's Eye: Snouck Hurgronje and the Politics of Pilgrimage from the Indies," in *Southeast Asia and the Middle East: Islam, Movement, and the Longue Durée*, edited by Eric Tagliacozzo (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009), 135–155.

⁹ Fred von der Mehden suggests there was "hajiphobia" within the Dutch administration. Fred R. von der Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam: Interaction between Southeast Asia and the Middle East* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1993), 3.

Table 1.1 *Hajj pilgrims from colonial Indonesia, 1919–40*

Pilgrim season	Total number of Indonesian pilgrims	Total number of overseas pilgrims	Indonesian % of total
1919–20	14,805	59,370	24.9
1920–21	28,795	60,786	47.9
1921–22	22,412	n/a	n/a
1922–23	22,022	86,353	25.5
1923–24	39,800	91,786	43.4
1924–25	74	n/a	n/a
1925–26	3,474	57,957	6.0
1926–27	52,412	123,052	42.6
1927–28	43,082	98,635	43.7
1928–29	31,405	86,021	36.5
1929–30	33,214	84,810	39.2
1930–31	17,052	40,105	42.5
1931–32	4,385	29,065	15.1
1932–33	2,260	20,026	11.3
1933–34	2,854	25,252	11.3
1934–35	3,693	33,898	10.9
1935–36	4,012	33,730	11.9
1936–37	5,403	49,864	10.8
1937–38	10,327	67,224	15.4
1938–39	10,884	59,577	18.3
1939–40	6,586	31,610	20.8

Source: J. Vredenbregt, "The Haddj: Some of Its Features and Functions in Indonesia," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 118, no. 1 (1962): 149.

ideals – were not routinely followed or enforced and most substantial changes within hajj transport were only significantly codified after World War I.¹⁰

Table 1.1 shows that between 1919 and 1940, approximately 359,000 Indonesians made the hajj – comprising 31.5 percent of all overseas pilgrims arriving in the Hejaz – and the majority of these passengers traveled on Kongsi Tiga ships. SMN and RL ships departed from the ports of Makassar in Sulawesi, Surabaya and Tanjung Priok (Batavia) in Java, Emmahaven (today's Teluk Bayur in Padang), Palembang and Belawan (Medan) in Sumatra, and Sabang off the tip of Aceh, with KPM connecting the additional ports of Semarang in Java, and Borneo's Pontianak and Banjarmasin. On the return trip, pilgrims could only disembark at the ports of Tanjung Priok and Sabang

¹⁰ Falkus, *The Blue Funnel Legend*, 37–38. For similarities within British and French shipping, see John Slight, *The British Empire and the Hajj, 1865–1956* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 43–44, 164–165.

and were responsible for arranging return transportation to their home ports.¹¹ NSMO ships, meanwhile, only departed from Emmahaven and Tanjung Priok before heading across the Indian Ocean towards the Red Sea and eventually on to Liverpool and Amsterdam.¹² Splitting this traffic equally, the three companies dominated Southeast Asian hajj shipping under the Kongsi Tiga flag.¹³ Kongsi Tiga ships were not built specifically for pilgrim transport, but were used most of the year as regular cargo ships. With a few adjustments, they were adapted for pilgrim transport only during the hajj season, which changed each year according to the lunar calendar. The ability of the companies to make slight adjustments to already existing ships meant hajj transport was extremely lucrative for all three Kongsi Tiga companies, earning the pool around 90 million guilders in ticket sales between 1919 and 1940.¹⁴

Following the difficulties of hajj travel during World War I, the early 1920s saw a surge in pilgrim traffic, largely consisting of members of the urban lower classes and elite members of the peasantry.¹⁵ Each year between 1927 and 1940, 65–69 percent of pilgrims on Kongsi Tiga ships were men, 27–33 percent were women, and 2–8 percent were children under the age of twelve.¹⁶ Many hajjis began their journey with limited funds and most had saved for long periods of their lives in order to make the journey. Others relied on the combined savings of entire communities to help finance their pilgrimages. In return, financial supporters in colonial Indonesia expected returning hajjis to contribute culturally, politically, and spiritually to their communities. Hajjis returned to Southeast Asia as respected religious figures – recognizable by their new titles and attire – and often became religious leaders and teachers within their local communities. Yet monetary reserves of pilgrims – often accrued over a lifetime – were quickly dissipated, sometimes even before arriving in Jeddah. Additionally, in 1922 the sale of one-way tickets was banned and all pilgrims were legally required to purchase round-trip tickets

¹¹ NL-HaNA, Staatsblad 1927, no. 286.

¹² Other Blue Funnel ships traveled from the Straits Settlements and North China to Jeddah. Falkus, *The Blue Funnel Legend*, 37.

¹³ During the 1928–29 season, of the 54,488 total pilgrims who officially passed through the Red Sea on their way to Jeddah, 27,846 traveled with Kongsi-Tiga, 5,879 with other Singapore lines, 19,829 with the Bombay from colonial India, and 934 on coastal boats from Aden. Of those onboard Kongsi Tiga, SMN transported 9,157 pilgrims on 13 ships, RL 8,854 on 13 ships, and NSMO transported 9,835 pilgrims on 11 ships. NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 158, Eindrapport 1928–29.

¹⁴ With the total number of passengers between the 1919–20 and 1939–40 hajj seasons totaling 358,951 and average return tickets costing f250 each, Kongsi Tiga would have earned f89,737,750 in ticket sales.

¹⁵ Moeslim Abdurrahman, "On Hajj Tourism: In Search of Piety and Identity in the New Order Indonesia" (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2000), 5–6.

¹⁶ J. Vredenbregt, "The Haddj: Some of its Features and Functions in Indonesia," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 118, no. 1 (1962): 91.

up-front and in cash. While the high cost of these return tickets put the hajj out of reach for some, the colonial administration argued the measure was needed to ensure the safe return of pilgrims who otherwise might run out of funds while on hajj and be forced into unfair work contracts or even slavery in order to pay their return fare to Southeast Asia.¹⁷ This change in ticketing was criticized by many in colonial Indonesia who claimed that rather than ensuring the safe return of pilgrims as the administration and Kongsi Tiga claimed, the regulation primarily served the economic interests of Kongsi Tiga.¹⁸

The ending of one-way tickets was part of a broader restructuring of pilgrim transport ratified in the 1922 Pilgrims Ordinance (*Pelgrims Ordonnantie*). Recognizing the need for better regulations following high pilgrim mortality rates during the 1920–21 season, Kongsi Tiga helped the Dutch government draft the new Pilgrims Ordinance to regulate all aspects of hajj transport. The new regulations standardized food, health, space, safety, and hygiene on Dutch pilgrim ships, required all agents selling pilgrim fares for Kongsi Tiga to be licensed by the government, and granted the Trio a total monopoly over hajj transport to and from colonial Indonesia.¹⁹ In addition to the spaces reserved for pilgrims below deck, the ship was now obligated to provide at least 0.56 square meters (1.8 square feet) per pilgrim on the upper deck, which was to remain free from any encumbrances to allow pilgrims respite from the stuffy and crowded conditions below deck. The upper deck also housed the ship's temporary hospitals, shower baths, latrines, and lifesaving devices. Yet pilgrims were forced onto the upper deck each day while the lower decks were cleaned and passengers on the SS *Melampus*, for example, were hustled onto the bow of the ship every morning after breakfast. After the stern and holds were checked for any remaining sick pilgrims or others lagging behind, the holds were sanitized with a sprinkling of carbolic acid.²⁰ Onboard sanitation also adhered to international sanitary regulations including the 1912 (ratified in 1920) and 1926 International Sanitary Conventions agreed in Paris that sought to stop the global spread of diseases through increased port sanitation and quarantine requirements.²¹

While the 1922 Pilgrims Ordinance did much to standardize conditions on Dutch pilgrim ships, it also demanded that detailed administrative procedures be followed throughout the voyage. Each ship was required to travel with four documents; a pilgrims certificate, passenger list, pilgrims list, and ship journal. The pilgrims certificate contained detailed information: the name of the ship;

¹⁷ Eisenberger, *Indië en de bedevaart*, 167.

¹⁸ Tagliacozzo, "The Skeptic's Eye," 147.

¹⁹ NL-HaNA, Staatsblad 698, 14 November 1922.

²⁰ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 157, May 1931.

²¹ See Eisenberger, *Indië en de bedevaart*, 83–84; Anne Sealey, "Globalizing the 1926 International Sanitary Convention," *Journal of Global History*, 6, no. 3 (2011): 431–455.

owner of the ship; names of the captain and doctor onboard; the flag under which the ship sailed; identification of the rooms in which the steerage class passengers would be transported; the largest number of passengers each room could hold; the number of places available onboard for higher-class passengers; the amount of space available on deck for steerage passengers in square meters; the largest number of passengers that could be transported at the same time; a list of the life-saving devices onboard; and specifications of the ship's lighting, ventilation, and store of provisions. Once the owner, captain, or ship's agent recorded this information, it was presented to the Harbor Master at the port of departure at least three days before embarkation and a f300 fee was paid to the harbor authorities. The ship's captain and physician then inspected the vessel, verifying the submitted information's accuracy, and the ship was granted a pilgrim certificate, assuring – in theory – the ship's adherence to the 1922 Pilgrims Ordinance in terms of space and onboard provisions.²²

The ship's owner, captain, or agent also created a passenger list and pilgrims list including information on all passengers departing from colonial Indonesian ports and arriving anywhere in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, or Arabian Sea. The passenger list included the following information for each passenger: name, sex, ethnicity, class of accommodation onboard (either steerage or a cabin passenger), whether the passenger was a pilgrim making the hajj or another category of passenger, and their assigned hold space below deck. These lists were submitted in duplicate at least twenty-four hours in advance of departure to the Harbor Master, who inspected and approved them. Copies of the final passenger list and pilgrim certificate were left with the port authorities at the last embarkation port in colonial Indonesia, while additional copies were deposited at the Dutch Consulate in Jeddah upon the ship's arrival. The ship's journal recorded events onboard, including any disciplinary actions taken by the captain and the number of pilgrim who died en route.

Additionally, pilgrims were required to obtain an increasing complex set of travel documents along with their tickets. As seen on the SS *Melampus*, and shown in Figure 1.1, each pilgrim was required to obtain a *reispas* from local authorities, which was stamped by the *havenmeester* prior to the pilgrim ship's departure. The travel pass was stamped again by the Dutch Consulate after arrival in Jeddah, when a tearable strip with the traveler's information was removed and kept in the consulate's records. At the end of the pilgrimage, the travel pass was stamped a third time prior to the ship's departure. Finally, preferably within seven days, but definitely not more than two months, of one's arrival in colonial Indonesia, each pilgrim was required to hand in their

²² This paragraph and the following two are from Eisenberger, *Indië en de bedevaart*, 44–50.



Figure 1.1 Passport control on a Dutch pilgrim ship, c. 1910–40.

Source: Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Coll. no. TM-10001256.

stamped travel pass to the same local authority that issued it, to ensure those claiming hajji status had actually completed the pilgrimage. Failure to comply with these regulations could result in a f100 fine. These records ensured adherence to the 1922 Pilgrims Ordinance while also contributing to the colonial surveillance project, which escalated during this period.

Dutch suspicions of hajjis increased dramatically after the communist uprisings of 1926–27. The Dutch government assumed that many communist agitators escaped incarceration by fleeing to Mecca under the guise of a hajji, which explained the large number of hajji passengers between 1926 and 1930.²³ In reality, Kongsi Tiga had suspended nearly all its pilgrim transport during the 1924–25 and 1925–26 hajj seasons due to the political unrest in Saudi Arabia. This caused a backlog of pilgrims eager to travel to the Middle East, which – combined with improving economic conditions in colonial

²³ NL-HaNA, SMN, 2.20.23, inv.nr. 731, 1926 Pelgrims.

