CHAPTER 4: ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE HADHRAMI ARABS TO THE ECONOMY

Introduction
Trade relations between Malacca and the Middle East in the 15th and early 16th centuries occurred through Arab, Persian, Turkish and Abyssinian intermediary traders who were based in the port of Bengal. Malay merchants also traded with the Indians. Gujarati merchants played an important role in trade between the Middle East and the Malay World. Ports such as Diu, Randir, Surat, Daman and Cambay in India acted as intermediary ports for ships bringing commodities from the Middle East that would be traded in the Malay World and elsewhere. Important ports in the Middle East like as Alexandria, Makkah,Ormuz, Aden and Jeddah were hubs for the collection of merchandise before being exported to the East and West. The ports in the Malay World, India and the Middle East were dependant and interrelated to each other for inter-ocean long distance trade.

The 16th century was also marked as the beginning of the intervention of colonial powers in Southeast Asia, particularly in Malaya which threatened the trade relationship between the Arabs and Malays in later years. The Arabs’ presence in Southeast Asian maritime trade had also started to diminish. It was only around the middle of the 18th century that the Arabs started to make their presence felt in Southeast Asian maritime trade. The long distance trade between India and China had secured the Malay Peninsula, particularly Singapore as transit ports which later on turned out to be one of the British colonies. The Arabs, especially those migrated from Hadhramaut, Yemen came to settle in Malaya and played a prominent role in Malayan trade. The Hadhrami Arabs managed to secure political and economic status in the society. Their capabilities adapted well with local customs and way of life, helping them to be accepted by the Malay society. The Hadhrami Arabs’ diligence and expertise in dealing
with trade and entrepreneurship made them competitive merchants parallel to the Chinese and Europeans. The British treated the Arabs as partners in economic ventures because of the Arabs’ diligence and expertise in trading. The presence of Arab traders of Sayyid descent from the Middle East in Malayan waters is traceable in Riau, the state capital of Johor since around the end of the 18th century. Under the leadership of Raja Haji, Riau became a trade centre, monopolizing in the tin business. As recorded in *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, “Large Numbers of Sayyids came from the Arab lands together with lebai from Java, who filled the religious hostels as well as mosques and prayer houses belonging to the dignitaries and the wealthy”.

19\(^{th}\) and 20\(^{th}\) century Malaya witnessed the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the country who played a primary role in the economic activities of the Malay states such as in services, trade, mining and agriculture. In the service sector, many of them work as civil servants, receiving monthly salary and allowances. Some of them became professional appraisers and auctioneers. Many of them were not only engaged in trade, but also in timber, agriculture and mining and became successful entrepreneurs and traders. Famous names like al-Attas, al-Junied, al-Kaff and al-Saqqaf ventured into more than one sector and were pioneers in their respective fields. The close relationship built with royalties earned them valuable capital when some of them were awarded with land and mining concessions by sultans. Such an award could be considered a golden opportunity and is important for them to expand their business ventures and flourish in Malaya.

The Malay Peninsula started to gain fame and popularity as an economic hub in the region in the 18\(^{th}\) century with the opening of Penang as a free trade port by Francis Light in 1786, and about two decades later in the 19\(^{th}\) century when Stamford Raffles opened Singapore as a trading post in 1819. Being situated on the trade route between

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China and West Asian countries including India, the Malay Peninsula served as a stopover between India and China for European merchants. Trade between England and India was monopolized by the East Indian Company which dominated the tea trade, one of the important commodities from the East. Besides, the Arab connection with the Malay World had already begun and can be traced back to at least the 9th century. The earliest Arab settlement found at Siak in Sumatra and Pontianak in Borneo dated from late 17th century where wandering Arab traders, adventurers, and religious scholars had been a feature of the Malay life for hundreds of years.2

Meanwhile, trade between India and China was under the control of independent merchant groups. They plied from India to China, passing by the Malay Archipelago. In the 19th century, the Arabs played quite a considerable role in the economic development of Singapore when Singapore was still under the Malay Archipelago. When Singapore opened as a free trade centre, Raffles managed to attract traders and merchants from all over the world, including Hadhrami Arab merchants to trade in Singapore. Raffles had also stressed on the vital role played by the Arabs along with the Chinese and Bugis in Eastern trade as without them, trade activity would have declined. “Let the Chinese and Arabs still trade to the eastward. Without them, the trade would be reduced to less than one third of even what it is at present” 3

Plantation

Agriculture is one of the economic sectors that the Hadhrami Arabs were involved in commercially. Some of them were reported to be major landowners in Kedah, especially in the districts of Yan and Kubang Pasu. The Arab families who owned most of these agricultural lands were the al-Idrus, al-Baraqabah and al-Jamalullail.4 Yan was one of

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3 Quoted in J. A. E. Morley, “The Arabs and the Eastern Trade”, Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS), Vol. 22, Pt. 1, 1949, p. 163. (The sentence is quoted as it is from the article).
the districts in Kedah where the Hadhrami Arabs ventured into paddy plantation. The government of Kedah had encouraged people in that area to open paddy fields. Swamps and wasted lands had been turned to vast areas of agriculture planted with paddy. This development was welcomed by the residents of Kedah as well as migrants from Siam and Indonesian islets.

The royals and dignitaries of Kedah were among those who took the opportunity to acquire fertile land in Yan, including Hadhrami Arabs such as Sayyid Othman, a magistrate in Alor Setar. Meanwhile, Tunku Abidin, Tunku Aminah, and Mohd Jonah were among the Kedah Royals and dignitaries who also acquired lands in Yan. Sayyid Akil was granted 160,000.00 acres of lands in the area of Mukim Gunong by Tuanku Raja Muda of Kedah. He had to pay taxes for 11 years which had amounted to $412.50. A sum of $37.50 was collected for the year 1910.

Frank Swettenham in his visit to Kedah in 1889 was impressed with the development of paddy plantation in Yan. "The padi fields are of greater extent than any other state that I have seen elsewhere in the peninsula. The whole country up to Perlis for some distance from the coast is one vast padi plain". In order to facilitate the plantation of paddy, Sayyid Osman who was the District Officer of Yan took the initiative by digging Sungai Yan Kecil to connect it with Wan Mat Saman Canal in Guar Cempedak for irrigation purposes to water the agricultural areas. It was completed in 1914.

Mohammad Redzuan Othman discusses the involvement of the Hadhrami Sayyid families in the economic sector in Kedah, particularly in agriculture. Among the Hadhrami Arab families who were involved in the plantation and agricultural sectors were the families of Al-Idrus, Al-Barakbah and Al-Jamalullail, while Sayyid Alwi bin

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8 National Archive Malaysia, Kedah/Perlis Branch. SUK 06/1332.
9 Sayyid Akil was granted 160,000.00 acres of lands in the area of Mukim Gunong by Tuanku Raja Muda of Kedah. He had to pay taxes for 11 years which had amounted to $412.50. A sum of $37.50 was collected for the year 1910.
Sayyid Ahmad al-Habshee worked on rubber estates in the district of Yan.\textsuperscript{11} Sayyid Abdullah bin Mohsin Al-Attas engaged in the sugar business in between Penang and Kedah.\textsuperscript{12} Meanwhile, Sayyid Abdul Rahman Al-Junied showed his interest to venture into the petroleum business in Kedah. He was reported to submit an application to the British government to set a shop up in Kulim in 1914.\textsuperscript{13}

Moreover, the Hadhrami Arabs not only participated in agriculture, but also in the economic and town development activities in Johor, particularly Johor Bahru. There were also Arabs from Singapore who were doing business in the state in various sectors. Most of them focused in town areas such as Johor Bahru, Penggaram, Batu Pahat and Maharani, Muar. The Hadhrami Arabs played significant roles in Johor’s economic sector which can be seen in the development of towns and opening of agricultural estates commercially by several Arab individuals. Their status as permanent residents had helped them a lot in gaining trust from the local authorities to be involved in commerce ventures in Johor.\textsuperscript{14}

In short, there were many successful Hadhrami Arabs at that time. Sayyid Mohamed al-Saqqaf was one of the successful Hadhrami Arabs in Johor. He took over the family business from his father, Sayyid Ahmad al-Saqqaf. He was a successful entrepreneur who was involved in many business ventures in Singapore and had managed to accumulate a huge fortune through his business connections, not only in the Malay Peninsula but also in Europe and the Middle East. His company, Al-Sagoff & Co. exported commodities such as timber, rubber, sago, coconuts, coffee, cocoa and pineapples, while its imports comprised of general merchandise for local consumption.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{11} Claims his share in the rubber Estate of Syed Alwi bin Syed Ahmad Alhabsi. Tuntutan Bahagiannya di Atas Kebun Getah Syed Alwi bin Syed Ahmad Alhabsi. 1918. Kedah 584/1338.

\textsuperscript{12} Prays that his brother Syed Abdullah bin Mohsin al-Attas be pardoned for evading payment of duty on sugar. Pohon diampun saudaranya Syed Abdullah bin Mohsin a-Atas fasal pelari daripada membayar hasil di atas gula. Kedah 3362-1352.

\textsuperscript{13} S. A. Al Junied applies for permission to erect on behalf of the Asiatic Petroleum Co. Ltd; Penang a Kerosine and Petrol store on Lot no 291, Kulim. Kedah 660/1333.


\textsuperscript{15} For the life and business activities of Sayyid Mohamed al-Sagoff, see Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia A.H. 1240 (A.D. 1824) to A.H. 1382 (A.D. 1962) with biographical and contemporary sketches of some members of the al-Sagoff family, compiled and published by Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, Singapore: S. M. Alsagoff, 1963, p. 11. See also letter from R.W. Maxwell (Acting Inspector-General of Police) to the Colonial Office, 12 March 1884, CO 273/126.
Sayyid Mohamed al-Saqqaf was among the Arabs who pioneered commercial plantations. Through his close relationship with the ruler of Johor, Sultan Abu Bakar, Sayyid Mohamed was awarded a large estate in Kukup, Johor in 1878. The land concession of 60,000 acres stretching between Sungai Permas and Sungai Pontian Besar was to be used for cultivation (except opium). The concessions, which was called “The Al-Sagoff Cucob Concession” by the British, was later on renamed the “Constantinople Estate” by Sayyid Mohamed.

The Constantinople Estate was a prospering economic zone. Many Javanese workers were employed on the estate to overcome the shortage of local labour. The Javanese workers signed contracts to work on the estate for a certain period of time. Being contract labourers, they were promised to be able to perform hajj with all expenses provided by the Estate. The Estate also provided a scheme that was also known as contract-tickets that attracted many Javanese workers to work on the estate. The Al-Saqqaf or Al-Sagoff and Company also made a deal with stranded hajis in Hijaz to bring them back home with a condition that they have to sign a contract to work as labourers in the estates belonging to the company for a certain period of time until their debts are paid. This practice was admitted to by Sayyid Mohammed al-Saqqaf himself where he had lent an amount of $100,000.00 for the period of three years. Around 200 potential pilgrims signed the contract to work on the estate in 1889. About 400 labourers were employed by the Estate in the 1880s and another 200 in the 1900s. The al-Saqqaf Company ferried potential hajj pilgrims and contract workers to Makkah using their own ships. This contract-ticket became popular among potential hajj pilgrims towards the end of the 19th century.

22 A. Wright & Cart Wright, A Twentieth Century Impression of British Malaya, p. 707.
century as it functions as a loan to pilgrims to replace cash money for the sake of safety. The workers were provided with all necessities needed on the estate. The workers’ settlement was also provided with a marketplace where they use their own currency known as Constantinople Currency to buy goods and other stuffs in the estate. After two months being awarded with the concession land, Sayyid Mohammed issued the Estate’s first currency on 1st May 1878.23 The currency was printed by Sa’aidi Press in Singapore and had consisted of 25 cents, 50 cents, $1.00 and $2.00.24

When Sayyid Mohammed al-Saqqaf passed away on 3rd July 1906 in Singapore, his properties were inherited by his two sons, Sayyid Abdul Kadir and Sayyid Umar. On 19th April 1907 Sayyid Abdul Kadir passed away, thus Sayyid Umar became the sole beneficiary of the al-Saqqaf wealth.25 Under Sayyid Umar, aggressive efforts were made to attract investors to the “Cucob Concessions”. Apart from developing the concessions himself, Sayyid Umar also leased part of the land in the concession to European companies to plant rubber. In 1907 he leased 10,000 acres of “Cucob Concessions” for 200 years to Hevea Rubber Planting Co. Ltd. This was followed by the lease of another 5,000 acres of land for 90 years to Peneiro Planting Syndicate. Both estates were required to pay a tax of 2.5% of their products to Sayyid Umar.26

Another Hadhrami Arab who was also involved in agricultural estate was Sayyid Hassan al-Attas. He was also awarded a land concession by the Sultan of Johor of about 2000 acres near Johor Bahru. This concession was known as the Estate of Habib Hassan. The Estate was planted with rubber, coconut and pineapple. Today, this estate covers the areas of Century Garden, Wadi Hassan, Kampung Ngee Heng, Hulu

Air Molek, Saujana, Kampung Tarum, and part of Kampung Kubur. He was also working on a rubber plantation area of 79 acres between Ghi Heng Road and Yahaya Awal Road. His son, Sayyid Mohamad was also involved in the agriculture sector by opening gambier and coffee plantations in Muar, Johor. Several Hadhrami Arabs applied for land grants for lots in Arab Street in Bandar Maharani, Muar for agriculture and business purposes. People such as Sayyid Hussein Mohamed al-Mahthar, Sayyid Mohamed Uthman al-Yahya and Sayyid Salleh Abdul Rahman were among the land applicants in Muar.