Indonesia, safer pilgrimage conditions under Ibn Saud's rule, and the fact 1927 was a hajj *akbar*, or greater hajj, that increased the pilgrimage's merit – resulted in an enormous increase in pilgrims during the late 1920s.²⁴ Nevertheless, hajjis traveling to and from the Middle East became prime suspects in the transmission of subversive politics between pan-Islamic and anticolonial movements in the Middle East and political agitators and groups such as the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in Southeast Asia.²⁵ In order to counteract the threat of further anticolonial unrest, the Dutch administration increased its surveillance over hajjis and enlisted the full support and cooperation of Kongsi Tiga.²⁶ As one official remarked, the colonial authorities needed to "hold the reigns tight, as punishment" after the uprisings.²⁷ In 1928, the administration urged local authorities collecting travel passes of returning hajjis to use it as an opportunity to keep control over returning hajjis, especially in regard to revolutionaries who might be among them.²⁸

The 1926–27 uprisings marked a turning point in Dutch colonial policing of the hajj, with close monitoring of the international movements of Muslim colonial subjects – especially those suspected of participating in subversive political activities, including hajjis importing pan-Islamic ideology from abroad. The hajj was an important site of state surveillance, reflected in the PID and ARD's heightened concerns over the "Nationalist-Muslim Movement" above all other groups under surveillance.²⁹ Despite this escalation, in reality the interwar period saw little violence or resistance centered on Islam or pan-Islamic ideology within colonial Indonesia. Nevertheless, the voluminous records collected on each Kongsi Tiga ship helped inform this imperial securitization project. The amount of regulation on hajj ships reflected overlapping concerns of the Dutch colonial administration and Kongsi Tiga: maritime sanitation and the wellbeing of pilgrims elicited carefully recorded information about the ship and its passengers.

²⁴ NL-HaNA, SMN, 2.20.23, inv.nr. 781, Jaarverslag 1927; Slight, *The British Empire*, 220–222, 242, 245.

²⁵ The PKI had been closely linked with pan-Islamic ideas, much to the distress of the Comintern who were particularly dissatisfied with the connection of Islam with Indonesian communist thought.

²⁶ By 1914, 90 percent of the world's Muslims lived under foreign rule and Europeans were "quite ready to believe that Muslims were responsive to appeals for concerted Islamic action" whether or not it was actually true. M. E. Yapp, "'That Great Mass of Unmixed Mahomedanism': Reflections on the Historical Links between the Middle East and Asia," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 19, no. 1 (1992): 8–9.

²⁷ NL-HaNA, BuZa / Kabinetsarchief Politieke Rapportage, 2.05.19, inv.nr. 325, 10 September 1931.

²⁸ Bijblad no. 11689 from the year 1928. See Eisenberger, *Indië en de bedevaart*, 49.

²⁹ Friend, *The Blue-Eyed Enemy*, 39–40.

Containing the “Arab” Threat at Sea

The collection of such detailed information helped Kongsi Tiga identify those onboard who did not fit the definition of “ordinary” pilgrim. The majority of “others” onboard consisted of “Arab” passengers – a blanket term used by the Trio to describe Hadramis traveling to and from the Middle East and Meccan shaykhs working as pilgrim brokers in colonial Indonesia. According to the 1922 Pilgrims Ordinance, a pilgrim was any “Muslim passenger, regardless of sex or age, traveling to or from the Hedjaz [Hejaz] for pilgrimage.”³⁰ The Trio criticized Arab passengers, who were largely merchants and agents rather than pilgrims, accusing them of unjustly profiting from the special arrangements made specifically for pilgrims and thus traveling for “next to nothing.”³¹ Further, Arabs were accused of manipulating and abusing the ticketing system by using the tickets of deceased pilgrims rather than purchasing their own fares.³² For the Dutch shipping companies, both groups represented a toxic element to the peace and order (*rust en orde*) implemented at sea through Kongsi Tiga’s extensive rules and regulations onboard. They were viewed as undesirable influences, capable of swaying the attitudes and opinions of Indonesian pilgrims. To counteract their influence, Kongsi Tiga used segregation as a tool to prevent what they considered to be a dangerous mixing of people onboard.³³

Of greatest concern were Hadrami Arabs – whose political and religious influence was feared by Kongsi Tiga. Together with the physical segregation of these passengers away from ordinary pilgrims, Dutch captains and officers were tasked with monitoring suspicious Hadramis they believed held sway over pilgrims and behaved insolently towards European crewmembers. Segregation onboard reflected the racial segregation of Hadrami residents in colonial

³⁰ The 1931 Simla Rules were meant to improve conditions on pilgrim ships traveling through the Indian Ocean.

³¹ The Dutch phrase used was “voor een appel en een ei.” NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 2 December 1929, Consul to Advisor Inlandse Zaken Weltevreden; GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1175, 19 May 1936, from International Agencies Ltd.

³² Kongsi Tiga was more lenient about the tickets of Indonesian pilgrims getting “mixed up” due to low Indonesian literacy rates and large parties usually traveling together in groups. NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 2 December 1929 Consul to Advisor Inlandse Zaken, Weltevreden.

³³ Again, these fears were likely exaggerated by Dutch shipowners and colonial officials. It is possible that, in reality, the growth of the number of hajjis had a leveling effect, undermining the position of the elite or Hadrami on the ships. Some historians see this period of the hajj as an egalitarian moment and we might also question whether this group would qualify under Benedict Anderson’s definition of an *imagined community*. Abdurrahman, *On Hajj Tourism*, 5–6; Benedict R. O’G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

Indonesia, who were categorized as foreign Asians (*vreemde Oosterlingen*). Hadramis were forced to live in Arab villages (*kampong Arab*) until 1919. Only after 1914 were such residents allowed to leave these Arab villages without first obtaining permission from and being granted travel passes by government authorities.³⁴ Despite this segregation, Hadrami communities were the most established and sizable Arab population in colonial Indonesia during the interwar period and held considerable economic and religious status in cities across the colony. Regardless of their relatively small numbers – approximately 45,000 in 1920, 70,000 in 1930, and 80,000 by World War II – Hadrami quarters grew into active trading districts in cities like Batavia, Surabaya, Palembang, and Pekalongan, largely through the trade of textiles, clothes, building materials, and furniture.³⁵ Successful traders often invested their profits into additional businesses in real estate and money lending and, in cities such as Palembang and Pekalongan, the Hadrami influence on local politics and commercial activities rivaled that of powerful Chinese communities.³⁶ This influence was partly due to the marriages of Hadrami men and Indonesian women – Hadrami women in the Middle East were largely restricted from traveling – providing “a bridge” that eased their integration into local communities.³⁷

Besides marriage, Islam was an important connection between Indonesian Muslims and Hadrami communities, serving as a “powerful unifying force” that helped Hadramis gain financial, religious, and cultural status in colonial Indonesia.³⁸ Religion helped integrate Hadramis into Indonesian society and their successes in commercial trade were intricately connected to their esteemed religious positions among Indonesian Muslims.³⁹ Their command of the Arabic language and continuing close ties to the Middle East (largely due to circular migration and large remittances) suggested a close bond to the Islamic holy land and was revered by many Indonesian Muslims.⁴⁰ Therefore, although a small fraction of the population, Hadramis occupied a superior

³⁴ Huub de Jonge, “Abdul Rahman Baswedan and the Emancipation of the Hadramis in Indonesia,” *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 32, no. 3 (2004): 375–376.

³⁵ Ibid., 373. ³⁶ Ibid., 375–376.

³⁷ Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami Awakening: Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900–1942* (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1999), 23.

³⁸ Ibid., 23.

³⁹ Peter G. Riddell, “Arab Migrants and Islamization in the Malay World During the Colonial Period,” *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 29, no. 84 (2001): 117.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 24. For more on remittances see De Jonge, “Abdul Rahman Baswedan”; Friedhelm Hartwig, “Contemplation, Social Reform and the Recollection of Identity. Hadrami Migrants and Travellers between 1896 and 1972,” *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, 41, no. 3 (November 2001): 327.

economic and legal position in colonial society, which helped inform their identities as Muslim cultural leaders within public religious life.⁴¹

Yet reverence towards Hadramis subsided with the rise of Indonesian nationalism during the 1920s and 1930s. Although Muslims in colonial Indonesia often viewed differences between Arabs and Indonesians in a positive light, Indonesian nationalism focused on Arab “foreignness” as opposed to shared religion.⁴² Despite our historical awareness of this increasing division, Dutch contemporaries continued to see Hadramis as powerful influences over Indonesian Muslims. Even Snouck Hurgronje felt Hadramis, in particular, were trying to spread Islam and expose Indonesians to the perceived exploitation and injustice perpetrated by the colonial government against them. He went as far as to recommend the wholesale refusal of Hadrami entry into the colony following the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, due to the detrimental moral influence they might have over Indonesians.⁴³ Additionally, Hadrami communities focused on “progress” within local communities through education: they built their own schools with curricula focused on Islamic religious teachings, as well as modern languages, mathematics, and geography.⁴⁴ Due to the elevated status of Hadramis within colonial Indonesia and the education available to them within these communities, the Dutch administration continued its attempts to diminish Arab power and prestige throughout the 1920s and 1930s.⁴⁵ Part of this strategy was to regulate and police Hadrami movements on Kongsi Tiga ships to and from the Middle East.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Sumit K. Mandal, “Forging a Modern Arab Identity in Java in the early Twentieth Century,” in *Transcending Borders: Arabs, Politics, Trade, and Islam in Southeast Asia*, edited by Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 164, 177.

⁴² Mobini-Kesheh, “The Hadrami Awakening,” 24; Riddell, “Arab Migrants,” 123.

⁴³ Huub de Jonge, “Contradictory and Against the Grain: Snouck Hurgronje on the Hadramis in the Dutch East Indies (1889–1936),” in *Transcending Borders: Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, edited by Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 228–231.

⁴⁴ Hartwig, “Contemplation, Social Reform, and the Recollection of Identity,” 327.

⁴⁵ Mobini-Kesheh explains how the colonial government “hastened this breakdown of the traditional stratification system by its willingness to appoint prominent non-sayyids as heads of their local Arab communities. When the Arab population of a city grew large enough to warrant it, the government would appoint a prominent individual as an Arab ‘officer’ . . . to provide liaison between his community and the government, to provide statistical information and advice to the government on issues related to Arabs, to disseminate government regulations and decrees, and to ensure the maintenance of law and order.” Mobini-Kesheh, “The Hadrami Awakening,” 26. Therefore, a shaykh could be administratively more powerful than a sayyid, but the sayyid in Java continued to be financial, religious, and cultural leaders based on tradition. Sumit K. Mandal, “Challenging Inequality in a Modern Islamic Idiom: Social Ferment amongst Arabs in Early 20th-Century Java,” in *Southeast Asia and the Middle East: Islam, Movement, and the Longue Durée*, edited by Eric Tagliocozzo (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009), 160.

⁴⁶ The British also imposed travel restrictions for Hadramis traveling across the Indian Ocean. See Engseng Ho, “Empire through Diasporic Eyes: A View from the Other Boat,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 46, no. 2 (April 2004): 212.

Kongsi Tiga's European officers and captains filed detailed reports about the "nuisance and opposition" experienced by Hadrami passengers who acted as "leaders" onboard and "corrupted the temperament of the pilgrims with their arrogant and insolent behavior."⁴⁷ For example, the captain of RL's SS *Sitoebondo* traveling from Jeddah to Tanjung Priok in the summer of 1930 complained about thirty Arab passengers whom he suspected of traveling with tickets belonging to deceased pilgrims. These passengers continuously disregarded Kongsi Tiga's onboard regulations by disobeying the bans on smoking and the use of stove devices onboard. They also got into fights, cut the line in the dining hall, littered, and regularly "troubled the doctor with traces of sickness" while refusing all injections and other medical interventions. The captain noted they disturbed "the good usual routine" of the ship through their "uncongenial and impudent behavior."⁴⁸

Other reports claimed "Arabs setting out for Netherlands India are troublesome passengers and often try to disturb the good order onboard" or accused these passengers of "bother[ing] the more rightful [Indonesian] passengers through their arrogant behavior."⁴⁹ The Trio's opinion was that "[i]n general, Arabs are disagreeable and harmful travel companions for Javanese. If they get the chance to snap up the best spots in the pilgrims quarters, they act the boss over their fellow Javanese passengers, they are 'korang adat' [asocial or impertinent] in relation to them."⁵⁰ According to the Trio, Arabs were able to "unjustly take up more room" and get the best spots onboard due to their "bold nature" and "experience in traveling onboard ships."⁵¹ This "bold nature" also led to numerous reports suggesting that "in general many Arabs misbehave towards their fellow female passengers while traveling" and the assumption that Arab men acted sexually inappropriately onboard was also "fully shared by the local agents of the Kongsi Tiga."⁵² At stake in these reports was the most threatening and feared outcome of Hadrami influence:

⁴⁷ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1176, August 1930, SS *Sitoebondo* from Djeddah to Tanjung Priok 22 June–13 July 1930.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1176, 18 September 1930, from Van de Poll & Co to RL; NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 2 December 1929, Consul to Advisor Inlandse Zaken, Weltevreden.

⁵⁰ *Korang adat*, an antiquated phrase with no exact definition, was used to imply someone was uncivilized and rude. Dirk H. Kolff, *Reize door den weinig bekenden zuidelijken Mulukschen archipel en langs de geheel onbekende zuidwest kust van Nieuw-Guinea: gedaan in de jaren 1825 en 1826* (Amsterdam: G. J. A. Beijerinck, 1828), 127.

⁵¹ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 11 December 1929, Consul to Advisor Inlandse Zaken, Weltevreden.

⁵² NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 2 December 1929, Consul to Advisor Inlandse Zaken, Weltevreden.

the contamination of Indonesian passengers' "good spirit." Arabs represented possible agitators who might turn pilgrims' compliant behavior against Dutch authority.⁵³

In order to counteract this negative influence, Kongsi Tiga segregated Hadrami passengers from Indonesian pilgrims: "[a]s a general rule we consider it undesirable to book Arabs and pilgrims on the same ship . . . at all events [we try] to lodge Arabs and pilgrims separate from each other."⁵⁴ Whenever possible, ships designated certain areas specifically for Hadrami passengers, either a "separate hatch" or, preferably, "a separate *lockable* room is made available, for example the space under the forecastle head."⁵⁵ European crew-members were also instructed to monitor Hadrami passengers and "keep an eye on them, especially at night."⁵⁶ As the 1920s progressed, Hadramis were denied passage on ships that could be "fully booked with real pilgrims" and, if any pilgrims *were* onboard, they were forbidden from entering "any parts of the ships that pilgrims occupy."⁵⁷ Instead, Hadramis had to wait until the "last few ships of the season," which – Kongsi Tiga hoped – would have only a few or no pilgrims onboard.⁵⁸ Kongsi Tiga's management discussed the wholesale denial of Hadrami passengers on its ships, but concluded such action would cause "difficulties with the Hedjaz government" and be "very troublesome."⁵⁹ In order to avoid threats to colonial control posed by Hadrami passengers, Kongsi Tiga was willing to forgo profits earned from these fares.

The reports of Kongsi Tiga's European captains and officers reflect underlying fears that better educated, wealthier, and more independent Arab passengers had the ability to "taint our good name and damage the good spirit of the pilgrims."⁶⁰ To keep colonial authority intact, Kongsi Tiga's administrative staff deemed the combination of Indonesian pilgrims and Arabs as "very undesirable" and by the late 1920s local Kongsi Tiga booking agents warned all captains and officers if any Arab passengers would be traveling onboard before the ship sailed.⁶¹ Imperial prejudices and stereotypes around race

⁵³ Additionally, the form of Islam practiced and preached by Arabs was considered a negative influence on pilgrims. Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, "Rethinking Riots in Colonial South East Asia," *South East Asia Research*, 18, no. 1 (March 2010): 106.

⁵⁴ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1175, 25 April 1932, SMN telegram to Abdoolabhooy Lalljee & Co. Merchants Head Office, Bombay.

⁵⁵ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1175, 11 March 1936.

⁵⁶ Italics my own. NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 2 December 1929, Consul to Advisor Inlandse Zaken, Weltevreden.

⁵⁷ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 3 April 1929, Consul to Kongsi-Tiga.

⁵⁸ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 2 December 1929, Consul to Advisor Inlandse Zaken, Weltevreden.

⁵⁹ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1176, 18 September 1930, Van de Poll & Co. to RL.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 2 December 1929, Consul to Advisor Inlandse Zaken, Weltevreden.

played a role in the negative opinions of Hadramis, but, in reality, disruptions onboard were often caused by passengers from colonial Indonesia. For example, in 1926 Hajji Soedjak returned to colonial Indonesia on SS *Ajax*.⁶² While acting as Chief Hajji (*Kapala Hajji*) – an onboard liaison between pilgrims and officers – the captain claimed Soedjak caused

much trouble: he held speeches onboard, where the pilgrims were urged towards various provocative actions, directly against the regulations of the ship and later against the quarantine regulations at Poelau Roebiah [Pulau Rubiah in Aceh] which he advised to sabotage as not in harmony with their religion. If not for the fact that the brother of our [Jeddah] Advisor Tadjoedin was on board, things could have been worse.⁶³

Rather than obedient submission to Dutch rules and regulations, Soedjak challenged colonial hierarchies by utilizing the sea's transgressive possibilities and his own fluid mobility, precisely what Kongsi Tiga and Dutch authorities feared might happen to many pilgrims while abroad. Kongsi Tiga's focus on the comingling of passengers reflected colonial beliefs that anticolonial ideology was imported into the colony from abroad.

Despite denouncing Meccan shaykhs or pilgrim brokers for many of the same reasons as Hadrami passengers, such passengers presented Kongsi Tiga with a different set of challenges. Unlike Hadramis, who could be physically segregated from pilgrims, Meccan shaykhs traveled together with hajjis and shared the same living quarters. Pilgrims generally used pilgrim brokers or shaykhs to arrange their food, accommodation, travel, and documentation for the trip from colonial Indonesia to Jeddah.⁶⁴ In colonial Indonesia, shaykhs had contact with local clerics (*kijaji*) at Muslim schools (*pesantren*), where they recruited and advised prospective pilgrims.⁶⁵ Once onboard, there existed "a serious battle to take each other's customers" as brokers worked to recruit pilgrims for their head shaykh in Mecca, earning commissions on each pilgrim they recruited.⁶⁶ Shaykhs were responsible for pilgrims up until their arrival in Jeddah, when they were transferred to the responsibility of a local shaykh (*mutawwif* or *dalil*) or his representative (*wakil*), who accompanied them throughout their pilgrimage in the Hejaz, arranging all food, accommodation,

⁶² Owned by Koninklijke Nederlandsche Stoomvaart Maatschappij, SS *Ajax* was used to transport pilgrims during the 1926–27 season due to the large number of pilgrims that year.

⁶³ NL-HaNA, BuZA / Kabinetsarchief Politieke Rapportage, 2.05.19, inv.nr. 325.

⁶⁴ Ernst Spaan, "Taikongs and Calos: The Role of Middlemen and Brokers in Javanese International Migration," *International Migration Review*, 28, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 95.

⁶⁵ "The shipping agencies secured the services of pilgrim brokers by paying premiums bought by pilgrims via this broker." Laurence Husson, "Indonesians in Saudi Arabia: Worship and Work," *Studia Islamika*, 4, no. 4 (1997): 118.

⁶⁶ Kees van Dijk, "Indonesische hadki's op reis," in *Islamitische Pelgrimstochten*, edited by Willy Jansen and Huub de Jonge (Muiderberg: Dick Coutinho, 1991), 44.

and transport.⁶⁷ Like many Dutch administrators, even Snouck Hurgronje viewed pilgrim brokers as corrupt predators who took advantage of pilgrims' dependence.⁶⁸

Like Hadrami passengers, Kongsi Tiga saw Arab shaykhs as "difficult passengers who quite often cause trouble or discontent on board"⁶⁹ and accused them of usurping "more space on board for themselves than they have a right to."⁷⁰ They were vilified for persuading pilgrims to change from one shaykh to another during the outward voyage and blamed for advancing "part of [pilgrims'] expenses [before sailing], which, later on, the pilgrims can only repay with great difficulty."⁷¹ Unlike Hadrami passengers, shaykhs traveled together with pilgrims on the steerage decks and, according to Kongsi Tiga reports, had more ability to influence fellow passengers in negative ways.⁷² One report noted the "tendency of Meccans to swear and pass the time by making unnecessary complaints" and feared these behaviors would be mimicked by Indonesians once "back in the Fatherland."⁷³ Kongsi Tiga believed pilgrims needed protection against shaykhs because "[m]ost pilgrims lack the courage to complain at the right moment."⁷⁴ SMN, RL, and NSMO instructed European captains and officers to protect anyone who "paid too little attention to himself," for example if denied the rightful amount of space below deck due to a "greedy" shaykh taking up too much room.⁷⁵

Using rhetoric from the Ethical Policy, Kongsi Tiga similarly stressed the Trio's responsibility to protect "innocent" pilgrims from the conniving ways of Meccan shaykhs. Although there may have been shaykhs who had questionable business practices, the Trio's deeper concerns revolved around the powerful position held by shaykhs within the hajj trade and their ability to "prevent

⁶⁷ The Dutch Consulate in Jeddah listed 269 *mutawwif* and 26 *wakil* operating in the Hedjaz in 1930. NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, July 1930.

⁶⁸ Tagliacozzo, "The Skeptic's Eye," 145.

⁶⁹ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 144, 21 November 1938, International Agencies Ltd. to SMN, RL, NSMO.

⁷⁰ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 9 October 1929, SMN, RL, NSMO to Consulate.

⁷¹ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 144, 21 November 1938, International Agencies Ltd. to SMN, RL, NSMO.

⁷² Unlike other Arab passengers, "[c]omplaints of Mekka-sechs committing adultery with Javanese women on board pilgrim ships have never yet reached our ears. We venture to think that news of such an endeavor would very certainly leak, especially since during the pilgrimage different and stricter notions of morality than under ordinary circumstances reign." NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 9 October 1929, SMN, RL, NSMO to Consulate.

⁷³ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 172, 8 December 1931, Report of Vice Consul Djeddah.

⁷⁴ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 11 December 1929, Consul to Advisor voor Inlandse Zaken, Weltevreden.

⁷⁵ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 9 October 1929, SMN, RL, NSMO to Consulate.

the smooth running of business.”⁷⁶ From canvassing passengers in colonial Indonesia, to maintaining order onboard, to controlling the movements of pilgrims after disembarking at Jeddah, shaykhs wielded an enormous amount of power and infringed on Dutch control over the entire hajj process. SMN, RL, and NSMO were, therefore, anxious to reform the use of shaykhs or, if possible, cut them out of the hajj pilgrimage entirely. The loyalty of shaykhs originating from the Hejaz to the Dutch regime could not be guaranteed. They were believed to take advantage of pilgrims onboard and in Mecca and were seen as troublemakers at sea. All three Kongsi Tiga companies agreed “it would be in the interest of the pilgrims if this [shaykh] traffic could be stopped.”⁷⁷

Shaykhs from colonial Indonesia, largely recruited from among Indonesian pilgrims who had previously worked or studied in Mecca for extended periods of time, were also present on most Kongsi Tiga ships, but the Trio assumed these Indonesian pilgrim brokers could be relied upon to uphold imperial order onboard and support the Dutch Empire more broadly.⁷⁸ While Arab pilgrim brokers were seen as untrustworthy and considered “more damaging than recruiters of [the pilgrims’] own nationality,”⁷⁹ Kongsi Tiga claimed it was of “the greatest importance to our companies to have a broker corps on which we can rely and from which we can expect support at times when we have to face competition.” The Trio believed it “logical that the bookings of the native pilgrims should be handled by people of their own race.” Broker loyalty was crucial to the Trio as challenges to Kongsi Tiga’s shipping monopoly increased during the 1920s and 1930s. Kongsi Tiga recognized they would “naturally be much stronger if we were backed by a reliable and loyal corps of brokers and if the influence of the Mecca shaykhs on the bookings were less than it is at present.” The influence of Meccan shaykhs depended on Arabs holding an elevated position within colonial Indonesia, which the Kongsi Tiga saw as based on “the fact that they come from the Hejaz and secondly owing to their having the disposal of more capital and their exercising a certain religious influence on the simple native.” Ultimately, Kongsi Tiga believed these pilgrim brokers could not be trusted or depended upon to support Dutch shipping because it was “a matter of indifference to a Mecca shaykh by which company the pilgrims travel, as his earnings are derived from the stay in

⁷⁶ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 149, 2 May 1931.