Apart from Johor, Sayyid Hassan invested in plantations by running the Ketapang Rubber Estate in Pahang commercially. Sayyid Hassan gained a reputable status in Pahang and was a highly respected Arab for his piety and wealth. Fortunately, he maintained a good relationship with Sultan Ahmad, the Sultan of Pahang who awarded 14,000 acres of land stretching from Kuala Pahang to Air Hitam for agricultural purposes for 99 years. The land was handed to him on 1 Muharram 1306 (7 September 1888). A saw mill was erected at Kuala Pahang to extract timber before it was developed for agriculture. Sayyid Hassan employed Chinese workers for this purpose. Of the concession land, about 2,000 acres were planted with rubber and it was known as the Ketapang Rubber Estate. The Ketapang Rubber Estate was said to be the largest estate owned by a Muslim before the Second World War. The workers employed were

28 See Memorandum CLM to GA on 4 September 1919, GA 857/1924.
29 A. Rahman Tang Abdullah, ‘Sejarah Masyarakat Keturunan Arab di Muar’, B.A. Academic Exercise, History Department, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Malaya, 1991/92, p. 18.
30 Letter from Muar Land Office for Sayyid Hussain Mohamed al-Mahthar to CLM on 29 December 1919 with renting amount $5 per acre, CLM 7/1920; see Letter from Muar Land Office for Sayyid Mohamed Uthman al-Yahya to CLM on 28 February 1920, CLM 7/1920; 596/1920; and Letter from Muar Land Office for Sayyid Salleh Abdul Rahman to CLM on 6 December 1924, CLM 1437/1924.
31 Sayyid Ali Mohammad al-Attas, Almarhum Sayyid Hassan Ahmad al-Attas, pp. 11-32; Mahayuddin Haji Yahaya, Sejarah Orang Syed di Pahang, pp. 90-91. See also Marriot (Governor's Deputy) to Amery, 1 April 1925; enclosure The Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence, No. 28, April 1925, CO 537/931.
33 See National Archive, Malaysia (Kuala Trengganu Branch), 1306AH/1888AD, Sultan Pahang 33/1916.
35 Ibid., p. 54.
among local villagers who planted rubber seedlings and supervised the estate’s management.\textsuperscript{36}

The Hadhrami Arabs were also actively involved in business enterprises in Selangor, when a Sayyid who was associated with Tunku Kudin engaged in a commercial undertaking since 1883. They engaged in business ventures related to a mangrove concession and had managed paddy and sago planting companies where Tunku Kudin had a half interest in.\textsuperscript{37} In Singapore, the al-Saqqaf family worked on perseverance estate and rural properties which produced lemon grass for a citronella oil factory.\textsuperscript{38}

Apart from that, the Hadhrami Arabs were also awarded certain areas to monitor economic activities as well as toll collection. In Kedah, two Hadhrami Arabs, Sayyid Osman and Sayyid Mansur al-Jafri were among the recipients of grants of revenues enforced at the end of 1911 (1329). Sayyid Osman shared the grant of revenues of brick export duty received from Kuala Kedah with Wan Ahmad. He also received the grant of revenues of pepper export duty and the fruit market in Yan. Meanwhile, Sayyid Mansur al-Jafri was awarded with a grant of revenues of markets in Sala, Kangkong and Simpang Ampat.\textsuperscript{39}

\textbf{Mining}

After emerging in the government services sector, the Hadhrami Arabs had tried to engage in the mining sector. Mining is another sector that saw the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the Malay Peninsula. Unfortunately, late 19\textsuperscript{th} century witnessed the Chinese dominance in Malay’a’s tin mining sector. “All the shopkeepers and financiers

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{36} See Aminudin bin Abd. Rashid, Syed Hassan bin Ahmad al-Attas: Satu Kajian Biografi, p. 55.}  
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{38} William G. Clarence-Smith, “Hadhrami Entrepreneurs in the Malay World, c. 1750 to c. 1940”, p. 311.}  
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{39} The Annual Report of the Adviser to the Kedah Government for the Year 1329 A.H. (2\textsuperscript{nd} January – 21\textsuperscript{st} December, 1911), by Meadows Frost, Acting Adviser to the Kedah Government, Kuala Lumpur: Printed at the F.M.S. Government Printing Office, 1912, p. 29. In the report the names of Hadhrami Arabs’ recipient were spelt Said instead of Sayyid.}
involved Chinese. The trades going into Malay states were controlled by the Chinese, and often were Chinese.\(^{40}\)

However, in Johor, the mining sector had recorded to have quite a number of Hadhrami Arab entrepreneurs’ involvement. In 1863, Sultan Abu Bakar awarded a land concession for mining tin in Air Putih to Sayyid Abdullah al-Junied, Sayyid Junied Umar al-Junied, Sayyid Abu Bakar Umar al-Junied and Sayyid Salim Mohsin al-Attas.\(^{41}\) In 1889, Sultan Abu Bakar also awarded a land concession of three square miles for mining to Sayyid Mohammed al-Saqqaf. Even though it was not clear the kind of minerals mined, Sayyid Mohammed through his lawyer Messrs. Donalson and Burkinshaw was given the responsibility to venture in the activity for 99 years.\(^{42}\) Sayyid Mohammed al-Saqqaf was also given permission by the Sultan of Pahang to do mining work in Raub, Pahang. Raub was then famous for gold mines.\(^{43}\)

With the introduction of the Mining Enactment of 1911, all miners in Johor are bound to the law. The grant of concession lands which the rulers of Johor used to award to whosoever they wished to, especially the Arabs who had close relationships with the royals is no longer in practice. Now, all miners have to apply to the government of Johor directly or either through agents or lawyers to mine tin in the state. Sayyid Abdul Rahman Umar al-Attas was reported to be one of the actively involved Hadhrami Arabs in tin mining in Johor. He owned two areas of tin mining in Mersing and Kota Tinggi. The Mersing tin mine was acquired on 13 June 1915. The 500 acres area was situated and bordered between the Mayang and Jemari rivers.\(^{44}\) Meanwhile, the Kota Tinggi tin mine was also acquired through an agent, lawyer M. Ismail on 10 February 1916. The area

\(^{40}\) K. G. Tregonning, “The Origin of the Straits Steamship Company in 1890”, JMBRAS, Vol. 38, Pt. 2, 1965, p. 287. The number of Chinese emigrants which entered Singapore had increased every year and in the 1898 their number was 190,000. Many of them went to Java, but a large number of them travelled to tin states on the Malay Peninsula. See also K. G. Tregonning, “The Origin of the Straits Steamship Company in 1890”, p. 287, footnote no. 14.


\(^{42}\) Ibid., p. 45.

\(^{43}\) J. A. Richardson, The Geology and Minerals Resources of the Neighbourhood of Raub, Pahang, Kuala Lumpur, 1939, p. 85.

consisted of 300 acres near the Redan River. Based on the reply letters from CLM to Sayyid Abdul Rahman Umar al-Attas, the fees for a mining license in Kota Tinggi was RM50.00 and RM25.00 for Mersing. The premium charge for selected 50 acres of land in both mining areas was RM10.00 per acre. Apart from that, Sayyid Abdul Rahman Umar al-Attas also had a joint venture with Chinese miners Ah Seah Im and Ang Tang. From the records, it shows that a new agreement was rearranged when Ah Seah Im was replaced by J.A. Hamilton.

The mining sector in Johor had also attracted outside investors from Singapore. Sayyid Mohamed al-Saqqaf, an Arab entrepreneur from Singapore was also actively involved in tin mining in Johor. He owned 500 acres of mining area at the Seluyot River in Kota Tinggi which was acquired on 22 October 1916 with a mining license fee of RM50.00 and a premium of RM10.00 per acre for selected 50 acres of land. Apart from that, Sayyid Mohamed together with another miner from Singapore, Shaykh Amir Badar managed to acquire an area of 500 acres near Bukit Lawang in Polesing on January 1917. The fee for a mining license was also RM50.00 and a premium of RM10.00 per acre for selected 50 acres of land. Furthermore, Sayyid Ibrahim Ali had also applied for a mining license to excavate minerals in the area of Endau where he had acquired about 500 acres of land around the Lendong River. These examples were proof that the Hadhrami Arabs were actively involved in the mining sector.

About 12 mining licenses was issued to the Arabs in Johor and Arabs from Singapore during the British administration in the state from 1914-1942. After the Second World War, the Arabs still continued their operations in producing tin mining. New
mining areas were opened for bauxite. One of the bauxite mining areas was operated by Sayyid Muhamed Mohsain at Bukit Melintang, Pengerang in 1950.\textsuperscript{50}

Records showed that quite numbers of Hadhrami Arabs were involved in the mining sector in Pahang. Apart from land concessions for agricultural and plantation purposes, Sayyid Hassan in 1890 was also awarded with lands for gold mining by the Sultan of Pahang. For that purpose, local villagers were employed to mine gold in small scales. To further develop the concession, Sayyid Hassan leased the mining lands to foreign investors such as Mr. Burkinshaw from Messrs. Donalson and Burkinshaw, Mr. Murray from the Merchantile Bank, and Mr. Cuthbertson from Bousted and Co. The lease was based on Sayyid Hassan receiving seventeen thousand shares each valued at $3.00.\textsuperscript{51} In 1921, Sayyid Mohamed Alwi al-Haddad together with his partner Ungku Abdul Rahman Ungku Abdul Majid from Johor applied for a mining license to extract gold in an area of about 2,000 acres in the District of Batu Talam, Raub, Pahang.\textsuperscript{52} Al-Sagoff and Co. was also involved in paper production in Pahang.\textsuperscript{53}

In the Batu Pahat area, many Hadhrami Arabs had settled down in Penggaram Town. Sayyid Abdullah Alwi, Sayyid Hassan Mohamed al-Idrus and Sayyid Idrus Mohamed al-Habsyi were among the applicants for land grants in the Penggaram town. Among the Hadhrami Arabs who ran business activities in Johor Bahru were Sayyid Husain Salim al-Attas, Sayyid Sahil Ahmad, and Sayyid Ahmad Abdul Rahman al-Habsyi. In Bandar Maharani, Muar there were Sayyid Idrus Mohamed al-Habsyi and Sayyid Mohamed Osman. While in Penggaram, there was Sayyid Hassan Abdullah al-Jufri.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{50} Letter from CLR Kota Tinggi to CLM Johor Bahru on 15 March 1950. CLM 212/1950.
\textsuperscript{52} Letter from District Officer of Raub, Pahang on 14\textsuperscript{th} March 1921 to the District Officer, Johor Bahru regarding the application from Ungku Abdul Rahman Ungku Abdul Majid from Bukit Taram, Johore, and Sayyid Mohamed bin Alwi al-Haddad for a prospecting license over 2000 acres of Land in the Mukim of Batu Talam, Raub, Pahang. CLM 363/1921.
\textsuperscript{53} See Letter from Al-Sagoff and Co., to District Office of Kuantan on 31 October 1923, District of Kuantan (DOK). DOK, 569/1923.
Services Sector

Apart from agriculture and mining, many of the Hadhrami Arabs in Johor were involved in other economic sectors such as services, trading, and mining. In the services sector, many of them had worked as civil servants who received monthly salaries and allowances. Some of them became professional appraisers and auctioneers. Furthermore, the Hadhrami Arabs have also served in Johor’s government service sector since before the interference of the British in Johor’s state administration in 1914. Many of them continued to serve in the state administration of Johor such as in the offices of Chief Minister, Treasury Department, Police Department, Religious Affairs Department, Education Department and Works Department. Applications for government posts were not only received from the Hadhrami Arabs living in Johor but also from outside Johor such as Kedah, Negeri Sembilan, Singapore and also from Pontianak. Based on The Singapore and Malayan Directory (SMD), it showed that the number of Hadhrami Arabs employed in the government service sector had increased from 19 persons in 1910 to 35 persons in 1922.