⁷⁷ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 144, 21 November 1938, International Agencies Ltd. to SMN, RL, NSMO.

⁷⁸ Spaan, “Taikongs and Calos,” 95.

⁷⁹ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 11 December 1929, Consul to Advisor voor Inlandse Zaken, Weltevreden.

the Hejaz” and the companies could, therefore, “never expect any loyal support from the Mecca shaykhs.”⁸⁰

The anxious reactions of Dutch shipowners towards Arab passengers suggest there were large numbers of such travelers onboard but company archives show just the opposite. Hadramis and shaykhs normally represented a very small percentage of those onboard Kongsi Tiga ships, with anywhere from thirty to a hundred Arabs traveling amongst the thousand-plus total passengers on each ship. For example, during the 1928–29 pilgrim season, only 614 Arab passengers were transported on Trio ships, a small number compared with the thousands of passengers who traveled on Kongsi Tiga ships that year.⁸¹ These numbers suggest that suspicion of Dutch shipowners likely outweighed actual subversive activities happening onboard but, nevertheless, such suspicions continued to inform Kongsi Tiga’s maritime policies.

Kongsi Tiga repeatedly failed to find “a satisfactory solution to the problem” of counteracting the influence of Arab shaykhs.⁸² As with Hadrami passengers, barring Arab shaykhs from entering the colony by refusing “to transport the shaykhs altogether” was entertained, as was a higher entry fee into the colony: “if the same [fee] could be [be enforced on ships running] to and from Singapore their [financial] outlay to travel to colonial Indonesia would be increased to such an extent that few would consider making the voyage.” These ideas were abandoned as they would cause “great trouble with the Saudi Arabian government, which must be avoided.”⁸³ Therefore, surveillance was the only option to “stop this nuisance” of shaykh influence and interference onboard. Through “daily control of the pilgrim transports” and “daily inspections of the pilgrim living quarters” Kongsi Tiga’s European crewmembers could “prevent this evil from taking on further dimensions.”⁸⁴ European captains and officers were instructed to “watch them and prohibit the use of Arabs onboard pilgrim ships as liaisons [*Kapala Hajji*] for the distribution of meat, etc. or for the conveyance or maintenance of regulations over order on board.”⁸⁵ By insisting Meccan shaykhs were never appointed Chief Hajji,

⁸⁰ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 144, 26 October 1938, SMN, RL, NSMO to International Agencies Ltd.

⁸¹ NL-HaNA, SMN, 2.20.23, inv.nr. 781, Jaarverslag 1929.

⁸² NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 144, 26 October 1938, SMN, RL, NSMO to International Agencies Ltd.

⁸³ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 144, 21 November 1938, International Agencies Ltd. to SMN, RL, NSMO.

⁸⁴ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 144, 9 October 1929, SMN, RL, NSMO to Consulate.

⁸⁵ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 11 December 1929, Consul to Advisor voor Inlandse Zaken, Weltevreden.

Kongsi Tiga further eroded the special status of these passengers, whom they believed held a revered and, therefore, dangerous position amongst Indonesian pilgrims.⁸⁶

Meccan shaykhs were required to make themselves known to local agents when they were issued their tickets. While each ticket had the individual traveler's name on it, there was a separate protocol for the handling of Indonesian pilgrim tickets and those of Meccan shaykhs. The Trio argued that since most pilgrims were illiterate and traveled together in groups, their tickets were unknowingly exchanged with others in the group on a regular basis. Kongsi Tiga would thus "NOT stick rigidly to the rule of the personal marks of their tickets." Meccan shaykhs, on the other hand, were "experienced travelers, they can all read and write and they invariably retain their own ticket." Local agents in Jeddah were familiar with the "long-held custom" of closely scrutinizing the individual tickets of Arab passengers, while the same requirement was overlooked for Indonesian pilgrims.⁸⁷ By closely monitoring the behavior of Meccan shaykhs onboard and keeping records of their identity through the issuance of personal tickets, Kongsi Tiga hoped to build cases against individual shaykhs it felt should be barred from traveling on its ships. If Kongsi Tiga's agents could provide "concrete and well-founded cases of corruption or fraud, maltreatment of prospective pilgrims or misconduct in Java, visas to enter Java can be refused [in Jeddah] by the Dutch legation." Although Kongsi Tiga recognized that "shaykhs being refused admittance in this way will of course be replaced by others" they hoped the replacement brokers would be "a better and less aggressive type of shaykh."⁸⁸

Kongsi Tiga was also under scrutiny from Muslim communities in colonial Indonesia who questioned Dutch ability to ensure the safety and comfort of pilgrims in terms of their interactions with shaykhs. Indonesian publications – such as the Palembang periodical *Perja Selaten* and the *Pewarte Deli* (Deli Herald) – published articles arguing that "the Dutch government and Her representatives must take 'harder' action against the pilgrim shaykhs, etc." This action was only possible "while still respectful of not bringing [colonial Indonesia's] neutral position in terms of religion [*kenetralen pada sgama*] into danger." Very aware of the power of public opinion within colonial Indonesia, Dutch authorities responded vehemently to such articles: "in terms of our

⁸⁶ Captains and first officers were warned beforehand if Arabs would be traveling with them and were instructed that no Arabs should be appointed "kopala's Hadji [sic]" onboard ships. NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 2 December 1929, Consul to Advisor Inlandse Zaken, Weltevreden.

⁸⁷ Capitalization is from the original document. NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv. nr. 147, 11 December 1929, Consul to Advisor voor Inlandse Zaken, Weltevreden.

⁸⁸ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 144, 21 November 1938, International Agencies Ltd. to SMN, RL, NSMO.

‘hardness’ (refusal of visas, etc.), we cannot go any further than a definite limit. Overstepping these would lead the pro-Arabic magazines in the Indies, which claim to have the interests of pilgrims in mind, to propose these steps are meant as a hindrance to the pilgrimage.”⁸⁹ Public concerns over the power of pilgrim brokers made the issue all the more pressing and tricky for Kongsi Tiga, which acted “with an eye on the danger to their own popularity.”⁹⁰

Dutch opinion believed the combination of incendiary factors experienced both onboard hajj ships and within the Middle East (discussed in Chapter 4) provided seditious influences while pilgrims were spatially removed from the colonial order in Indonesia. The journey was meant to dampen any seditious ideas entertained while abroad, before pilgrims returned to colonial Indonesia. In this way, policies onboard served to reeducate pilgrims who may have forgotten their place in the colonial order while on hajj. Kongsi Tiga worried that if potentially subversive Arab passengers held an elevated status at sea, then “pilgrims would listen to these [passengers] more than the captain of the ship” and Kongsi Tiga decried “surely we must remain boss on our own ships!”⁹¹

Race, Class, Consumer Power, and Competition

Like the segregation of steerage passengers, Kongsi Tiga’s policies regarding the transport of passengers in higher-class accommodation were also informed by colonial Indonesia’s racialized class hierarchies. Upper-class passengers, or cabin passengers, were divided into five categories within three classes of accommodation. Class A cabins were reserved for European and high-ranking Indonesians and were the most exclusive and expensive accommodation onboard: servants were assigned to wait on Class A passengers in their cabins, each with its own private bathroom and toilet, and ate their meals in the salon together with the European captain and officers. Class B cabins were available to Indonesian civil servants and other non-European private passengers. Class B passengers also had servants to care for their cabins and were provided better food than ordinary pilgrims, but were not guaranteed use of a private bathroom or toilet and were prohibited from using the salon. Class C passengers paid f150 extra for private cabin accommodation, but were otherwise treated as ordinary pilgrims without special food, servants, or lavatories. On the return journey from Jeddah, all upper-class passengers were permitted to return on any ship – provided a cabin was available – and, therefore, did not have to wait

⁸⁹ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 135, Jaar Verslag 1355 (1936–37).

⁹⁰ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 11 December 1929, Consul to Advisor voor Inlandse Zaken, Weltevreden.

⁹¹ NL-HaNA, BuZa / Kabinetsarchief Politieke Rapportage, 2.05.19, inv.nr. 325.

their turn for the next available ship like those in steerage.⁹² It was mandatory that all Indonesian cabin passengers were “natives of better standing such as regents, merchants, etc. who are traveling for [their] own account and who can be relied on to behave decently.”⁹³

Despite these policies, Indonesian pilgrims of “better standing” were often discouraged from travelling in Class A cabins in the Trio’s attempt to retain the most exclusive spaces onboard solely for European use. For example, during the 1937 hajj season pilgrims Mr. and Mrs. Gelar Soeis Soetann Pengeran disembarked from RL’s SS *Buitenzorg* after a three-week journey from Tanjung Priok to Jeddah, where they immediately visited the Dutch Consulate to lodge a complaint about their sea voyage. Kongsi Tiga’s agents in Medan and Batavia had dissuaded the couple from traveling in Class A accommodation and instead assigned them to a Class B cabin for which they paid f400 each.⁹⁴ Although the couple found both the cabin and service to their liking, they were denied use of the toilet and bathroom adjacent to their cabin, despite promised access by Kongsi Tiga’s ticketing agents in Batavia.⁹⁵ Additionally, the couple was prohibited from eating in the salon with Class A passengers and European crewmembers. Instead, they were served the same food as steerage passengers on the decks below. Only after several complaints did the captain supply them with bread, cheese, and eggs for breakfast and supplemental sweets and puddings with their other meals, but they were still prohibited from entering the salon for the duration of the trip.⁹⁶

As a result of this complaint, the three Kongsi Tiga firms debated whether or not they should continue accommodating pilgrims in upper-class cabins. Kongsi Tiga’s management feared that allowing Indonesians access to higher-class accommodation would give them a sense of entitlement and result in more requests for special treatment and expanded privileges onboard. SMN and RL questioned if the British-owned NSMO was trying to make a “political statement” by accommodating so many Indonesian passengers in Class A and B cabins and allowing “prominent natives to, more or less, travel like Europeans.” NSMO reassured the other firms that passengers only occupied these spaces when there were “no other European passengers onboard” and access to the salon was only given when “there was no separate deck.”⁹⁷ Additionally, SMN and RL worried about granting access to the salon, which they saw as

⁹² GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1202; GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1202, 8 January 1938; GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1202, 9 June 1937, SMN to RL and NSMO, Batavia.

⁹³ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1202, 11 August 1930.

⁹⁴ Paid in Batavia on December 14, 1937.

⁹⁵ Instead a special place was set up for them on the after deck without a tap or other facilities. GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1202, 8 January 1938, Jeddah to RL.

⁹⁶ Ibid. ⁹⁷ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1202, Inhoud van Oktober, November 1938.

a European space off-limits to Indonesian pilgrims, no matter what their social standing in colonial Indonesia.

Besides Indonesian pilgrims, many Hadramis had the financial means to purchase Class A, B, and C tickets, but were prevented from doing so, as the Trio doubted their ability to “behave decently.” In theory, allowing Hadramis to travel in higher-class cabins would keep them separate from Indonesian pilgrims for the duration of the voyage, but this was not in line with Kongsi Tiga’s policies denying Hadramis an elevated status onboard. Throughout the 1930s, Lallajee and Company, Kongsi Tiga’s agent in Al Mukalla, received “letters from many places in Hadramout asking us to arrange for them second and even first-class passages for Singapore.” While the agents were prepared to sell these tickets “[p]rovided accommodation for the class is available on board the steamers,” they received little information from Kongsi Tiga’s management about how to proceed: “[o]wing to absence of sufficient information about the fares, we experience great inconvenience as to charges, and have to wait until the arrival of steamers to ask the captains. We shall be obliged, if you will furnish us with full particulars about it.”⁹⁸ Kongsi Tiga remained vague with local agents about such fares due to internal conflicts over whether or not the Trio should allow Arab passengers higher-class accommodation.

SMN, RL, and NSMO did not always agree on policies regarding cabin passengers and the three companies struggled over the balance between financial profits and maintaining colonial hierarchies onboard. NSMO, the only non-Dutch company in the pool, was “quite prepared to accept Arabs in first class accommodation in any of our vessels fixed to call at Makallah [sic], provided they were able to pay their passage money.”⁹⁹ RL disagreed and felt that despite NSMO’s determination “to rent first class cabins to Arabs . . . This does not change our position, that we do not want the accommodation for European passengers made available for Arabs.”¹⁰⁰ SMN took an even tougher stance against offering cabin accommodation to Hadramis, concluding “we must not transport any Arabs in cabins that are also used by Europeans.”¹⁰¹ Both SMN and RL felt “the cabins intended for European passengers must in no case be made available for the transport of Arabs.”¹⁰² Ultimately, the Trio decided on a compromise to “look case by case if reserved accommodation, which also would be rented to C category pilgrims, can be made available for Arab steerage passengers.”¹⁰³ For the Dutch companies, profits were secondary to concerns over racial and class contamination onboard, while NSMO

⁹⁸ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1178, 24 June 1939, SMN to RL.

⁹⁹ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1178.

¹⁰⁰ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1178, 12 July 1939.

¹⁰¹ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1178, 24 June 1939, SMN to RL.

¹⁰² GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1178, 27 June 1939, RL to SMN.

¹⁰³ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1178, 1 August 1939.

was less concerned. Ultimately, all three companies agreed that “[a]t the most, we can consider [providing] clerks cabins on ships where no pilgrims are traveling.”¹⁰⁴

Within the strictly regulated spatiality onboard Kongsi Tiga ships, foreign Asians traveling in steerage held a position of power onboard and presented a danger to Dutch colonial authority by subverting the colonial hierarchies implemented by Kongsi Tiga. Indonesians of “better standing” were also present within colonial Indonesia’s social hierarchies and therefore did not transgress colonial norms or threaten colonial stability in quite the same way as Hadramis traveling in the higher classes. Along with anxieties over contamination of European spaces, the SMN and RL were worried about the example higher-class Arab passengers would set for Indonesian pilgrims, many of whom had never left the colony and were traveling across global maritime networks for the first time. Kongsi Tiga wanted to ensure these experiences did not include encouragement to question Dutch colonial authority. The trans-oceanic mobility of passengers refracted racial hierarchies present in colonial Indonesia, ultimately producing a hierarchical structure onboard unique to Kongsi Tiga ships.

By the 1920s, hajj shipping in Asia was monopolized by a small number of European shipping companies that dominated pilgrim transport to and from colonial Indonesia, colonial India, and the Straits Settlements. Despite viewing each other as competitors, these European companies cooperated with each other through shipping conferences. Yet intense competition for passengers meant European companies constantly adjusted their ticket prices to match or undercut European competitors.¹⁰⁵ Despite ongoing rate wars, conferences primarily accepted the right of each European nation served by the conference’s ships to act as a participating member and the “legitimacy of each member’s existence was usually mutually recognized.”¹⁰⁶ Unlike the “horizontal integration” of European shipping conferences, Indonesian, Indian, Chinese, and Japanese hajj transport competitors were excluded from cooperation with the Kongsi Tiga. While this may be partially due to a “technological hierarchy” favoring larger and faster European ships, shipping was also structured around racial discrimination informed by conventions in colonial Indonesia.¹⁰⁷

Due to both the economic and political repercussions of losing hajjis to competing firms, Kongsi Tiga saw the loss of passengers as a serious issue and

¹⁰⁴ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1178, 27 June 1939, RL to SMN.

¹⁰⁵ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1176, 9 February 1932.

¹⁰⁶ Frank Broeze, “Underdevelopment and Dependency: Maritime India during the Raj,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 18, no. 3 (1984): 445.

¹⁰⁷ Campo, “Steam Navigation,” 22.

commissioned numerous inquiries to learn why passengers chose competing firms. Even after their record-breaking hajj season of 1926–27, Kongsi Tiga sent employees to ask hajjis in person why some opted for foreign ships, especially vessels leaving from Singapore. The answers were more complicated than simply inadequate food onboard or wishing to bypass required vaccinations in colonial Indonesian ports.¹⁰⁸ Pilgrims found the lower prices onboard Singapore ships “enticing” and believed ships leaving from Singapore were more concerned with passenger comfort. Those interviewed praised the fact that Singapore ships accommodated “much more baggage in their quarters than did the Java boats.”¹⁰⁹

Despite many regulations in the 1922 Pilgrims Ordinance stipulating required provisions onboard Dutch pilgrim ships, a lack of oversight and lackadaisical inspections left enforcement of correct procedures largely up to each individual ship. For example, pilgrims could be transported, according to one report, in “gunpowder rooms, that often lie in the mid-ship, [having] no portholes so that the ventilation is never as good as in the other pilgrim quarters. Moreover, the room is darker because the daylight cannot shine in.” Yet, according to the Pilgrims Ordinance, transport in these rooms was “permissible, provided certain requirements are met.”¹¹⁰ Even in the designated pilgrim quarters, the large open rooms below deck were crowded with people and largely devoid of comfort save for items brought by the pilgrims themselves. The Pilgrims Ordinance only required one saltwater shower and two latrines for every hundred passengers onboard.¹¹¹ Within these crowded and stifling conditions, the Trio was confused over why pilgrims spent relatively little time on the upper decks: “[I]t is a remarkable fact that most pilgrims gladly stay all day in the pilgrim holds amid the hanging mosquito nets, (wet) sarongs etc., etc., . . . It is as if they shun the fresh sea air.” The Trio assumed pilgrims stayed below deck due to weather conditions: “our pilgrims on board are generally not dressed warmly enough. In the Red Sea in particular it can be very cold during the first months of the season.”¹¹²

A more informed explanation of these conditions was written by public health inspector W. G. de Vogel in a 1927 report. De Vogel’s report highlights how ships themselves were to blame for pilgrims avoiding the upper decks. The report exclaimed that “not a square inch of space [is] left on the upper deck

¹⁰⁸ Concerns over vaccination evasion diminished in 1929 when the Straits Settlements began enforcing vaccinations for all departing pilgrims.

¹⁰⁹ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 157, Eindverslag 1926–27.

¹¹⁰ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 157, Eindrapport 1937–38.

¹¹¹ 1922 *Pelgrims Ordinatie*, Article 6, sections i and j stated the first 50 pilgrims had 2 latrines and then 1 additional for every 50 pilgrims or part thereof, up to 500, with 1 additionally per 100 beyond that. This means that on a typical returning ship of 1,700 passengers there would be 23 latrines and 17 showers, of which some were reserved for women.

¹¹² NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 158, Eindrapport 1928–29.

to which passengers from the between-decks can go for air or change of scene.” Additionally, it was nearly impossible to move the pilgrims’ baggage below deck and, therefore, difficult to clean the ship throughout the trip: “even in the best regulated ships, conditions below grow worse and worse as the voyage proceeds.”¹¹³ The onboard experiences of R. A. A. Muhamar Wiranatakusumah, the Regent of Bandung, reflect the difficult conditions experienced by steerage passengers on RL’s SS *Soerakarta*. The decks below were crowded, dark, and stuffy and after a few days “the heat in the holds was unbearable.”¹¹⁴ The passengers suffered from sea-sickness and the “rolling of the ship was always evident in the depths of the hold . . . [and] seen clearly on the faces of passengers who, with their upset stomachs, craved more space.”¹¹⁵ SMN and RL hoped the introduction of new ships such as RL’s MS *Kota Radja* and MS *Kota Inten* would improve conditions onboard, but by 1936 RL was still noting that quarantine authorities rarely enforced the 1926 International Sanitary Convention’s regulations and then only to the extent that each vessel “must have a suitable tween-deck space available, have part of the upper deck sheltered by an awning, and have a doctor on board.” For the rest – wooden upper deck, life-saving appliances, hospital, permanent kitchens, latrines, etc. – the company noted that inspection authorities “do not bother” and they had “no reason to believe that they will change this system.”¹¹⁶

The Trio’s food rationing policies were also investigated to determine possible room for improvement (Table 1.2). Unlike Kongsi Tiga ships where food was included in the ticket price, Singapore ships provided only firewood and water and it was up to passengers to bring their own food onboard and prepare it themselves. Kongsi Tiga’s report claimed most pilgrims “found the food provisions agreeable” and “were appreciative of the rice, dried fish, salted eggs and other provisions given to them” onboard Dutch ships.¹¹⁷ Commenting on RL’s steerage rations, Regent Wiranatakusumah noted that the “food was good” and was pleased with the amount of water provided and the salted fish and eggs that helped comprise the ship’s three daily meals for the majority of passengers.¹¹⁸ As a high-class cabin passenger, however, Wiranatakusumah

¹¹³ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 157, May 1931.

¹¹⁴ Aria Wiranatakoesoema and G. A. van Bovene, *Mijn reis naar Mekka; naar het dagboek van den regent van Bandoeng Raden Adipati Aria Wiranatakoesoema* (Bandoeng: N.V. Mij. Vorkink, 1925), 18.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 17.

¹¹⁶ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1175, 16 June 1936. The 1926 International Sanitary Convention sought to stop the global spread of diseases through increased port sanitation and quarantine requirements. See Sealey, “Globalizing the 1926 International Sanitary Convention.”

¹¹⁷ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 157, Eindverslag 1926–27.

¹¹⁸ Although he doesn’t mention this distinction in his memoir, as a cabin passenger Wiranatakusumah would have been served a higher standard of food throughout the trip. Wiranatakoesoema and van Bovene, *Mijn reis naar Mekka*, 4.

Table 1.2 Daily rations per steerage pilgrim per the 1922 Pilgrims Ordinance

Article	Unit	Quantity	Article	Unit	Quantity
Dried fish	0.1	kilograms	Fresh coconut oil	0.01	liters
Salted duck eggs	1.0	pieces	Vinegar	0.01	liters
Dried vegetables	0.002	kilograms	Salt	0.01	kilograms
Javanese green peas	0.05	kilograms	Roasted coffee	0.015	kilograms
Rice	0.5	kilograms	Tea	0.04	kilograms
Soja	0.007	liters	Javanese brown sugar	0.004	kilograms
Sugar	0.03	kilograms	Drinking water	5	liters

Note: Two persons under ten years of age to count as one adult, children under two years are not entitled to rations. The daily quantity of drinking water shall be supplied to each person in full, irrespective of age.

Source: NL-HaNA, Staatsblad 698, *Pelgrims Ordinanntie*, 14 November 1922, Article 9 (1) A.

himself would have enjoyed more sophisticated food throughout the trip, although his memoir does not address this distinction. While Kongsi Tiga saw these provisions as a positive selling point for its ships, British shipowners in Singapore generally believed pilgrims preferred Singapore ships precisely because they did *not* offer food to pilgrims. One British report highlighted this negative attitude: “Netherlands East Indies pilgrims are given rations and are forbidden from bringing any other foodstuffs on board aside from those provided and preparing their own food is forbidden.” Kongsi Tiga countered this criticism by stressing that “if there are parts of his usual diet [not included in the rations] that he cannot go without, no one will deny him the fact he can prepare his own meal to his own taste.”¹¹⁹ Wiranatakusumah experienced this on SS *Soerakarta*: those pilgrims “used to a little good eating, cook for themselves and others bring with them conserved meat, cans of sardines, etc.”¹²⁰ While food was a contested issue between British and Dutch shipowners, Kongsi Tiga saw it as a major advantage over its Singapore-based competitors.