According to Sohaimi Esa, the Hadhrami Arabs who worked in the government service sector were generally from low income background unless they received side income by being involved in trade and cultivation activities. Some of them worked in several private companies as labourers or clerks, or as teachers at private schools owned by Arab people such as Madrasah al-Attas al-Arabiyyah in Johor Bahru. For example, Sayyid Abu Bakar Abdullah al-Attas was employed as a teacher at Madrasah al-Arabiyyah al-Attas Johor and Sayyid Salem Ahmad worked as a clerk at Syed Noah Al-Habshee and Co.

55 For example Surat Syed Ismail, Johor Bahru kepada GA pada 13 Januari 1920, GA 30/1920; Surat Syed Abdul Azizi Abdul Hamid, Johor Bahru to GA pada 22 Januari 1924, GA 123/1924; and Surat Pesuruhjaya Kerajaan Muar untuk Syed Abdul Kadir Muhamed kepada SS pada 29 Disember 1917, SS 1401/1917. Applications received from outside Johore such as GA 793/15 surat Syed Abdullah Syed Uthman Abdul Kadir, Kedah kepada GA pada 24 Muharram 1334; 812/1922, surat Syed Abdullah, Negeri Sembilan kepada GA pada 29 November 1922 and SS 551/1922, Surat Pesuruhjaya Polis untuk Syed Hassan Muhamed al-Kadri, Pontianak kepada SS pada 25 Februari 1922.
The Hadhrami Arabs were also involved in the service sector by being appraisers. Sayyid Noah Mohamed al-Habsyi was an active appraiser and was involved in the business since 1905. His business was centred in Johor Bahru. Having good business contacts with prominent and successful traders in Johor helped him to hold a first class appraiser status from which he got recommendation and support.\(^{58}\) He managed to establish his own company named Syed Noah Al-Habshee and Co.\(^{59}\) Sayyid Noah also owned licenses in architecture, surveying, realty and is an agent of the commissioner. Besides that, he also opened a petrol pump station in Pontian Kecil, Kukup in 1928.\(^{60}\) Other appraisers among the Hadhrami Arabs during this period of time were Sayyid Hussain Ali in Segamat, Sayyid Abdullah Hassan al-Attas in Johor Bahru, and Sayyid Mohamed Umar al-Attas in Mersing.\(^{61}\)

The Hadhrami Arabs in Johor managed to run their businesses well and many of them became successful traders and merchants. Most of the big companies owned by the Hadhrami Arabs were situated in Johor Bahru, a town of commerce. Companies like Al-Attas and Co, Johore Star and Co., Al-Kaff and Co. and Sahil and Co. were owned by the Hadhrami Arab families in Johor. Al-Attas and Co. was owned by Sayyid Hassan al-Attas who was a successful Arab trader in Johor who ventured into real estate, agriculture, services and commerce. His business was centred in the Johor Bahru town on Ibrahim Road, Segget Road, Dhobi Road, Trus Road and Tan Heok Nee Road. In these areas, shop-houses, offices and houses were built for rental.\(^{62}\) Since most of his properties were situated at strategic locations, many of his lands were later on sold to the government of Johor for public use such as for road construction between Tan Yeok

\(^{58}\) Letter from traders/merchants to SS on 30 July 1917, SUK 728/1917; Applications for first class appraiser by Sayyid Noah Al-Habshee, SUK 1216, SUK 325/1917 and SUK 729/1917.

\(^{59}\) The Singapore and Malayan Directory, 1925, p. 640.

\(^{60}\) Letter from Sayyid Noah al-Habsyi to SS on 7 February 1928, SS 3783/1930, attached with company logo, SS 427/1928.

\(^{61}\) Letter from Sayyid Hussain Ali to SS on 26 June 1926, SS 1948/1926; Letter from Sayyid Abdullah Hassan to SS on 1 December 1919, SS 2150/1919 and Letter from Commissioner Government of Endau to SS on 3 January 1923, SS 59/1923.

\(^{62}\) Letter from Sayyid Hassan Ahmad al-Attas to CLM on 10 November 1926, CLM 753/1926.
Nee Road and Dhobi Road, and on Bentara Road for building barracks that cost about $2600.00.  

The Johore Star and Co. located on Jalan Ibrahim, Johor Bahru was owned by Sayyid Hussain Ali. He was an agent of the commerce commissioner and also ran wholesale hardware, clothing and many more businesses. Sahil and Co. was owned by Sayyid Sahil Ahmad. The company supplied food and clothing for prisons and hospitals in Johor Bahru. Al-Kaff and Co. was owned by the Al-Kaff family and was registered under a commerce and broker license. The Al-Sagoff and Co. was owned by Sayyid Mohamed al-Saqqaq from Singapore. The company was not only involved in agriculture ventures in Kukup, Johor but also owned lots of rental houses in Muar.

There are several Hadhrami Arab businessmen who were noted for their business achievement in the services sector in Batu Pahat. They were Sayyid Mustafa bin Agil, Sayyid Ahmad Alwi and Sayyid Hamid Hassan al-Jufri. Sayyid Mustafa bin Agil bin Shahab owned a company registered under his name, Syed Mustapha bin Agil bin Shahab and was involved in the architecture and construction industry since 1929. He was assisted by Sayyid Mohamed, the Assistant Director; Sayyid Safi’i and V.M. Husain as clerks, and Sayyid Ali as the architect. He was also an experienced architect and contractor (building) in Pontian, Johor; Malacca, and Singapore. He was appointed by the government as a Grade II Appraiser, and later on in January 1937 promoted to Grade I Appraiser. Sayyid Ahmad Alwi is another Hadhrami Arab entrepreneur in Batu Pahat who was also involved in business as an architect, realty agent and commissioner agent. He was assisted by Sayyid Mustafa Akil as supervisor.

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64 See these files contain information on his business details, GA 396/1922, GA 149/1923, GA 664/1923 and GA 773/1923.
68 Ibid., pp. 258-259; The Singapore and Malayan Directory (SMD), 1932, p. 661; SMD, 1933, p. 637; SMD, 1934, p. 590 and SMD, 1941, p. 61.
69 Letter from Sayyid Mustapha Agil to AABP on 4 December 1939 and 25 February 1940, GA 1123/1939; Letter from Sayyid Mustapha to AA Kukup on 11 December 1938, AAK (P) 534/1938; Letter from Sayyid Mustapha Agil to SS on 4 January 1937 and 6 January 1937; SS 4917/1936; and A letter from Sayyid Mustapha Agil for extending Appraiser’s and Auctioneer’s license, AABP 207/1932.
and building surveyor and Hassan Ahmad as draftsman and clerk. His brother Sayyid Muhamed had a joint venture with a bank director of Batu Pahat, a Chinese merchant Kua Kim Pah and Kepol Shaaban to open an area of 10 acres to build 35 shop lots that included a cafeteria and lounge at Jalan Sultanah in Penggaram Town.

In 1940, Sayyid Hamid Hassan was involved in transportation services where he operated in the areas of Batu Pahat and Muar. He invested in the transportation services by running eight buses everyday between Batu Pahat and Muar. In Segamat, Sayyid Umar Othman al-Saqqaq was appointed as an appraiser and Grade II auctioneer in 1927.

In the state of Pahang, the early generations of Hadhrami Arab migrants were also noted for their economic involvement in the early 19th century. Abdullah b. Abdul Kadir Munshi recorded about the existence of an Arab community in Pahang during his visit to the East Coast Malay States in 1837-38 (1253 H.) According to him, the people who even though were few in number, were highly respected, rich and mostly earned their living as traders. Based on his account, it is clear that the Hadhrami Arabs were actively involved in business activities in Malaya decades before the introduction of a capitalist economy by the British. Sayyid Hassan, the father of Sayyid Ahmad Al-Attas was among the traders who arrived in Pahang in the late 19th century. In 1827, as recorded by Gray, an Englishman who traded opium in Pahang, between January to February there were two Arab merchants from Singapore named Sayyid (Sahid) Alwee and Sayyid (Sahid) Abdullah who were doing business in Pahang.

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71 List of lands and agricultural areas owned by Sayyid Ahmad and his children, CLM 937/1928.
73 Letter from Sayyid Umar Othman al-Saqqaq to SS on 20 January 1927, SS 300/1927; Letter from Government Commissioner of Batu Pahat for Sayyid Umar Othman al-Saqqaf to SS on 18 October 1927, SS 2682/1927.
In Kelantan, there are not much record found and written about the Hadhrami Arabs’ involvement in the state’s economic sector except through several notes by foreign visitors such as F. F. Laidlaw who was impressed with trade activities in Kelantan markets. He observed that the traders consisted of multiple races such as Malays, Chinese, Indians and also Arabs.77

Sayyid Hassan al-Attas also ventured into new forms of business by going into the entertainment sector when he established the first cinema in Johor in 1926. The cinema was named *Public Cinema* and was situated at the junction of Dhobi Road and Terus Road. The Shaw Brothers was given the responsibility to supervise and maintain the cinema from 1931 until 1938. The name of the cinema was then changed to “Empayar Theater”. The cinema was a joint venture investment between the Shaw Brothers, Sayyid Hassan and Charity Estate.78 Sayyid Hassan had also expanded the Al-Attas business by venturing into real property overseas when he bought a three storey building in Cairo City, Egypt in 1926. The building was bought from a local Arab Egyptian for 10,000.00 pounds. The building was then rented to Malay students from Malaya at around RM15.00 to RM60.00 per month.79

In the absence of a dominant Malay trading class, the Arabs emerged as the most prominent entrepreneurs, apart from the Indian Muslims representing Muslims in business activities in Singapore. The active involvement of Arabs in business activities was most notable when Stamford Raffles established Singapore in 1819. After Singapore was made a free port, Raffles ordered that an area suitable for up to two thousand Arabs be set aside and they were encouraged to settle in the new city-port.80 Raffles hoped that Singapore would attract a large community of Arabs who had a long history of involvement in trade to participate in the development of the island.

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78 Syed Hussein al-Attas, ‘Suara Al-Attas,’ p. 50.
incentives offered and their entrepreneurial skills enabled the Arabs to prosper like the Chinese and European traders.\textsuperscript{81}

By late 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the Arabs had firmly established their business interests in Singapore and it was described by the Dutch scholar L.W.C. Van Den Berg as “the most flourishing, though not the largest Arab colony in all the Indian Archipelago” and their numbers were said to be increasing year by year, as it was “the point by which all Arabs pass who go to seek their fortunes in the Far East”.\textsuperscript{82}

Although the period between the late 1920s and early 1930s were the times of a worldwide economic recession, the period was considered as the golden days to the Arabs in Singapore as the wealthiest community in the island owing to their vast holdings in house, land, and estate properties and the steep rise in land values in the interwar years.\textsuperscript{83} Together with the Jews, Arabs in 1931 were described as “the largest owners of house properties” in the island.\textsuperscript{84}

The first Arabs to arrive in Singapore after it was put under the British administration were Sayyid Mohamad Harun al-Junied and his nephew Sayyid Umar al-Junied. Both of them settled in Kampung Gelam, where Sayyid Mohamad Harun al-Junied died as a very rich man in 1824. Sayyid Umar lived on until 1852 and served as leader of the Arab community in Singapore.\textsuperscript{85} Generally, most of the Arabs who settled in Singapore in early 19\textsuperscript{th} century were petty shopkeepers, small traders and owners of real estate. Another Arab who also came to Singapore in its early days and made his fortune in trading ventures was Sayyid Abdul Rahman al-Saqqaf.\textsuperscript{86} Sayyid Abdul Rahman al-Saqqaf and his son, Sayyid Ahmad traded spices in Java and the neighbouring islands. In 1848,

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., p. 85.
\textsuperscript{86} Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia, p. 9.
Sayyid Abdul Rahman established a company known as Al-Sagoff and Co. Sayyid Ahmad, the son of Sayyid Abdul Rahman married Raja Siti, daughter of Hadjee Fatimah, the Sultana of Gowa in the Celebes. Sayyid Ahmad expanded the family business by venturing into many other sectors in Malaya such as realty, plantation and shipping.\textsuperscript{87}

Singapore became a focal point of business interests to the Arabs in the late 19th century when about a number of 80 Arab commercial firms were established by 1885. This number is equal to 29 percent of all Arab firms in the Malay World with capital over 10,000 guilders. Arabs became influential real estate owners in Singapore. The expected value of real estate owned by the Arabs on the island was 4 million guilders or about a quarter of the estimated total value of real estate owned by the Arabs in the Malay Peninsula and the Dutch East Indies.\textsuperscript{88}

The Arabs owned around 75 percent of private land or about 50 percent of Singapore's total land area by the 19th century. In spite of their small number, the Arabs together with Jews owned more real estates in the 1930s. The Arabs owned almost the proportions of urban property that is valued at $2.5 million in which almost 80 percent of the large estates including Raffles Hotel (owned by the AlSagoff) and the Europe Hotel (owned by the AlKaffs).\textsuperscript{89}

\textbf{Hajj Business}

Since a majority of Hadhrami Arabs were familiar with Arabia and they were also respected for their profound knowledge about Islam, many of them were involved in \textit{hajj} activities and were appointed as pilgrim brokers or syaiikh \textit{haji}.\textsuperscript{90} Being a pilgrim broker is not an easy task. A syaikh \textit{haji} must be responsible to ensure that every

\textsuperscript{87} Hadjee Fatimah was a rich Malay lady with business connections in the Malay States and Celebes. She was reported to own many vessels. When she died her fortune was inherited by her son-in-law Sayyid Ahmad. See Charles Burton Buckley, \textit{An Anecdotal History}, p. 564.