As shipping competition increased, not only provisions, but also additional onboard comforts became points of contention allowing pilgrims an oppositional voice within the restrictive maritime environment of Dutch hajj transport. Even among the three Kongsi Tiga firms, pilgrims developed strong preferences based on the treatment accorded them by each firm. All three companies kept tabs on their share of pilgrim revenue and SMN and RL, despite the tranquil images portrayed in advertisements like that shown in Figure 1.2, consistently trailed far behind NSMO in terms of popularity among

¹¹⁹ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 157, Eindverslag 1926–27.

¹²⁰ Wiranatakoesoema and van Bovene, *Mijn reis naar Mekka*, 4.



Figure 1.2 Kongsi Tiga advertisement poster, c. 1920–40.

Source: Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland (SMN), nummer toegang 2.20.23.

pilgrims. From 1920 to 1937, NSMO transported approximately 49.3 percent of pilgrims, while SMN and RL together averaged 50.7 percent of all 342,779 passengers.¹²¹ SMN and RL were concerned over this disparity and commissioned detailed investigations to discover the reasons behind it.

SMN and RL's investigations found four main reasons why pilgrims had a strong preference for NSMO ships. First, while SMN and RL ships doubled as freighters outside of the hajj season, NSMO had a few newer ships devoted exclusively to hajj transport, each with permanent pilgrim accommodation onboard. Second, NSMO's use of the center castles in addition to the upper steerage decks provided more room for pilgrims than the upper deck space, bathrooms, and WCs on SMN and RL ships. This extended onboard space resulted in smaller numbers of pilgrims per square foot and therefore more space per pilgrim. Third, roomier accommodation along with the installation of bigger airshafts meant NSMO ships were better ventilated below deck than SMN and RL vessels, making the voyage more comfortable for pilgrims. Finally, NSMO ships were faster and the travel times shorter due to the fact they bypassed many colonial Indonesian ports frequented by SMN and RL and instead sailed directly between Padang's Emmahaven, Batavia's Tanjung Priok, and Jeddah.¹²² While it is reasonable to question whether some passengers were aware of NSMO's British ownership – perhaps providing an additional reason to choose the company over SMN and RL – the archives provide no evidence of this. Considering NSMO ships were run from Amsterdam, sailed under the Dutch flag, and employed Dutch captains and officers onboard, it is unlikely that British ownership would have been readily apparent to most pilgrims.

Rather, due to the shorter travel time, more space onboard, better accommodation, and improved hygiene and health facilities, NSMO ships were generally more comfortable than those of RL and SMN and NSMO ships experienced lower mortality rates amongst the passengers. Official shipping data made these differences clear to all three firms. For example, during the 1927–28 hajj season the SMN journey from Tanjung Priok to Jeddah took twenty-two days, RL twenty-one days, and NSMO ships only eighteen days.¹²³ As Table 1.3 shows, during the return voyages that season, SMN's fleet experienced 170 pilgrim deaths, RL's had 169, and NSMO's fleet suffered the lowest mortality rate of the three with 148 deaths onboard.¹²⁴

¹²¹ This does not include the years 1920 when Dutch ships were still being repatriated after World War I, 1924–25 when Hejaz violence suspended all hajj travel from colonial Indonesia, or 1925–26 when circumstances in the Hejaz still curtailed hajj pilgrimage. The total number of passengers including these years was 376,507. GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 219.

¹²² Falkus, *The Blue Funnel Legend*, 41. ¹²³ NL-HaNA, SMN, 2.20.23, inv.nr. 782.

¹²⁴ SMN transported 9,519 pilgrims on seven returning ships, RL transported 10,950 on seven ships, and NSMO transported 10,629 pilgrims on nine ships, making the percentages of

Table 1.3 *Percentage of deceased pilgrims on Kongsi Tiga, 1921–30*

	1921	1922	1923	1924	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	Average
SMN	16.03	5	2.32	5.5	4.20	4.62	2.99	2.73	4.08	5.27
RL	12.75	9.5	2.92	5.3	1.3	3.55	2.6	2.4	2.96	4.81
NSMO	5.82	2.2	0.51	1.5	—	1.93	2.68	1.53	2.51	2.33
A. Holt (Singapore)	3.27	2.5	3.45	1.2	2.7	2.82	2.36	4.09	0.9	2.58

Source: NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 158, Bedevaartseizoen 1929–30.

For all these reasons, NSMO took the lead in the number of bookings every year and only after its ships were fully booked did SMN and RL see their ships begin to fill up.¹²⁵

SMN and RL scrambled to make up for this disparity by taking the preferences of pilgrims into account and changed their businesses practices to accommodate pilgrim demands. RL added new motor ships to its pilgrim fleet in a bid to attract passengers. SMN expanded the space available to pilgrims on its upper steerage decks. Although these changes took considerable effort, SMN and RL understood that more space and increased comfort onboard were major reasons why pilgrims preferred NSMO ships.¹²⁶ Unfortunately, simply adding more space was not enough to turn the tide of hajj preferences and SMN lamented pilgrims' continued preference for NSMO ships: it is “as if our Company was being boycotted. This boycott is especially noticeable in the Batavia area, comprising the largest pilgrim center.” One report from SMN even claimed the disparity in passengers was not merely due to slower and older ships in their fleet, but to the “the Eastern mentality of the parties involved.”¹²⁷ This patronizing explanation may reflect the frustration felt by SMN administrators, who were at the mercy of pilgrim demands. Through their consumer power, pilgrims held SMN in a financial stronghold and the company was forced to ask its local agents for suggestions and advice about how it might sway public opinion and attract more customers.

Local agents suggested two main reasons behind NSMO’s primacy in the market, both concerning the treatment of pilgrims and respect shown to them as paying customers with a right to certain comforts onboard. First, the agents argued that pilgrims on NSMO ships were shown more respect by the company’s crewmembers. Unlike NSMO, SMN’s onboard regulations focused on maintaining order and – in the company’s own words – saw “tidiness reign”

deceased pilgrim passengers 1.78, 1.54, and 1.39 respectively. NL-HaNA, SMN, 2.20.23, inv. nr. 782, Jaarverslag 1928.

¹²⁵ Largely with pilgrims from Java and other fixed ports of call.

¹²⁶ NL-HaNA, SMN, 2.20.23, inv.nr. 782, Jaarverslag 1928.

¹²⁷ NL-HaNA, SMN, 2.20.23.

above all else. SMN's local agents pointed out to management in Batavia that the company saw it as

necessary that the pilgrims are repeatedly sent out of the room to the deck above and also again and again are driven away off the deck. The people find it simply dreadful, because they couldn't recognize the reasons why it happened. It follows that during the round-trip season of 1927 in certain instances the chasing away of people in a less tactful way appears to have taken place, with the result that the specific ship and therefore Company involved received a very bad name in the villages [*dessas*].¹²⁸

SMN's onboard regulations for keeping ships clean managed to alienate passengers and make their voyages extremely uncomfortable. This treatment was interpreted by many as a lack of respect and appreciation on the part of SMN towards its paying customers, who, in return, took their business elsewhere.

Second, local agents pointed out that passengers preferred the liberties shown them by NSMO prior to departure. While SMN's regulations were "very good from a European standpoint (the embarkation always ran orderly and calmly)," the pilgrims preferred NSMO's manner of pushing off to sea. All well-wishers who traveled with the aspirant hajjis to port were welcomed onboard NSMO ships prior to departure in order to see their loved ones off. These friends and family, who sometimes traveled long distances together with the departing hajji in order to say farewell, could "behold with their own eyes how the relative will be accommodated on the pilgrim ship." Agents stressed that these same friends and family members might eventually wish to go on hajj. Allowing them onboard to "appreciate the facilities" would encourage patronage of NSMO in the future and "when they are ready to depart they will choose the Company they had previously visited."¹²⁹

After hearing the reasons why pilgrims were unsatisfied with its service from local agents, SMN immediately changed its embarkation procedure to mimic the NSMO model. Further, SMN's captains "received instructions that the ship management must adapt more to the pilgrims' wishes" and ensure crewmembers would not chase pilgrims from one space to another in a harsh manner.¹³⁰ Similar concessions were made to pilgrims' desires to bring folding cots and deck chairs for use onboard. Although these items were "more and more in fashion" on both Dutch and British pilgrim ships, SMN and RL saw them as unnecessary luxury items that upset order onboard.¹³¹ The 1922 Pilgrims Ordinance ambiguously stated that no cargo could "unfavorably affect the health or safety of the passengers" and pilgrims were only legally provided with one-third of a cubic meter of deck space per person. Therefore, most

¹²⁸ Ibid. ¹²⁹ Ibid. ¹³⁰ NL-HaNA, SMN, 2.20.23, inv.nr. 782, Jaarverslag 1928.

¹³¹ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 157, Eindraport 1937–38.

baggage was stored in the hold for the duration of the voyage.¹³² Kongsi Tiga argued that with cots and chairs in use on deck, “[l]ittle room remains in the pilgrim quarters and on deck in which to move, while it becomes very difficult to keep these areas clean.”¹³³

While the discussion over cots and chairs referred to adequate amounts of space and maintaining proper hygiene in pilgrim living quarters, SMN and RL also feared the inequity such items might promote among steerage passengers and were adamant about diminishing class distinctions between such passengers. Kongsi Tiga believed owners of folding cots and deck chairs “unfairly furnish themselves at the cost of the legroom and deck space of their fellow passengers” and if the use of such comfort items were to continue, “people must little by little change over to the establishment of classes within pilgrim transport.”¹³⁴ The Trio was unwilling to make such a change and remained adamantly against creating a more expansive class system amongst steerage passengers, concluding “[f]or the sake of the mass, it is actually better to forbid the use of deck chairs onboard pilgrim ships all together.”¹³⁵ Ultimately, due to increasing competition, Kongsi Tiga was forced to amend its policy on such “luxuries” if it wished to retain passengers from Singapore-based competitors who were more lenient with baggage allowances.¹³⁶ Kongsi Tiga conceded to pilgrim demands by allowing the use of folding cots and deck chairs at the cost of f10 extra per chair or cot.¹³⁷ For some, ten guilders was a tenable price to pay for making onboard living more comfortable, but for the Dutch ship-owners these material comforts were a threat to order and class hierarchies, which they feared might be eroded through the use of “luxuries” in the steerage class.

In spite of the regulations imposed on Kongsi Tiga ships, competition within hajj shipping increasingly became an avenue for pilgrims to sidestep the Trio’s monopoly over pilgrim transport. Pilgrims used their consumer power to express dissatisfaction with Dutch treatment of pilgrims and increasingly purchased fares from companies they felt were most amenable to their well-being. Opting for foreign shipping companies, as well as exercising preference between the three Kongsi Tiga firms, provided hajjis an opportunity to voice their demands for increased respect as paying customers and accessibility to more material comforts onboard. By exercising their economic power as

¹³² 1922 Pilgrims Ordinance Article 26, section 2.

¹³³ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 157, Eindraport 1937–38. ¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 2 December 1929, Consul to Advisor Inlandse Zaken, Weltevreden.

¹³⁶ “Each year this is called attention to by the quarantine authorities at Kamaran, while at Singapore they take less notice.” NL-HaNA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 157, Eindraport 1937–38.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

consumers of maritime transport, pilgrims forced Kongsi Tiga to actively address their concerns and occasionally even alter their rules and regulations.

Shipping in Muslim Hands: *Penoeloeng Hadji*

In the context of rising anti-colonialism during the late 1920s and 1930s, some Islamic groups in colonial Indonesia felt that simply choosing one Kongsi Tiga firm over another failed to make a powerful statement against Dutch monopolization of hajj transport. Increasing demands in colonial Indonesia to “make use of a Muslim [owned shipping] opportunity” alarmed Kongsi Tiga’s management. Muslims wanted to control their own transport to and from one of the most important religious experiences of their lives and some Indonesians hoped an entire hajj shipping firm would be established in the near future, ensuring hajj pilgrimage remained completely “in the hands of Muslims.”¹³⁸ Religious objections to the Dutch hajj shipping monopoly, based around larger nationalist and anticolonial struggles, were the most threatening form of competition in the eyes of both Dutch shipowners and the colonial administration.

The reformist Islamic organization Muhammadiyah made one of the most promising attempts at an Indonesian-owned hajj shipping company during the interwar period. First founded in Yogyakarta in 1912 by Hajji Ahmad Dahlan, Muhammadiyah embraced modernization and promoted religious, educational, and cultural reforms.¹³⁹ The organization was cultural and religious rather than political per se and established schools, boarding houses, and cooperatives for peasants and traders.¹⁴⁰ Along with promoting education and maintaining local mosques, prayer houses, orphanages, and clinics, the organization also published a vast amount of printed material promoting Islamic reforms incorporating modern thought into religious doctrine.¹⁴¹ If any indigenous group were to receive Dutch support, it would likely have been Muhammadiyah, which, like the colonial authorities, “launched a direct attack on the power and prestige” of local clerics (*kijajis*), along with the “religious education they were providing the masses.”¹⁴² In theory, the Dutch could have viewed this organization as an ally in their quest to rid colonial Indonesia of

¹³⁸ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1190, 3 July 1930.

¹³⁹ The Dutch government allowed other branches of Muhammadiyah to be set up outside Yogyakarta in 1921.

¹⁴⁰ M. A. Abdul-Samad, “Modernism in Islam in Indonesia with Special Reference to Muhammadiyah,” in *Islam in the Indonesian Social Context*, edited by M. C. Ricklefs (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1991), 61.

¹⁴¹ Kroef, “The Role of Islam,” 41.

¹⁴² Clifford Geertz, “The Javanese Kijaji: The Changing Role of a Cultural Broker.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2, no. 2 (1960): 240.

subversive religious ideas and people within local Muslim schools (*pesantran*).¹⁴³ However, in reality, Dutch suspicions around the political underpinnings of Islam during the 1920s and 1930s informed the ways Kongsi Tiga and the Dutch colonial administration handled Muhammadiyah's attempt at hajj shipping. The group's Islamic affiliation turned it into yet another enemy of Dutch colonial authority.

In 1930, Muhammadiyah made plans to charter two ships under the name Peneloeng Hadji (Hajji Helper or PH) to carry pilgrims to Jeddah during the upcoming hajj season. The organization argued that by patronizing Kongsi Tiga and traveling with non-Muslims to the Middle East, pilgrims were not truly completing the fifth tenet of Islam. Unlike Dutch companies, PH promised their ships would put the religious concerns of pilgrims above all else: PH ships would provide separate prayer areas for men and women and run educational courses onboard instructing hajjis about the rites to be performed on the pilgrimage. PH would also improve material comforts by adding a restaurant and library, providing passengers access to a radio, and employing a full medical staff including a doctor and both male and female nurses.¹⁴⁴ Further, firewood and water would be included in the ticket price of f250, exactly the same fare as charged by Kongsi Tiga that year. Unlike the Dutch shipping monopoly, PH was a nonprofit endeavor aimed at eventually decreasing travel costs for hajjis in the hopes of making the pilgrimage accessible to larger numbers of Indonesian pilgrims.¹⁴⁵

As much as it was an Islamic endeavor, PH was also an act of nationalist autonomy. Muhammadiyah insisted that indigenous-owned ships would correct Kongsi Tiga's attitude that "hajj-transport exists under their power." Many critics of Kongsi Tiga agreed that "[p]eople naturally prefer to depart with a ship that is dispatched through people of their own nation, unless they intentionally want to stuff another man's pocket."¹⁴⁶ Others questioned why the situation of Indonesian pilgrims remained inferior "while other nations, Egyptians, and British Indians for example, were respected while undertaking the pilgrimage." Still others blamed the lack of an Indonesian-owned shipping company on the racist nature of colonial education. According to one Indonesian journalist, this inferior education resulted in a grave lack of indigenous

¹⁴³ While they remained apolitical, their members were free to participate in other political organizations. Kroef, "The Role of Islam," 41.

¹⁴⁴ Dahlan also set up a women's section called Ā'ishiyah (after the prophet's wife) in 1918, which had total autonomy in internal affairs but was under Muhammadiyah in external affairs. Nashi'at al-Āishiyah was established for young women. "Ā'ishiyah was very active, holding tabligh (religious meetings), religious speeches to its members as well as workers in batik enterprises and women in the general public. Together with Nashi'at al-Āishiyah a musalla (mosque) for women was built at Yogyakarta which became a centre for their activities." Abdul-Samad, "Modernism in Islam," 61.

¹⁴⁵ *Revue Politiek*, 28 March 1931.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

confidence: “[o]ur nation has put very little trust in our own power and attaches little value to it; the cause of which can be found in the fact that we are raised to be weaklings, without any sense of responsibility for taking care of our own affairs.” Control over pilgrim transport meant Islamic communities in colonial Indonesia wouldn’t need to “stay forever dependent on the help of foreigners.”¹⁴⁷ Such arguments promoted indigenous shipping lines as a step towards nationalist autonomy and the eventual creation of an independent Indonesian nation.

Nationalist undertones were evident in Peneloeng Hadji’s criticisms of Kongsi Tiga. Public notices posted by local travel bureaus such as Batavia’s Peneloeng Hadji Hinda Timoer promoted PH’s ships by promising the vastly improved conditions onboard. Official PH propaganda highlighted the negative aspects of Kongsi Tiga’s policies, while simultaneously promoting the special accommodation its ships would provide. PH ships would be

satisfactorily big, good, and fast. On board will be a special room in which to pray and a place to get a breath of fresh air; in short, the conditions on board are exactly as those on shore. The service on board is performed through Muslims themselves, which undoubtedly will please each passenger. The provisions and all the work generally will follow Muslim law, while all regulations on board will strike all as contributing to the overall pleasure of all passengers . . . all Muslim brothers know our duties as Muslims towards people who have a pure purpose.¹⁴⁸

Many local Islamic newspapers were more outspoken in their criticisms of Kongsi Tiga, which, they argued, created inhospitable living conditions for Muslim passengers. Kongsi Tiga was accused of packing pilgrims onto ships like “herrings in a tin” and of treating pilgrims exactly the same as contract coolies – it was only due to the insistence of their shaykhs that hajjis and coolies were “no longer mixed together under one roof.”¹⁴⁹ Additionally, men and women occupied the same spaces on Kongsi Tiga’s ships, as “proscribed by Islamic religion.”¹⁵⁰ Kongsi Tiga also forbade pilgrims to transport livestock for ritual slaughter in the Hejaz and were accused of denying this to pilgrims because the companies found it “bothersome for the fellow passengers” and claimed it was “within their rights to forbid such transport.”¹⁵¹

The most damning accusations against Kongsi Tiga targeted Dutch capitalist greed and the economic profits achieved through the exploitation of

¹⁴⁷ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1190, 14 June 1939.

¹⁴⁸ Translation of public notice from *Reisbureau Peneloeng Hadji Hinda Timoer*, Kali Besar West 2, Gebouw Chartered Bank, Batavia GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1190, 1 February 1931.

¹⁴⁹ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1190, 14 June 1939.

¹⁵⁰ NL-HANA, BuZa / Kabinetsarchief Politieke Rapportage, 2.05.19, inv.nr. 325.

¹⁵¹ NL-HANA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 147, 2 December 1929, Consul to Advisor Inlandse Zaken, Weltevreden.



Figure 1.3 Pilgrims embarking on RL's MS *Kota Nopan*, Belawan,
19 September 1937

Source: Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Coll. no. TM-60032976.

Indonesian Muslims. While Muhammadiyah attempted to raise f500,000 in capital to charter its pilgrim ships, Kongsi Tiga earned millions of guilders in profits every year (Figure 1.3) and was accused of only being concerned with “raking in the money.” Nationalism played into perceptions of hajji suffering at the hands of greedy Dutch shipowners:

[T]housands roll from our pockets into those of another nation. Most [hajjis] are people from the farming class, who almost every year give their cash to the “money box” of a foreign nation. People save their cents and guilders until eventually they reach an amount sufficient to cover the costs of hajj. The saved money, that men have struggled to earn, is now deposited in another man’s pocket . . . This is a shame, not because the money is given away . . . but that it winds up in the hands of others.¹⁵²

One of the major goals of Penoeloeng Hadji was to gain control of hajj transport profits in order to reinvest this money into Islamic communities and causes in colonial Indonesia. Making the hajj easier on pilgrims in terms of comfort, spiritual fulfillment, and economic accessibility, PH hoped indigenous shipping would alleviate many pilgrim hardships, including the large number of hajjis who “brought money with them [on hajj] and returned with debts.”¹⁵³

¹⁵² *Revue Politiek*, 28 March 1931.

¹⁵³ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1190, 14 June 1939.

Kongsi Tiga initially believed Muhammadiyah's attempts would dissolve by themselves without interference by Dutch authorities and expected "not much would come of it."¹⁵⁴ Despite Kongsi Tiga's assumption that PH's plans would have "little success," it could not "altogether ignore them, as there is a possibility that by chartering ships of foreign companies the native organizations might succeed in offering a competing transport opportunity."¹⁵⁵ What swayed the Trio's attitude was the loss of fares at the beginning of the 1931–32 hajj season. Internal memos noted "a number of pilgrims have adopted a wait and see attitude" about the outcome of PH's endeavor and were, therefore, not purchasing pilgrim fares on Kongsi Tiga ships. Loss of revenue gave the Kongsi Tiga cause to consider to "what extent this competing business was driven by idealism among the natives." Kongsi Tiga predicted this idealism would eventually leave pilgrims with nothing and that Penoeloeng Hadji would

inevitably cause all kinds of inaccurate messages to be sent into the world, with the result that the prospective pilgrims, through false illusions, would at first hope for the arrival of a ship that will fulfill all religious demands and be much cheaper than the Kongsi Tiga. In short, that people shall instantaneously travel perfectly. In the meantime, the first ships of the bona-fide Companies would leave empty, or partially occupied, while the pilgrims continue to wait until it grieves them and they meanwhile become greatly duped.¹⁵⁶

Kongsi Tiga doubted the ability of Muhammadiyah to carry out such transport successfully and saw its attempt as misguided idealism doomed to failure. Kongsi Tiga even dared PH to try it in the hopes it would "get into a mess with the return voyage," thus proving their point that Indonesians were ill-equipped to handle their own hajj transport.¹⁵⁷

Despite the Trio's seemingly lax attitude and conviction that Penoeloeng Hadji would fail of its own accord, Kongsi Tiga relied heavily on legal and diplomatic support to maintain its shipping monopoly and to ensure the loss of tickets experienced at the beginning of the 1931–32 hajj season was quickly remedied. First, Kongsi Tiga turned to the 1922 Pilgrims Ordinance, which ensured Kongsi Tiga's continued monopoly over hajj shipping by requiring a f90,000 guarantee for all hajj transport companies. Officially established to dissuade "moonlighting" hajj shipowners (mainly Chinese and Indonesian *prahu* or sailing vessels), the actual purpose of this stipulation was to make entry into hajj maritime transport virtually impossible for fledgling indigenous

¹⁵⁴ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1190, 3 July 1930.

¹⁵⁵ NL-HANA, Consulaat Djeddah, 2.05.53, inv.nr. 144, 26 October 1938, SMN, RL, NSMO to International Agencies Ltd.

¹⁵⁶ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1190, 15 December 1931.