\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{90} They were also known as \textit{broker haji} amongst Malays.
pilgrim receives his ship ticket and to inform the pilgrim the exact date of the ships’ arrival and departure as the ships will depart to Hijaz from Penang and Singapore. The potential hajj pilgrim is also reminded to take cholera and smallpox injections as well as provide a medical statement that proves that he has taken the injections. Sayyid Salleh al-Sagoff was one of the pilgrim brokers appointed by the State of Kedah to supervise hajj activities of pilgrims from Kedah. 91

In 19th century Malaya, hajj activities were exclusively managed by the Arab community. It was run by private individuals who had connections and contacts with shaykh haji or mutawwif in Makkah. The al-Saqqaf or al-Sagoff family was among the Hadhrami Arabs who were directly involved in this industry. Sayyid Ahmad, the son of Abdul Rahman al-Saqqaf began the business, transporting pilgrims to Hijaz using sailing vessels or sailing ships around the 1850s. He then moved to steamships and had carried 3,476 pilgrims in 1874 to Jeddah using his four steamships. The al-Saqqaf family owned a shipping company named the Singapore Steamship Company. 92 They owned a firm in Singapore that conducted business in real estates and had also acted as a pilgrim agency. Most pilgrim brokers or syaikh haji were Arabs. 93 There were many syaikh haji representatives or syaikh agents in the Malay states and Singapore. In order to get potential hajj pilgrims, the hajj brokers and agents would advertise about their services to would-be pilgrims in local newspapers. 94

Mohd Zulfadli had listed the names of agents that acted as syaikh haji in the Malay states and Singapore between 1940 until 1970. From 109 pilgrim agents or

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syaiKH haji representatives listed in the Malay states and Singapore, only three of them were Arabs of Sayyid descent. Two of them were in Penang, namely Sheikh Sayyid b. Ahmad Shaikh Zayed (Burmah Road) and Sayyid Ali b. Sayyid Abdullah al-Mufathal (Lumut Lane). The other one was Sayyid Ali b. Mohammed al-Junied from Gurun, Kedah.95

Hajj brokers or syaiKH haji used printed media such as newspapers as a way to promote their services to the public, particularly the Malay Muslims in Malaya. However, newspapers were not the only means for the syaiKH haji to get potential pilgrims from Malaya. The hajj brokers would also have personal meetings with potential pilgrims as well as ‘pesanan dari orang perseorangan’.96 Personal meetings between the representative of syaiKH haji and potential hajj pilgrims was among the most effective ways to attract Muslims in Malaya to join respective hajj brokers to perform hajj in Makkah. Through personal meetings with the representative of a syaiKH hajj, the potential pilgrims were explained details about hajj activities. The advertisements on hajj activities portrayed the best facilities; transportation as well as accommodation provided for potential hajj pilgrims during their stay in Hijaz.97

Mohd Zulfadli had listed the names of newspapers published from 1900 till 1950 that advertised information on hajj activities conducted by respective syaiKH haji or hajj brokers in Malaya. These newspapers are published and operated in Penang and Singapore. Among the newspapers operated in Singapore were Berita Malai, 1943; Dunia Akhirat, 1936-1937; Dunia Sekarang, 1934-1944; Fajar Asia, 1934-1944; and Kehidupan Dunia Akhirat, 1935-1936. Meanwhile, the newspapers operating in Penang that advertised information of hajj activities by hajj syaiKH were Al-Ikhwan, 1926-1931; Bahtra, 1932-1933; Bintang Timur, 1900; Bumiputera, 1933-1934; Cahaya Pulau

96Ibid., p. 138.
97Ibid., pp. 138-39.
Pinang, 1904-1906; Cahaya Timur, 1942; Dewasa, 1931; Dunia Baharu, 1948; Dunia Melayu, 1928-1929; and Idaran Zaman, 1925-1930.98

The Al-Saqqaf firm based in Singapore acted as a pilgrim agent who controlled hajj activities from Malaya through their syaikh pilgrim agents and brokers. Apart from advertising their services in newspapers, hajj syaikh or brokers would also offer money lending facility to potential pilgrims for pilgrimage.99 This loan was given to would-be pilgrims who did not have sufficient money to cover their expenses in Makkah but were ambitious to perform hajj in Makkah. After completing their pilgrimage, the borrowers will be given the opportunity to pay their debts in cash or they can pay back by working as farm labourers. The majority of them chose to pay the debt by working as farm labourers in the Cucob Concession owned by the Al-Saqqaf company.100

Malaya, in particular Singapore was the main transit for pilgrims before departing to Hijaz. However, Singapore did not only dealt with pilgrims from Malaya, but also pilgrims from Indonesia. “In the mid 19th century, some two thousand Indonesians made the journey; by the end of the century, the number had risen to over 7000, and a high percentage took passage from, and returned to, Singapore, not only because of the facilities available there, but also to avoid Dutch restrictions on travel to Mecca”.101 Here it shows that Singapore became the chosen port for pilgrims outside Malaya, especially those from the East Indies due to the strict rules and regulations imposed on them by the Dutch authorities in their country. This is because the Dutch were afraid that these pilgrims would be influenced by pan-Islamic ideas that had widely spread in Hijaz amongst hajj pilgrims or the hajis. They believed that the returned hajis would cause social and political disturbances in Indonesia.102

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98 Ibid., p. 137.
100 Ibid., p. 199; State Secretary, 1451/1921, Surat Perjanjian Tanah Konsesi Kukup - AlSagoff Concession Kukup, J/PELB.
Since the cost of travelling to Hijaz is expensive, not many people were able to go there. Generally, Malays go to Makkah in their old age, after they have saved enough money to cover the cost of travelling and expenses in Makkah. By that time, their children had already grown up and become independent. It is a dream of every Muslim to perform hajj and if possible they would prefer to die in the Holy City of Makkah. Upon returning from Makkah, Malay pilgrims are addressed as Tuan Haji for men and Hajjah for women.\textsuperscript{103}

The al-Saqqaf family was among the significant Arab families in Singapore who were involved in this profitable business.\textsuperscript{104} They did not only engage in the hajj industry as pilgrim brokers, but also had another business related to it whereby they employed potential pilgrims to work in their estates for a certain period of time. The Constantinople Estate owned by the al-Saqqaf family employed many Javanese workers. Being contract labourers, they were promised to be able to perform hajj with all expenses provided by the Estate.\textsuperscript{105} A scheme known as contract-tickets introduced by the Constantinople Estate had attracted many Javanese workers to work there. Around 200 potential pilgrims signed contracts to work on the estate in 1889.\textsuperscript{106} Some 400 labourers were employed by the estate in the 1880s and another 200 in the 1900s.\textsuperscript{107}

In order to facilitate the travel of pilgrims, Sayyid Ahmad b. Abdul Rahman al-Saqqaf acquired steamers to serve his flourishing pilgrimage business. His Singapore Steamship Company ferried pilgrims to Jeddah as early as 1874.\textsuperscript{108} After the death of Sayyid Ahmad in 1875, his business was continued by his son Sayyid Mohammad, including the business of pilgrim brokering and pilgrims’ transportation to Makkah. Sayyid Mohammad was known as “a shipowner and considerable proprietor in Singapore

\textsuperscript{103} Moshe Yegar, Islam and Islamic Institutions in British Malaya, p. 222.
\textsuperscript{105} Arnold Wright, A Twentieth Century Impression of British Malaya, London: Lloyd's Great Britain Publishing Co., Ltd., 1908, p. 707.
\textsuperscript{107} See William Gervase Clarence-Smith, “Hadhrami Entrepreneurs in the Malay World, c. 1750 to c. 1940”, pp. 311-312.
and Johor”. In order to assist him in dealing with the family business, Sayyid Mohammad sent his nephew Sayyid Omar to Jeddah to manage the business there. Sayyid Massim bin Salleh al-Jufri was another Arab entrepreneur who built his fortune in shipping, and at one time owned several large trading vessels, and later towards the end of his life acquired some steamers that were used for shipping pilgrims to Makkah. Sayyid Ibrahim Omar al-Saqqaf, the grandson of Sayyid Mohamad al-Saqqaf was also one of the Arab entrepreneurs who were responsible for providing services and assistance for pilgrims from Singapore to Makkah.

In the early stages, the Al-Saqqaf firm sent pilgrims to Makkah using their own sailing ships. However, with the advent of steamships, the firm had no choice but to cooperate with British shipping companies to bring pilgrims to Hijaz. The increased number of pilgrims from Malaya caused the Al-Saqqaf firm to charter steamships from other shipping companies. The Blue Funnel Shipping Company was among the shipping companies that was involved in transporting pilgrims from Malaya in the period of 1900 to 1950. The Blue Funnel Shipping Company was responsible for transporting pilgrims from Malaya to Hijaz since 1936.

The widespread of intellectual trends that took place in Hijaz such as ideas of pan-Islamism, modernist trends, and Wahabi teachings had indirectly influenced pilgrims from Malaya. The British were aware that such intellectual exposure could affect their position in Malaya and it was considered as a big threat to the British
administration in the country. It was quite common among the hajj pilgrims from Malaya to stay in Makkah for a fairly long period of time, usually from six months to several years, but there were some who spent their old days in Makkah after retirement. However, the length of the hajj trip to Makkah had shortened since the Second World War ended. After the war ended, pilgrimage trips to Makkah were then controlled and became a four-week travel package. Therefore, pilgrims from Malaya had ample time to perform hajj rather than busying themselves in other social networks. 117

Shipping

Apart from being involved in business ventures and trades, another profitable business in which the Arabs were actively involved from the beginning of the 20th century until the Second World War was inter-island shipping trade in the waters of the Malay World. 118 In the Malay World, shipping business was also related to the pilgrimage industry which was exclusively in the hands of the Arabs. Arab shippers benefited and prospered in this business as a result of a growing flow of Muslim pilgrims to Hijaz from Singapore and Penang since the late 19th century. 119

The Hadhrami Arabs’ involvement in shipping industry had started much earlier around mid 18th century when they conducted business shipping and trading commodities in the Malayan waters between Java and the Straits of Malacca particularly Palembang and Malacca until mid of 20th century. At this period of time shipping venture was a profitable business trading commodities across the oceans. The Hadhrami Arabs owned large vessels of many kinds that are mostly built in locally. However, the Hadhrami Arabs sail shipping cannot survive and gradually started to decline when steamships were introduced in the 1880s. Clarence-Smith further says that;

117 Ibid.
118 They trade batik and other cloth products and also a wide range of goods such as spices, tobacco, coconuts and timber.
“A specifically Hadhrami involvement on this route (sailing between Java and the Straits of Malacca) dated back at least to the mid-1750s. The average size of all ships owned by Arabs was just over 50 tons, but some of their vessels were much larger. Arab captains resident in Java were mostly to be found in the central and eastern ports of the north coast, notably Semarang, Pekalongan, Gresik and Surabaya. Crew members were mainly Javanese and were probably free rather than slave.”  

The Arabs were well suited to the industry since they had well-established business connections in Singapore and Penang as well as contacts in Hijaz which facilitated the conduct of hajj. The al-Saqqaf family was particularly significant among the Arabs in Singapore who were involved in this profitable business. In order to facilitate the travel of pilgrims, Sayyid Ahmad b. Abdul Rahman al-Saqqaf procured steamers for this purpose. His steamship company started operating the business of ferrying potential pilgrims to Jeddah since 1871. By 1874, four steamers were used to transport 3,476 pilgrims to perform hajj in Makkah. Of this number, about 2,250 pilgrims were from the Dutch East Indies colony. However, in 1880, the company faced a severe misfortune when a ship carrying pilgrims was hit by a storm off the coast of southern Arabia.

Another prominent Arab entrepreneur in Singapore who also built his fortune in shipping was Sayyid Muhsin (Masim) bin Salih al-Jufri. He was reported to own several large trading vessels and some steamships later on towards the end of his life. With the introduction of steamships in the late 19th century after the opening of the Suez Canal, Sayyid Muhsin was rumored as not being able to cope with the change in the

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121 Ibid.
industry. The problem was added with stiff competition from European shipping companies, causing his business to fail.\textsuperscript{126}

By 1919 the Arabs appeared to have ceased operating steamships due to stiff competition from British and Dutch steamship companies.\textsuperscript{127} The inability of the Hadhrami Arabs’ shipping companies to compete with the European companies had caused many of their businesses to close down. The rivalry among European shipping companies such as the British, Dutch and Germans during the inter-war years of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century affected trade and economy of countries in South East Asia.\textsuperscript{128} Although their ventures in the shipping business started to decline by the end of second decade of the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, some of the Hadhrami Arabs still managed to maintain their monopoly in the pilgrimage industry. For example, it was reported that in 1922, Sayyid Ibrahim bin Omar al-Saqqaf still ran his father’s pilgrim office at Jeddah.\textsuperscript{129} Sayyid Ibrahim Omar al-Saqqaf, the grandson of Sayyid Mohamad al-Saqqaf was also one of the Arabs who was responsible for providing services and assistance needed for pilgrims from Singapore in Makkah.\textsuperscript{130}

\textbf{Publishing Industry}

The publishing industry in Malaya has started since the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century, pioneered by a group of Christian missionaries from Europe. The locals’ involvement in the industry began in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century in Singapore when a group of Jawi Peranakan published a weekly newspaper known as \textit{Jawi Peranakan} in 1876. Since then, about 157 journals have been published in Malaya comprising of various types of genres and themes. Singapore became the centre of publication and Malay literature. During the Second

\textsuperscript{126} Ulrike Freitag, “The Arab merchants in Singapore”, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{127} William Gervase Clarence-Smith, “Hadhrami Entrepreneurs”, p. 300.
\textsuperscript{130} Genuine Islam, Vol. 1, No. 6 & 7, June/July 1936.
World War, almost all publishing activities were halted and some were ceased. After the war, it was reported that around 321 types of journals were published. The publication centered in several main cities such as Singapore, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Kota Bharu, Kelantan and Johor Bahru. It is noticed that most of the journals did not last long. Nevertheless, this is a good sign, showing that the reading culture had spread in the society.131

The involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the publishing and printing industry in Malaya started in early 20th century. The involvement of the Hadhrami Arab community in the publishing industry in Malaya was closely related to political developments in the Arab World. The involvement of the Hadhrami Arab community in the publishing industry in Malaya intensified with the publication of the *al-Imam* magazine in Singapore in 1906. *Al-Imam* had similarities with the *al-Manar* magazine in Egypt. Most of the articles and its contents were taken from *al-Manar*, the reformist magazine in Egypt.132

The publishing industry was a business venture that Hadhrami Arabs were also actively involved in in Malaya. The history of printing in Malaya started in Penang when A. B. Bone introduced *The Government Gazette*,133 a weekly newspaper on 1st March 1806. The newspaper then changed its name to *Prince of Wales Island Government Gazette* on 7th June 1806. The printing company then omitted the word ‘government’ from the newspaper’s title of the 17th October 1807 issue. *Prince of Wales Island Gazette* continued to publish until it ceased publications in August 1827.134

The publishing industry in Malacca started in 1815 by a Christian missionary group from London. In Singapore, the printing activity started soon after Stamford Raffles opened Singapore in 1819. The Missionary Society of London was responsible to run the

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134 Ibid., p. 3.
Mission Press, the first foreign publishing company in Singapore. In the beginning, the printing companies in the Straits Settlements were owned by the Christian Missionary Society. These newspapers serve as the government’s gazette as well as for commerce. The Singapore Chronicle, The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser, and the Straits Times were among the earliest newspapers published in Singapore in the second decade of the 19th century.

Muhammad bin Datuk Muda Linggi, A.M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, Ian Proudfoot, and William R. Roff were among the writers who studied the development of journals in Malaya. They provided valuable information and insight to the history of journals published in Malaya and its growth since the 19th century up to the 20th century. This chapter aims to study specifically the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs, a minority group of Arab ethnic in the publishing industry in the Malay Peninsula during the 19th and 20th century.

The involvement of Muslims in the printing industry started in Singapore around late 19th century when a group of Jawi Peranakan worked on lithograph printing articles about Islam and worldly affairs in Malaya. In 1876, they published Jawi Peranakan, a weekly newspaper which is the oldest Malay newspaper in Singapore. Only in late 1880s the Arabs started to show their interest in the printing industry in Malaya when Sayyid Mahmud b. Sayyid Abdul Kadir (1865-1913) established Alwi Ikhwan Press. He was also among the earliest Arabs to produce books for school.

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135 Ibid., p. 3.
136 Ibid., pp. 20 and 26.
137 Muhammad bin Dato’ Muda, Kitab Tarikh Surat Khabar, Bukit Mertajan: Matba’ah al-Zainiah, 1940.
Lembaga (1933-1941) was a popular Malay daily newspaper published in Singapore by Alwi bin Abbas al-Attas. The newspaper was widely circulated throughout Malaya with 20 pages and it was sold at 5 cents per copy.\textsuperscript{143} It was like a ‘brother’ (saudara) to Lembaga Malaya. Both Lembaga (1933-1941) and Lembaga Malaya (1934-1941) shared the same editor, Onn Jaafar. There are similarities between them in terms of contents, covering both local and international issues of politics, society and economics.\textsuperscript{144} It is worth to note that the newspapers and journals published during the 1930s, especially those under the Hadhrami Arabs’ conveyed as well as reported to the public current issues happening in the country concerning the Muslim society and Malaya as a whole.\textsuperscript{145}

The development of the publishing and printing industry in Malaya had contributed to political awareness among the people in Malaya. Ramlah Adam related that the political development of the Malays and their awareness towards the idea of nationalism was also rooted from Indonesia in which she believes that it was brought from there through political movements as well as the press. The involvement of Malay youths and their participation in Indonesian political parties had more or less exposed them to ideas of independence. The politics in Malaya received direct influence from the development of mass media, literature, publications, magazines and newspapers in the country as well as in Indonesia. These developments played an important role in the dissemination of information and ideas of independence as well as raised the public’s awareness and national spirit among the Malays.\textsuperscript{146}

The publishing industry in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century Malaya had witnessed the influence of reformist ideas from Middle Eastern countries. Newspapers and magazines did not only feature local and international issues around the world, but also become the

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid.
media for educated Malay students from the Middle East countries such as Makkah and Egypt to promote ideas of reformism and pan-Islamism. *Al-Imam* (1906), a reformist journal was one of Malaya’s earliest periodicals that served this purpose. And then came along *Saudara, Jasa, Warta Malaya* and many more. Although the newspaper was inclined to depict political issues of Malaya as well as anti-imperialism, it also played an important role in promoting equal opportunity in education to everyone in Malaya regardless of social status.147

Political developments in the Middle East had greatly influenced the development of the printing industry in Malaya. Compelled to deliver the idea of reform, Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi together with Syaikh Tahir Jalaluddin and some friends published a magazine called *Al-Imam* in Malaya in 1906. This newspaper is a continuation of the *Al-Manar* newspaper in Egypt. The newspaper acted as a platform to educate the public on issues related to religion and the ideology of reform. In the printing industry, the Hadhrami Arabs either became part of the editorial board as editors and writers or owned the publishing company which provided financial support. The general themes of issues being raised up and discussed by the journals and periodicals during the twentieth century were related to Malaya’s socioeconomic situation and politics. The reformist journals and newspapers also promoted the idea of ‘pan-Islamism’ and anti-colonial issues in main newspapers before they were banned from publication.148

*Al-Imam* held a resemblance to *al-Manar*, an Arabic periodical from Egypt published in Malaya in the Malay language. Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi, Syaikh Tahir Jalaluddin, Haji Abbas Muhammad Taha, and Syaikh Mohd. Salim al-Khalili were among the important and influential personalities who were responsible for the publication of *Al-Imam* in 1906. The magazine was first published on 22 July 1906.

printed by the Matba‘ah Melayu Tanjung Pagar. The editors of Al-Imam were Syaikh Mohd Tahir Jalaluddin al-Azhari, Sayyid Syaikh bin Ahmad al-Hadi, and Haji Abas bin Mohd. Taha. Al-Imam was printed in Jawi and contained about 32 pages with 31 editions published since July 1906 till it ceased publication in December 25, 1908. The Al-Imam’s publication was then taken over by Al-Imam Printing Co., Ltd. Al-Imam was a religious reformation magazine in line with Muhammad Abduh and Al-Manar’s ideas of reform. Al-Imam reminded Malays about their backwardness in many aspects of life compared to other races in Malaya. In the 1930s, the Arabs were particularly active in the publication of their own Arabic journals. For example between 1931 to 1941, there were at least fifteen of them published in Singapore, ranging from those which lasted for just a few issues to those which survived for several years. The first Arabic journal published in Singapore was the weekly Al-Huda under the editorship of Sayyid A. W. Jilani. Sayyid A.W. Jilani was also the editor of two other journals, Al-Akhbar and Al-Akhbar Al- Musawwarah. Both journals were published in 1939 and had ceased circulation prior to the Japanese invasion. The Arabic journals published found their readership not only in Singapore, but all over the Malay World and Hadhramaut. There are several other Arabic journals that are not mentioned by William R. Roff in his writing. The Al-Watan that was published in 1910 could be considered among the earliest newspapers published by the Hadhrami Arabs. Sayyid Mohd. bin Abdul Rahman al-Mashor was its editor and publisher. The first issue was published on 28 February 1910, but there is no record about its origin. It could have probably been published in Singapore. This newspaper contained four pages. From Proudfoot’s records, Al-Islah

\[149\] A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, Persuratkhabar Melayu (1876-1968), p. 6.
\[150\] Ibid.
\[151\] For details of the Arabic newspapers published in Singapore, their editors, holdings and the number of issues published, see William R. Roff, Bibliography of Malay and Arabic Periodicals Published in the Straits Settlements and Peninsular Malay States 1876-1941, London: Oxford University Press, 1972, pp. 59-61.
\[152\] Ibid., pp. 59 & 60.
\[154\] Ibid., p. 20.
could possibly be the earliest Arabic newspaper as it was published in 1908. The first issue was published on 29 November 1908 in Singapore and was priced at ten cents per copy. It covered general news. The editorial board was led by Shaykh Karamah Baladrom@Baladran.155

Shaykh Karamah Baladrom@Baladran reported that up to 1931, there were four Arabic newspapers published in Singapore; *al-Islah*, *al-Hisam*, *al-Muntasyir* and *al-Huda*.156 The publication of Arabic newspapers showed that there were Arabic speaking readers in Singapore and in Malaya in general. The editors of *al-Huda* for example encourage readers to send letters written in Arabic. It was a kind of encouragement for the people to participate and improve their Arabic language. Many of the young generations of Arab were not able to speak fluent Arabic as their mother tongue was Malay.157 *Sawt Hadramaut* is another Arabic newspaper published by the Al-Saqqaq in Singapore. The newspaper was edited and published by Sayyid Taha Al-Saqqaq Al-‘Alawi. *Sawt Hadramaut* was published weekly and printed by the Ahmad Press located at Jalan Sultan, Singapore. It was sold at 15 cents per copy. The newspaper also provided a special column for the “‘Alawi Affairs” or the ‘Syu’un Al-‘Alawiyyah’ which discussed about the Hadhrami Arabs or the ‘Alawis in Malaya and Indonesia. There was also a column for the "Hadhramaut Affairs” or fi Syu’un Hadhramaut. Among the issues discussed in the newspaper were about the Hadhrami Arab affairs in Surabaya, Pekalongan and the establishment of orphanage houses in Betawi.158

The Arabs’ involvement in the publishing industry, however, started much earlier and they had been active in sponsoring the publication of several Malay journals. When the first Malay reformist journal, *Al-Imam*, was published in 1906, the people responsible in bringing it into existence were the Arabs, who not only contributed the editorials but

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155 However, according to William R. Roff, the editorial board was led by Sayyid Mohammad Agil b. Yahya. He was assisted by Shaykh Karamah Badaran, and perhaps Sayyid Hassan b. Shahab.