¹⁵⁷ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1190, 29 October 1931.

shipowners who were unable to afford such a large guarantee. The Pilgrims Ordinance required additional provisions ensuring indigenous shipowners were essentially barred from challenging Kongsi Tiga's monopoly and Penoeloeng Hadji was legally paralyzed by Articles 21 and 22 in the Pilgrims Ordinance. Article 22 required that anyone seeking a license to act as a pilgrim agent first needed a banking corporation approved by the head of the Dutch navy to provide a minimum guarantee of f90,000. Without this license, one could not act as a pilgrim agent and sell tickets legally. According to Article 21, pilgrims traveling on ships to Middle Eastern ports could only be provided tickets from licensed pilgrim agents.¹⁵⁸ In other words, to sell tickets to hajjis, agents had to be licensed and they could only get licensed if they had a f90,000 guarantee approved by the Dutch government. What this meant for Penoeloeng Hadji was that despite its ability to raise f90,000 by selling pilgrim fares, its inability to sell tickets legally before already having f90,000 created a near insurmountable obstacle for Muhammadiyah. This frustrating paradox further exposed the inequalities of Dutch colonial law to many increasingly disillusioned Indonesian subjects.

To overcome these crippling financial regulations, Muhammadiyah used grassroots networking to develop alternative strategies for raising the f90,000 guarantee. In addition to private donations from wealthy members of the organization, grassroots canvassers asked each aspirant pilgrim to contribute money that would later be subtracted from their ticket fare. Since the money collected would go towards a "future" ticket, Muhammadiyah believed it wasn't technically acting as a pilgrim agent. Not surprisingly, Kongsi Tiga saw the situation from a different perspective, arguing that collecting such money amounted to the same thing as soliciting passengers and that Muhammadiyah was indeed acting as an agent. Kongsi Tiga's three pool members were in fact the *only* companies meeting the legal requirements to act as pilgrim agents in colonial Indonesia. In order to protect its interests from Muhammadiyah's encroachment, Kongsi Tiga made a formal complaint to the colonial government about the "illegal" passenger canvassing taking place by PH representatives.

In making this complaint to the colonial authorities, Kongsi Tiga displayed its powerful position to Muhammadiyah and any other indigenous group with ideas of starting a hajj shipping line. Not only was its monopoly protected under colonial law, the colonial government – to which the shipping companies could turn to for help in eliminating competitors – also supported Kongsi Tiga's monopoly. The Trio viewed these laws as fair and felt it was justified to demand such a large guarantee from Penoeloeng Hadji:

¹⁵⁸ NL-HaNA, SMN, 2.20.23, inv.nr. 661.

no legal impediment will be put in the way of an Indonesian shipping company for Hajji-transport by the government. Every organization that fulfills the pilgrim-ordinance (stbld. 1922 No. 698) may take part in this transport. To proceed is very correct. That these tough stipulations for their business are the same as for the Kongsi-Tiga has it seems the history of pilgrim transport to Djeddah behind it, especially that transport out of other Islamic lands, exhibited up until the present time. It is a somber history, where the Kongsi Tiga transport was a ray of light when other Western and Eastern shipping companies have failed.¹⁵⁹

Despite its reliance on such legal protections, not to mention self-congratulatory tone, the Trio was fearful that Muhammadiyah might bypass the f90,000 guarantee requirement by using Article 67 of the Pilgrims Ordinance: if PH declared itself a nonprofit group interested in shipping pilgrims on “ethical” grounds, it would be exempt from paying the guarantee. If Muhammadiyah used Article 67, it would also prevent Kongsi Tiga from receiving the colonial administration’s assistance in blocking such action, as “the government then loads itself with appearances of granting a monopoly to Kongsi Tiga,” something “supremely undesirable” for the government from a political standpoint. PH’s use of Article 67 convinced the Trio they were dealing with an “Islamic organization [that was] definitely less than neutral” and saw PH’s legal maneuvering as an aggressive attack on Dutch business interests.¹⁶⁰

To manage the situation, representatives from Kongsi Tiga met with the Superintendent of Shipping (Hoofdinspecteur van Scheepvaart) to discuss a recent meeting that had taken place in Batavia between the Superintendent, the Advisor for Native Affairs (Adviseur voor Inlandse Zaken) Emile Gobée, and three representatives from Muhammadiyah.¹⁶¹ One of those representatives was Hajji Soedjak, the same man who had caused so much trouble while Chief Hajji on SS *Ajax*. All five men came together to discuss the current and future existence of Peneloeng Hadji. The Superintendent and Advisor “strongly dissuaded the gentlemen from Muhammadiyah from plunging into the adventure of pilgrim transport because ruin would be unavoidable.” They warned that Kongsi Tiga would “acquit themselves and a fierce rivalry battle will ensue and it is no question who will have the worst of it.” The Superintendent revealed that he considered Muhammadiyah’s plans “an instructive project in learning the hard way” and Kongsi Tiga echoed these sentiments, stating it was “not so objectionable, that the [Muhammadiyah] gentlemen learn a lesson, provided the intended conditions in the [1922 Pilgrims] Ordinance are maintained without any compromise.”¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1190, 13 June 1938. ¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ For more on Gobée see KITLV-Collectie Emile Gobée, inventaris 8, H 1085.

¹⁶² NL-HaNA, BuZa / Kabinetsarchief Politieke Rapportage, 2.05.19, inv.nr. 325.

Kongsi Tiga's tactics in its communication with the Superintendent were meant to personally discredit Muhammadiyah's representatives and disparage their organization as a whole. The Superintendent informed Kongsi Tiga: "the gentlemen of Mohammidijah have made serious complaints of being discourteously treated by the Kongsi Tiga."¹⁶³ The shipping company fired back that the "aim of Muhammadiyah was clear: through concessions, favors, and selling blank tickets, they were trying to trip up Kongsi Tiga's monopoly and when this didn't work, complaints began that we were treating them discourteously."¹⁶⁴ Kongsi Tiga argued that the three Muhammadiyah representatives had unfavorable reputations, were to a large degree untrustworthy, and recruited people to their cause solely in their own self-interest. In agreement with these negative portrayals, the Superintendent concluded that Muhammadiyah's complaints against Kongsi Tiga were unfounded and that the Muhammadiyah "gentlemen he had met with made a very unfavorable impression."¹⁶⁵

Despite such shared sentiments, Kongsi Tiga was particularly concerned over whether or not the Superintendent and Muhammadiyah representatives had come to an agreement regarding its nonprofit status under Article 67. To Kongsi Tiga's relief, the Superintendent considered concession on this point a "dangerous give and take because once an exception is made, other similar requests will likewise be made." Muhammadiyah clearly expressed its dissatisfaction with this decision – cementing the continuation of Kongsi Tiga's monopoly – and considered it a "bad course of action to punish by holding the reins tight, now that political configuration is so enormously altered in relation to a few years ago." The organization believed that "[I]n the long run, the Government must yield to public opinion of the Native Side." While ultimately successful in its bid to prevent Peneloeng Hadji, Kongsi Tiga agreed that "whoever has paid attention to and felt the native currents in the last years, must acknowledge that in many cases to change one's policy serves one's own purposes." However, the Trio also mourned this increased need for flexibility and conciliation with "native concerns," lamenting how "the times have changed!"¹⁶⁶

The Superintendent's decision prevented Muhammadiyah from chartering Peneloeng Hadji ships during the 1931–32 season and Kongsi Tiga noted,

¹⁶³ NL-HaNA, BuZa / Kabinetsarchief Politieke Rapportage, 2.05.19, inv.nr. 325, 10 September 1931, Top Secret [Zeer Geheim] Correspondence, SMN, RL, and NSMO Batavia Office to Head Offices Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

¹⁶⁴ NL-HaNA, BuZa / Kabinetsarchief Politieke Rapportage, 2.05.19, inv.nr. 325.

¹⁶⁵ NL-HaNA, BuZa / Kabinetsarchief Politieke Rapportage, 2.05.19, inv.nr. 325, 10 September 1931, Top Secret [Zeer Geheim] Correspondence, SMN, RL, and NSMO Batavia Office to Head Offices Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

“when it became known, that the Peneloeng Hadji was dissolved, the bookings came [to us] more freely.”¹⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the ongoing desire for Islamic and Indonesian-owned hajj transport during the 1930s reminded Kongsi Tiga that its monopoly was not popular among hajjis. Pilgrims opposed Kongsi Tiga’s capitalist motives and the colonial government’s cooperation in preventing the creation of indigenous shipping lines. It didn’t help that the 1930s saw a large decrease in pilgrims – from 36,067 in 1929–30 to 17,776 in 1930–31 and only 4,624 in 1931–32 – due to the global economic downturn. These numbers continued to stay in the low thousands until 1937–38 when they returned to merely half the number of passengers transported during the late 1920s. These low numbers made Kongsi Tiga’s monopolization of hajj shipping even more essential in safeguarding the pool’s profits.

Muhammadiyah’s attempts to charter its own pilgrim ships threatened Dutch hegemony by reinforcing two ideas: that Islamic pilgrimage should be in the hands of Muslims and that Europeans had no right to monopolize hajj shipping solely for their own financial profit. Although Kongsi Tiga saw itself as a “ray of light” within hajj transport, the Trio employed questionable tactics to eradicate both ideological and financial competitors. Colonial laws made it nearly impossible for indigenous groups to establish their own hajj shipping lines, only adding to vexation felt by increasing numbers of colonial subjects. Together, Kongsi Tiga and the Dutch colonial administration obstructed Peneloeng Hadji in order to safeguard the Dutch shipping monopoly and, more broadly, to preserve the Dutch empire’s omnipotence. Despite Muhammadiyah’s attempt to put control of pilgrim transport into “the hands of Muslims,” such efforts would not be realized until after World War II.

* * *

The Dutch-owned shipping monopoly Kongsi Tiga attempted to export terrestrial structures of empire to the maritime world in order to maintain hegemony over what they considered a simultaneously vulnerable and dangerous population of Indonesian religious pilgrims. Of greatest concern were the non-pilgrim passengers – primarily Meccan shaykhs and Hadrami Arabs – whose political and religious influence was feared within the confined spaces onboard. Together with the physical segregation of passengers, Dutch captains and officers were tasked with monitoring suspicious passengers who they believed held sway over pilgrims. Concurrently, these colonial subjects challenged Dutch control while outside the geographic confines of colonial Indonesia by not only transgressing rules onboard, but also using their consumer power

¹⁶⁷ GAR Archief KRL: inv.nr. 454.05, 1190, 15 December 1931.

to demand religious concessions and better treatment by Kongsi Tiga. The reformist Islamic organization Muhammadiyah attempted to circumvent Dutch interference by establishing a Muslim and Indonesian-owned shipping line in 1930. This was as much an Islamic endeavor as an act of nationalist autonomy and was met with fierce resistance from Kongsi Tiga and the Dutch administration, which collaboratively prevented indigenous competitors from infringing on the Dutch shipping monopoly over pilgrim transport.

Unlike the terrestrial realms of colonial Indonesia – where judicial systems reinforced colonial rules and securitization was extensively enforced – the maritime world became a charged political arena following the 1926–27 communist uprisings. The same fears endured by Dutch shipping companies and government administrators were shared by European crewmembers at sea, all equally concerned over the maritime world's ability to disseminate anticolonial ideology and expedite its penetration into colonial Indonesia across the archipelago's fluid surrounds. Kongsi Tiga, therefore, worked together with the Dutch colonial government to export colonial forms of policing, surveillance, and segregation to transoceanic spaces, frequently to the detriment of its own profits. By ensuring the transoceanic mobility of passengers did not subvert terrestrial norms, shipping companies played a pivotal role in political contestations of power during the interwar years. While Kongsi Tiga was vulnerable to competing shipping companies, public opinion, and passenger demands, the Trio had a relatively easy time of it compared to the difficulties faced by other Dutch shipowners discussed in Chapter 2.