156 Shaykh Karamah Baladrom@Baladran, “Sahifah Jadidah”, *Al-Huda*, June 1, 1931, p. 7.


158 *Sawt Hadramaut*, Year 1, no. 5, 24 Mei 1935.
also supported it through financial backing. The initial financial backer of *Al-Imam* was Syaikh Mohd. Salim al-Khalali, an Achehese of Hadhrami Arab origin. Another early financial backer of the journal was Sayyid Muhammad bin Aqil bin Yahya.\(^\text{159}\) Sayyid Shayk Al-Hadi was also among its editors.\(^\text{160}\) He was also involved in the publication of the *Al-Ikhwan* journal (Sept. 1926-1931). Many of the *Al-Imam*’s articles were republished in *Al-Ikhwan*.\(^\text{161}\)

*Al-Ikhwan* is a monthly magazine published by Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi in Penang on 16 Sept. 1926. Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi was its editor and publisher from 16 September 1926 until the last edition in December 1931. The magazine was written in Jawi. At the beginning, *Al-Ikhwan* was printed by the British Malaya Co., and then the printing process was taken over by The Jelutong Press, Penang. The Jelutong Press was owned by Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi. The newspaper was in line with *Al-Imam*. However, it was not a reform magazine.\(^\text{162}\) *Al-Ikhwan* had also highlighted on the issue of women. ‘Women's World’, an excerpt from the book *Tahrir al-Mar'ah* or *kebebasan perempuan* that was authored by the late Qassim bek Amin was published in the newspaper. Besides, the Hadhrami Arabs also financed and controlled several other publishing journals such as *Saudara, Warta, Lembaga* and *Majlis*.\(^\text{163}\)

*Lembaga Malaya* is another journal published by the Hadhrami Arabs in Singapore from Dec 1934 till 1938. It was then republished in Johor Bahru from 1938 till 1941. The journal was put under the leadership of Onn bin Jaafar (10.12.1934 – 1936), Sayyid Alwi bin Sayyid Syaikh Ahmad al-Hadi (1936-1941) and Sayyid Jaafar Albar (1936-1941). The journal was printed in Jawi with 40 pages and was published weekly on every Monday. It was then published on every Friday. The journal ceased publication at


\(^{161}\) Ibid., p. 24.

\(^{162}\) A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkahabaran Melayu (1876-1968)*, p. 18.

the end of 1941. Onn bin Jaafar and Sayyid Alwi were the editors and publishers of this journal.164

Lembaga is another journal published by Hadhrami Arabs in Singapore in October 1935 till 1938. It was then republished in Johor Bahru from 1938 till 1941. Among the editorial board were Malay and Hadhrami Arabs such as Onn bin Jaafar (8.10.1935 – 1936), Sayyid Alwi bin Omar Albar (1936 - mid of 1939) and Sayyid Alwi bin Shaykh Ahmad al-Hadi (mid 1936 -1941). It was also printed in Jawi, had contained 24 pages and was published daily including on Sundays. The newspaper ceased publication at the end of 1941. Copies of this newspaper are available at The National Archives of Malaysia.165 A weekly newspaper, Lembaga was published from 1933-1941 with Onn bin Jaafar as its editor. It was financed by Sayyid Alwi bin Abbas al-Attas.166

Saudara167 was a weekly newspaper published on 29 September 1928 by The Jelutong Press, Penang. It was published by Sayyid Alwi bin Sayyid Syaikh Ahmad al-Hadi. Among the editors were Malays and Hadhrami Arabs such as Mohd Yunos bin Abdul Hamid 929.9.1928 - ?, 1931), Abdul Rahim Kajai (29.9.1928 -?, 1931), Sayyid Alwi himself (1932, Sept. 1934 - ?) and Sayyid Syaikh Ahmad al-Hadi (early 1933 – Feb. 1934). The newspaper which was written in Jawi, started at 8 pages and then 20 pages in 1935. It was published every Saturdays from 29.9.1928 till January 1932. It was then published twice a week starting from February 1932. The journal ceased publication in 1941. Copies of this newspaper are available at the University of Malaya.168

Hadhrami Arabs together with the Malays were actively involved in the printing sector, publishing newspapers and journals. Their involvement in the publishing industry was said to have started much earlier. However, in Malaya, Muslims’ printing

164 A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968), p. 32.
165 Ibid., p. 36.
167 In the beginning, Saudara was published by Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi in 1928. It was then taken over by his son Sayyid Alwi bin Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi as the publisher and also editor of the newspaper.
168 A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968), p. 20.
and publishing of religious books or ‘kitab agama’ started to flourish in the early 20th century due to the development of Islamic education in *madrasah*. Sayyid Hassan Al-Attas was a successful trader in Johor who was also involved in the publishing industry in Malaya when he established his own publishing company in 1927 named *Al-Attas Press* (Matba‘ah al-Attas). The company was situated at Kampung Wadi Hassan, Johor Bahru.\(^{169}\) Al-Attas Press published its first monthly journal, *Majalah Jasa* on 29 November 1927. Sayyid Zain Hassan al-Attas was the journal’s chief editor and this magazine could be considered as the first journal published by the Hadhrami Arabs in Johor. The journal contained 42 pages and was published in Malay using Jawi script. It was sold at 25 cents per copy. *Majalah Jasa* discussed issues such as lessons learned from history, contemporary developments and others.\(^{170}\)

The Al-Attas Press also published general and religious books as well as printed books and religious books in Malay, English and Arabic. *Tarikh al-Qur’an, Islam dan Tamadun* and *Asas Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama’ah* were among the religious books published by the al-Attas Press.\(^{171}\) Besides that, the company also took orders from customers such as printing bills, invitation cards and letter heads. *Jasa* ceased to publish in May 1932 after publishing 37 issues due to the high cost of maintenance and stiff competition from other publishing companies.\(^{172}\) Another reason for the journal to cease its publication was due to lack of moral support and material after the death of Sayyid Hassan al-Attas in 1932 who was the backbone of the company.\(^{173}\) Towards the end of his life, Sayyid Hassan published another journal, *Bulan Melayu* on 1 June 1930.\(^{174}\)


In 1930, one of the Al-Saqqafs, Sayyid Hussein bin Ali Al-Saqqaf founded the first Malay daily newspaper, *Warta Malaya* with Onn Jaafar on 1st January 1930. Apart from *Warta Malaya*, Sayyid Hussein was also a well-known publisher who published weekly Malay pictorials, *Warta Ahad* and *Warta Jenaka*. *Warta Malaya* was one of the influential presses in Malaya. At the beginning, *Warta Malaya* was printed by Anglo-Asiatic Press. Then, it was taken over by Warta Malaya Press Ltd. When Anglo-Asiatic Press changed its name to Malaya Press Limited, Sayyid Hussein joined venture with his brother Sayyid Abdullah and their cousin Shaikhah to fund the publication of *Warta Malaya*. Apart from publishing their own daily newspaper, they also offered services for book binding of religious books and also received translation works from English to Malay and vice versa. They also provided special columns for rent to companies, privates or individuals for advertising purposes in *Warta Malaya*.

The other two journals were also printed by Warta Malaya Press Ltd. *Warta Malaya* was printed in Jawi with around 24 pages per issue. Sayyid Alwi Ahmad al-Hadi (Dec. 1933 – February 1934) and Sayyid Abdullah b. Hamid al-Idrus (1934-1941) were among the editors who wrote for *Warta Malaya*. Things changed when the Japanese occupation took place in Malaya. Many of the newspapers discontinued publication during the occupation period. Nevertheless, *Warta Malaya* was still in operation, publishing its daily newspaper printed in Jawi and Roman (Rumi). The daily newspaper shrank from 24 pages to 6 pages and sometimes 2 pages only per issue. Its publication ceased in August 1942 and then it was taken over by Japanese and used for their propaganda purposes.

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175 Sayyid Hussein bin Ali al-Sagoff was from a family of Hadhrami Arab, al-Sagoff one of the richest Hadhrami Arabs’ families in Singapore. They used their wealth investing in business and commerce as well as commercial establishing publishing company.


Apart from covering news from overseas such as from China, Turkey, India, England and other European countries, *Warta Malaya* had also focused on local news and issues of politics, economy and social aspects of the Malays. Besides, *Warta Malaya* also had exchanges with other newspapers’ news such as *al-Kamalian* and *Putera* in Kelantan and *Lidah Benar* in Kelang, Selangor.\(^{179}\) It can be said that *Warta Malaya* had distributor agents in almost every state in Malaya. The late 1920s and early 1930s were the times when the country was influenced by the global economic recession. Some publishing companies were affected by this recession. *Warta Malaya* for example had decreased the price of its newspaper from 10 cents to 6 cents per copy in line with the economic recession.\(^{180}\)

*Warta Ahad*, a weekly magazine published in Singapore on 5 May 1935 was also published by Sayyid Hussein Ali al-Saqqaf. It was printed in *Jawi* by Warta Malaya Press Ltd. This weekly magazine was published on every Sunday and had contained around 36 pages. Among the editors of *Warta Ahad* were Onn bin Jaafar (5 May 1935 - Dec. 1935), Sayyid Alwi Ahmad al-Hadi (Dec. 1935 - February 1936), Sayyid Hussein bin Ali al-Saqqaf or Sagoff (1936 - ?) and Abdul Rahim Kajai. *Warta Ahad* was a famous magazine during its time. The magazine ceased its publication at the end of 1941.\(^{181}\)

*Warta Jenaka* was also published by Warta Malaya Press, a publishing company owned by Sayyid Hussein Ali al-Saqqaf or Sagoff. The weekly newspaper was first published on 7 September 1936. It contained 30 pages printed in *Jawi* and published every Monday. The newspaper ceased publications in Dec 1941. The editorial board of *Warta Jenaka* were all Malays such as Abdul Rahim Kajai (7 Sept. 1936 – Dec. 1941), Hashim Yunus

\(^{179}\) *Warta Malaya*, Year 1, No. 17, 20 January 1930.

\(^{180}\) Nevertheless the number of newspaper production had increased in 1937. The price of Warta Malaya also has returned to its original price 10 cents per copy. The selling of Warta has increased with Johor as the main centre. In Johor itself, there were five agents in the district of Johor Bahru, Pontian, Muar, Penggaram and Batu Pahat. See *Warta Malaya*, Year 1, No. 3, 3 January 1930, p. 3. Besides, *Warta Malaya* was also distributed to other states in Malaya with agents in Seremban, Pulau Pinang, Malacca, Alor Setar, Sungai Petani and Kuala Lumpur. *Warta Malaya*, Year 1, No. 30, 4 February 1930, p. 14.

\(^{181}\) A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968)*, p. 34.
and Ishak Haji Mahmud. Copies of this journal are available at the National Archive of Malaysia, University of Malaya and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.  

Sayyid Hussein was also involved in funding several types of journals such as al-Qalam, one of the widely read periodicals that highlighted the issues of Muslims ranging from religious affairs to issues of economy, social and politics. This periodical had tried to raise Malays’ awareness towards the British government’s mismanagement in Malaya as well as their inconsideration and bias towards Islam and Muslims. The journal was published in Singapore in July 1950. The company was then moved to Petaling Jaya, Kuala Lumpur. Among the editors of al-Qalam were Sayyid Abdullah b. Hamid al-Edrus (July 1950 – end of 1968, still in service), Abdullah Basmeh (1950-1965) and Sayyid Jaafar Albar (1955-?). The monthly journal was printed in Jawi with an inconsistent number of pages. In July 1956, the number of pages was 59. The company published the journal until the end of 1968. The Genuine Islam (1936-1939) was another periodical published monthly which emphasized on issues of Muslim minority dilemmas in the 1930s. During the 1930s, most periodicals published in Malaya addressed the issue of Muslim-related affairs locally and internationally.

There were several other Hadhrami Arabs who took the initiative of publishing journals in Malaya. They either published the journals on behalf of an association, the private sector, the government sector or for commercial use. For instance, in the state of Kedah, Sayyid Ahmad Shahabudin, an Hadhrami Arab who held the position of Chief Minister of Kedah published Waktu, a bi-monthly newspaper on 11 November 1956. The journal was printed in Jawi by Wah Chong Press, Alur Setar. It contained 16 pages.

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182 Ibid., p. 39.
184 A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968), p. 65.
The journal ceased publication in April 1957. Sayyid Ahmad Shahabudin was the editor and publisher of the newspaper.186

Meanwhile in Perak, Sayyid Abdullah al-Attas published a monthly journal called *Khizanah al-Ilmu* at Kuala Kangsar in August 1904. The chief editor was Sayyid Abdullah al-Attas himself with several other editors such as Haji Mohd. Noor bin Haji Mohd and Ismail al-Khalidi. The journal was printed in Jawi by *Matba’ah al-Attas* Kuala Kangsar. It is not clear when the journal ceased publications. Another newspaper published by Hadhrami Arabs in Ipoh, Perak was *Panduan Teruna* in February 1930. This weekly newspaper was under the editorship of Sayyid Othman bin Shaykh (21.2.1930 - ?). The newspaper was printed in Jawi and published every Friday by Matba’ah al-Rahman, Ipoh. It is not clear when the journal ceased publications.187

In Penang, apart from the publication of *al-Ikhwan* (1926) and *Saudara* (1928) by the al-Hadi family printed by the Jelutong Press, there were two other journals published by Hadhrami Arabs in Penang; *al-Rajaa’* (1925) and *Sahabat* (1939). *Al-Rajaa’* was published by Madrasah al-Masyhur in March 1925. This monthly magazine was printed in Jawi with 28 pages. It was the school’s magazine and had became the ‘voice’ of the school. However, it is not clear when the magazine ceased publications.188 *Sahabat*, a newspaper published in Penang three times a week was also operated by a Hadhrami Arab, Sayyid Ahmad b. Shaykh (15 February 1939). The Jawi newspaper was published on every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday with 44 pages and it was printed by Al-Huda Press Pulau Pinang. Sayyid Ahmad bin Shaykh was one of the editors of *Sahabat*, while the rest are Malays. The *Sahabat* newspaper ceased to publish

187 Ibid., p. 6.
in April 1941. The copy of this newspaper is available at University of Malaya, the National Archive of Malaysia and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.\(^{189}\)

In the state of Negeri Sembilan, *Bintang Sembilan*, a weekly newspaper that was published in 1925 was reported to employ an Hadhrami Arab; Sayyid Ali al-Zahari (April 1925 - 1926) as its editor. The *Jawi* newspaper was published by Abdul Hamid bin Mohd. It was first published in April 1925 printed by the Negeri Sembilan Press on every Friday. It was however halted in 1925 and again republished in January 1926 till the end of 1926.\(^{190}\)

The publishing and printing industry in Johor received a great blow from Singapore, a flourishing cosmopolitan city. This was an unavoidable phenomenon as the state was close by the island. There were several newspapers published in the state with the participation of several Hadhrami Arabs as members of the editorial board. *Taja Penghiburan* was published in September 1934 in Muar, Johor by Sayyid Abdul Qadir bin Mohd bin Yahaya. Sayyid Abdul Qadir was also the editor of a magazine that was published every three months. The magazine represented the ‘voice’ of members of the Muar Club Association, Bandar Maharani, Johor. It is however not known when the magazine ceased its publications.\(^{191}\)

*Majalah Peredaran* is another magazine published by Persatuan Guru-Guru Ugama Johor (The Association of Religious Teachers of Johor) in August 1946. Ahmad bin Yaacob was the publisher appointed on behalf of the association. Most of the editorial members were Malays except for Sayyid Mohd. bin Idrus al-Attas, a Hadhrami Arab (1946 - ? ). The monthly *Jawi* magazine contained 36 pages. The magazine became the ‘voice’ of the association. In the beginning, it was named ‘Peredar’ and

\(^{189}\) Ibid., p. 43.

\(^{190}\) A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968)*, p. 16.

\(^{191}\) Ibid., p. 31.
then had changed to *Majalah Peredaran*. Copies of this magazine are available at the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and University of Malaya.\textsuperscript{192}


Apart from the Hadhrami Arabs’ involvement in popular reformist magazines and newspapers mentioned above, they had also worked as editors in other Malay magazines and periodicals. Sayyid Sa’dullah Khan was also one of the editors of *Utusan Melayu* from 1918 – 1921. The newspaper was first published on 7 November 1907, printed in *Jawi* and Roman by Singapore Free Press. This newspaper contained four pages and was published three times a week; Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The newspaper was then published daily from September 1915 till 1921 when it ceased publications. Copies of this newspaper are available at the University of Malaya and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (microfilm).\textsuperscript{194} The Hadhrami Arabs were also involved in the publication of international magazines such as *Majalah Al-Islam* that was published in Singapore in 1912. *Majalah Al-Islam* is a translated work from an Islamic Review magazine published in London. Sayyid Mohammad al-Junied and K. Anang were the translators of this monthly magazine. The magazine was printed by Al-Ikhwan Press with 32 pages in *Jawi*. The magazine was also circulated to West Jawa, Indonesia distributed by Radin Gunawan.\textsuperscript{195}

*Lidah Ibu*, a Malay magazine printed in *Jawi* was published in Singapore on 1 September 1935. The editor of this magazine was Sayyid Mohd. bin Zain al-Sagoff. It is

\textsuperscript{192} Ibid., p. 58.
\textsuperscript{193} A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkhabaran Melayu* (1876-1968), pp. 64-65.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., p. 7.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid., p. 9.
not clear when the weekly magazine ceased to publish. *Medan Lelaki* is another magazine published in Singapore on 27 September 1927. Sayyid Ahmad Hussein Dahlan al-Indonesi was the editor cum publisher of this magazine who produced it on behalf of the Medan Company. Being printed in *Jawi*, the weekly magazine contained 36 pages and was printed by the Royal Press, Singapore. Copies of this magazine are available at the University of Malaya. This magazine is aimed to promote the teachings of Islam. Apart from that, Sayyid Ahmad Hussein was also the editor and publisher for *Medan al-Islam* that was also published in Singapore. The monthly magazine was first published on 14 August 1936 in *Jawi* and printed by Royal Press Singapore. It is not clear when the magazine ceased to publish.196

Members of the al-Saqqaf and al-Idrus family were also involved in the publishing and printing industry in Malaya. For example, *Kesatuan Islam* was a Malay magazine printed in *Jawi*, published in Singapore by Sayyid Ibrahim bin Sayyid Omar al-Saqqaf in January 1946. This weekly magazine contained 36 pages. Its publication only lasted for four months and had ceased publications in April 1946. The magazine was printed by Al-Ahmadiah Press. The editor of this magazine was Sayyid Abdullah bin Sayyid Hamid al-Idrus who served as the editorial staff from the first issue till the last one in April 1946. This magazine is a religious based journal. Copies of this magazine are also available at the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.197

*Asmara* was another journal published in Singapore in August 1954 that saw the involvement of al-Saqqaf family members; Sayyid Omar Ali al-Saqqaf as the publisher on behalf of the Geliga Publication Bureau Singapore. Most of the editorial boards were Malays. The monthly magazine contained 40 pages and was printed in *Jawi*. It is not known when the journal ceased to publish. This magazine contained short stories, especially for adults. Copies of this magazine are available at the Dewan Bahasa dan

197 Ibid., p. 55.
Sayyid Omar Ali al-Saqqaf was also responsible for the publication of *Wartawan*, a monthly magazine published in Singapore on behalf of the *Persatuan Wartawan Melayu Singapura* in 1956. The magazine contained 44 pages and was printed in *Jawi*. It is not clear when the magazine ceased to publish. This magazine became the ‘voice’ to *Persatuan Wartawan Malaya Singapura*. Copies of this magazine are also available at the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.\(^{199}\)

*Album Asmara* was another version of magazine *Asmara*. This magazine was also published by Sayyid Omar bin Ali al-Saqqaf on behalf of Geliga Publications Bureau Singapore in 1957. *Album Asmara* contained 76 pages and was printed in *Jawi* by Weng Printers Co., Singapore. The magazine was published annually before it ceased to publish in 1959.\(^{200}\) Sayyid Mohd Ali al-Saqqaf was also involved in the publishing industry when he became editor for *Warta Ahad Semenanjung* newspaper that was published in Singapore in February 1958. The weekly newspaper issued on every Sunday contained eight pages and was printed in *Jawi*. *Warta Ahad Semenanjung* was a Sunday version of *Warta Semenanjung*, a daily newspaper that was also published by Sayyid Mohd Ali al-Saqqaf on 8 March 1958. Both *Warta Ahad Semenanjung* and *Warta Semenanjung* were published by Semenanjung Press Ltd. *Warta Semenanjung* contained eight pages and it is unknown when the newspaper ceased to publish. Copies of this magazine are available at the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.\(^{201}\)

It is noticed that from 1959 onwards, most of the journals published in Malaya started to use Roman rather than the *Jawi* script. *Penulis* is another magazine published by the Persatuan Penulis Nasional (PENA) in Singapore in January 1964. Among the editors of *Penulis* was Sayyid Hussin Ali. The magazine was printed in Roman with 52 pages. The magazine stopped its publication in December 1964 but again resumed publication in August 1968. The magazine was published quarterly in Kuala Lumpur. Copies of this

\(^{198}\) Ibid., pp. 77-78.
\(^{199}\) Ibid., pp. 88-89.
\(^{200}\) Ibid., p. 92.
\(^{201}\) Ibid., p. 93.
magazine are available at Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. Majalah Lembaga Alam Islam is published in Singapore in May 1968 under the leadership of Sayyid Ibrahim b. Omar al-Saqqaf. The magazine was printed in Roman with 72 pages by Malaysia Press Ltd., Singapore. This monthly journal served as a source of knowledge for readers concerning issues related to religion, cultures, knowledge and history. Sayyid Ibrahim b. Omar al-Saqqaf was the editor and also publisher of this magazine. Hang Tuah is a magazine published in London in 1958. This magazine was published by Badan Siasah Kesatuan Melayu UK (United Kingdom) and was printed in Roman at 30 pages. Among the editors of this magazine was Sayyid Ahmad Ali (March 1962 - ?). It is not known when the newspaper ceased to publish. Copies of this magazine are also available at Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

It is observable that in the 1920s until 1930s the publishing industry in Malaya was dominated by non-Malays; Peranakan Arab, and Jawi Peranakan. Most of the newspapers published in Malaya before the Second World War were owned or published by rich and influential ‘orang-orang peranakan’, either born Arab of Malay mothers or born Malay of Indian Muslim fathers. They were to be found in Singapore and Penang. This situation had caused uneasiness and worry among the Malays who see the need for a publication by Malays and representing the Malays. This issue had been raised up by Roff who said that;

“…namun semua surat khabar kota yang utama (surat2 khabar Saudara, Warta dan Lembaga dan Majlis) diongkosi dan kuasai oleh orang2 bukan Melayu-Arab, Arab-Melayu, dan Jawi Peranakan. Tiadanya surat khabar yang benar2 asli sebagai gelanggang melahirkan pendapat orang2 Melayu sudah menimbulkan kekhutiran di kalangan orang2 Melayu beberapa tahun lamanya terutama di Singapura…”

202 Ibid., pp. 112-113.
203 Ibid., p. 134.
204 Ibid., p. 150.
Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi was one of the famous Hadhrami Arab journalists in the early 20th century Malaya. The early education received by Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi helped him master Arabic. Although he was an Arab, his early education and upbringing helped him much in mastering Arabic as well as the Malay language. He was also personally a critical and creative person. His involvement in journalism started as early as 1906. Being inspired with the idea of reform and Islamic movements from West Asia in particular Egypt, Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi together with his comrade Syaikh Tahir Jalaluddin al-Azhari took the initiative to publish *Al-Imam* in 1906 in Singapore.

His meeting with Muslim reformist leaders in Egypt such as Syaikh Muhammad Abduh during his visit to Egypt while escorting the princes of Riau who furthered their studies there had inspired him to stand up against the heretical or bid’ah and superstitious practices in the Malay society. He also read books and writings of Syaikh Muhammad Abduh.207

Apart from being a journalist, Sayyid Shaykh was also an author of religious books. Through writings, he tried to reform the society. His writings portrayed his thoughts and progressive attitude in promoting the Islah movement and reform in the Malay society. He also stressed the importance of education, freedom and opportunities enjoyed by men to also be given to Muslim women. His thoughts were also reflected in the novel *Kitab Alam Perempuan* and *Hikayat Faridah Hanum*. He also produced love novels and books of fiction such as *Cerita Ashik kepada Makhsyuknya* and *Ceritera-ceritera Rokambul*. His works were published in *al-Imam, al-Ikhwan* and *Saudara*.208

Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi’s talent and interest in journalism was inherited by his son Sayyid Alwi who was also involved in this field. His involvement in journalism started in 1930 when he was asked by his father to handle *Saudara* to fill the vacant post of Abdul Rahim Kajai as an editor who quitted and joined *Majlis* in Kuala Lumpur. In

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208 Ibid., pp. 57-61.
November 1933, Sayyid Alwi moved to Singapore and joined Warta Malaya as editor. However, his tenure with Warta Malaya did not last long when he had to move back to Penang to take over Saudara after his father passed away in 1934.209

Sayyid Alwi was the eldest son of Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi. He was born in Malacca in 1893 and received his early education at the Malay School in Riau. He furthered his studies at Victoria Bridge in Singapore and passed Standard 7 in 1913. In 1914 he was sent to Beirut to study Arabic education at an Arab College known as Kuliyyah Othmaniah. However, he did not complete his studies at Kuliyyah Othmaniah but had joined the Protestant College in Syria. Once he returned home, he joined the Anglo Chinese School in Penang and then Madrasah al-Masyhur. He then joined Syarikat Bekerjasama Negeri-Negeri Melayu in 1924 until his father asked him to join Saudara, managing and supervising the newspaper publication in 1928.210

Unlike his father, Sayyid Alwi paid less emphasis on the issue of Islamic reform (Islah) in Malaya. However, his father’s idea of reform had indirectly made Saudara as an agent of reform and a strong supporter of Kaum Muda’s thoughts. The 1930s was a critical time in Malaya where issues of social, economic and politics were the main concern of the Malays in Malaya. Saudara also discussed and suggested solutions that could help improve the social status of the Malays. Saudara also asked the Malays to eliminate negative attitudes so that they could compete economically and socially with other races in Malaya.211 Sayyid Alwi also wrote articles touching on the issue of Malays’ education. He who had experience teaching at the Anglo Chinese School and Madrasah al-Masyhur criticized and advised the Malays on the importance of education so they could improve their lives for a better living. Malays at the time were seen as backwards in many aspects of life.212

209 Ibid., pp. 76, 84.
210 Siti Rodziyah Nyan, Akhbar Saudara Pencetus Kesedaran Masyarakat Melayu, p. 83. Before the starts his career as a teacher at Anglo Chinese School and Madrasah al-Masyhur in Penang, Sayyid Alwi had joined the military service in the medical team in Turkey for about a year and then joined the British army until 1919 during his stay overseas.
211 Saudara, 9 March 1929, p. 3; See also Siti Rodziyah Nyan, Akhbar Saudara Pencetus Kesedaran Masyarakat Melayu, p. 85.
212 Ibid.
Under the editorship of Sayyid Alwi, *Saudara* managed to last for about thirteen years in the world of journalism in Malaya. *Saudara* tried to play its role as social media not only in circulating news to the readers, but also to remind the Malays that they were in a critical situation. Immigrants from outside are now demanding for equal rights in many aspects of life in Malaya such as chances to hold positions in government offices and to have control over the economy in Malaya. Most of the foreign immigrants were concentrated in the cities, doing business and being involved in trade compared to the Malays who lived in the suburbs and rural areas. Foreign immigrants, particularly the Chinese dominated the economic activities in Malaya, while at the same time petitioned constantly to have the same rights and privileges as the Malays. Articles on the issues of Malays’ backwardness and poverty had more or less managed to alert the Malays of their situation.213

Sayyid Hussain bin Ali al-Saqqaf214 was another big name in journalism in 20th century Malaya. Sayyid Hussain established Anglo-Asiatic Press in 1929. Sayyid Hussain collaborated with Onn Jaafar to produce several Malay newspapers like *Warta Malaya* (1930), *Warta Ahad* (1935) and *Warta Jenaka* (1936).215 *Warta Malaya* was published in Singapore in January 1930. In the beginning, *Warta Malaya* was printed by the Anglo-Asiatic Press which then changed its name to Warta Malaya Press Limited with Sayyid Hussain as its owner.216 *Warta Malaya* was a daily newspaper but no publication was produced on Sunday. Most of its workers and editors were Malays. When Onn bin Jaafar resigned from his post as editor of *Warta Malaya*, his place was taken by Sayyid Alwi bin Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi. However, his tenure only lasted for about eight months. His place was then replaced by Abdul Rahim Kajai, Muhammad

214 His name is also spelled Sayyid Hussein. Throughout this study his name will be spelled Sayyid Hussain.
215 Syed Mohsen al-Sagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia*, p. 39. The Al-Saqqaq or al-Saggof family was among the wealthy Arab families in Singapore. They involved in business as well as real estate in Singapore. They also invested in publishing industry in Malaya.
Ismail bin Abdul Kadir, Muhammad Hashim bin Yunus and Muhammad Yusof bin Ishak.\textsuperscript{217}

Apart from publishing its own newspapers, the Warta Malaya Press Ltd also provided religious book binding services and translation from English to Malay and vice versa. They also provided special columns for rental to private companies for the purposes of advertisement in \textit{Warta Malaya}.\textsuperscript{218} However, \textit{Warta Malaya} also faced huge competition from other newspapers like \textit{Utusan Malaya} that was published in 1939 in Singapore. The emergence of \textit{Utusan Malaya} was a severe blow to the production of \textit{Warta Malaya}. The newspaper \textit{Utusan Malaya} was the most anticipated newspaper by the Malays as it could be said to represent the opinions of the Malays and was eventually owned, operated and published by the Malays. The birth of \textit{Utusan Malaya} was in response to the need of Malays who looked for a newspaper that could represent the Malays’ voice instead of being dependent to newspapers published by non-Malays.

The Hadhrami Arabs did not only highlighted issues related to religious reform in the society by revitalizing the teachings of Islam and to free the society from heretical practices (bid’ah) and khurafat in their newspapers and magazines, but also touched on the social, economic and political issues in the country. These journals function as informants to the readers of the social and political issues in the country as well as overseas. These journals also shared information and news among them as well as collaborate with other newspapers and magazines from other states in Malaya. These journals had more or less influenced the people’s perspective and thoughts over the Malay scenario and political atmosphere of Malaya during that period of time. Journals, in particular the reformist newspapers and magazines had played important roles in

\textsuperscript{217} Ibid.
bringing social change and political awareness to the Malay society in the early period of 20th century Malaya.

Roff specifically refers to the role of Warta Malaya as the agent of change, conveying information and discussing issues related to the Malays and their rights in Malaya. Warta Malaya also published religious articles for the purpose of religious knowledge among readers. However, it was not a reformist newspaper like Saudara.

“…Warta Malaya discussed editorially a wide range of issues affecting the Malays, from the vexing question of the restoration of powers to the State Councils in the Federations Malay States (FMS) and the dangers inherent in locally domiciled non-Malay demands for increased right, to higher education for the Malays and the development of the Malay economy”. 219

Based on the issues published in these journals, it is clear that Kaum Muda were the strong supporters of the reform ideas in the Malay society. The newspaper Saudara is more likely to be seen parallel and tend to follow the religious struggle of al-Imam that was published in the early 20th century while al-Imam was a resemblance of the reformist magazine al-Manar from Egypt. The editorship factor contributes to the styles of writing in the journals. Those with English and Arabic education backgrounds more or less would affect the writings in the journals. For example, Sayyid Alwi bin Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi, the editor of Warta Malaya received comments from readers to reduce the number of Arabic news and articles quoted in Warta Malaya from Arabic newspapers. 220

Saudara was a reformist newspaper based in Penang published by Sayyid Alwi bin Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi on September 1928. Saudara reached its readers in every nook and cranny in the Malay Archipelago as well as in Western Asia. This is proven by the number of letters received by the editorial team from readers and it was also distributed to many areas such as Sarawak, Sabah, Siam, Kalimantan, Southern Thailand, Sumatera,

Sulawesi, Egypt, Hijaz and London.²²¹ *Saudara* also touched on issues of religion until to some extent, it was said that Saudara was a reformist magazine for its support towards the ideas of *Kaum Muda*. When Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi became the editor of *Saudara*, most of the articles and writings in the newspapers touched on the issue of religion that became the main cause of conflict between *Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua*.²²²

Apart from publishing issues relevant to the struggle of *Kaum Muda*, *Saudara* also promoted ideas of Islamic Reform in the society through its articles and writing. *Saudara* also stressed on the issue of Malays. Malays at that time were seen as the leasy productive ethnic in Malaya socially, economically and politically compared to other races. *Saudara* was also concerned about the Malays’ progress in education, economy, politics and social aspects.²²³ *Warta Malaya* also criticized the British administration in Malaya that was seen as being biased to the non-Malay people.²²⁴ Nevertheless, the approach taken by *Warta Malaya* was less anti colonial. Instead of struggling to oust British from Malaya, editorial boards of *Warta Malaya* urged the British to provide more chances and opportunities to the Malays to hold important positions in the administration of Malaya.²²⁵

*Kaum Muda* or the young faction had used *Saudara* as a medium for religious reform struggles and dissents with *Kaum Tua* or the old faction who were also known as the traditionalists. The years between the 1928 and 1930s were the period that had seen a polemic of religious struggle between *Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua* in Malaya with the participation of *Saudara* representing *Kaum Muda*’s ideas and reforms in the society. The newspaper *Lidah Benar* representing *Kaum Tua* who were also called by *Kaum Muda* ‘Lebai-lebai Pondok’ was obsessed with the concept of *taqlid*.²²⁶ Debates between the two parties were published in both newspapers. The 1930s were considered as the peak

²²¹ Saudara, 7 June 1930, No. 4; See also Siti Rodziyah Nyan, *Akhbar Saudara Pencetus Kesedaran Masyarakat Melayu*, p. 37.
²²² Siti Rodziyah Nyan, *Akhbar Saudara*, pp. 35-40. Starting from the issue of 17 October 1931, the post of publisher and editor of *Saudara* was taken over by Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi when Sayyid Alwi resigned from his post to join *Warta Malaya* in Singapore. See also Zulkifli Mahmud, *Warta Malaya*, p. 21.
²²⁶ Saudara, 27 April 1929, See also Siti Rodziyah Nyan, *Akhbar Saudara Pencetus Kesedaran Masyarakat Melayu*, p. 43.
time of nationalistic consciousness among the Malays. Saudara was also bold in giving scathing criticism to Kaum Tua, the British government in Malaya and also to the Malays in general regarding issues of Malay backwardness in education, economic, politics and social compared to other races in Malaya. Saudara also criticised the Malays’ attitude who dared not to compete with the non-Malays as the reason for their backwardness and lagging behind. Saudara also condemned the attitude of some Malays who were spendthrift and wasteful that had caused them to live in poverty and were left behind in various economic sectors. The issue of foreign immigrants from India and China was widely discussed by Warta Malaya. These immigrants dominated the economic sector in Malaya, for example in the mining industry.

Conclusion

Although the number of Hadhrami Sayyids was quite small, they managed to flourish economically in Malaya and became successful traders and entrepreneurs. Even though they complained about being secondary compared to other entrepreneurs in Southeast Asia especially the Chinese, they performed well in business ventures in Malaya as well as in the East Indies, Indonesia. They were reported to be actively involved in economic activities and were successful traders as the Chinese. The stories of success of early Hadhrami Sayyid emigrants in making their lives in Malaya had attracted and encouraged more of their fellow-countrymen to migrate to Malaya. With the establishment of companies such as Al-Attas and Co., Al-Sagoff and Co., and Al-Kaff and Co., it shows that many of them had became successful traders and entrepreneurs. Their involvement in the economic sector of Johor contributed a lot in developing the state as a centre of commerce in the southern region of Malaya. Although their number

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227 Refer to “Mengapakah apa2 pekerjaan Am bagi Kaum Melayu tidak mahu maju?”, Saudara, No. 434.
228 Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi had experienced handling the first reformist magazine al-Imam in Singapore that was lasted for about two years only. Its ambitious aspirations to do reform in the society received negative reaction from the Malay society. His open and bold criticism towards the British administration in Malaya that are seen and put the blame to the Malay rulers over the Malay backwardness added with the widespread of corruption among the Malay aristocrats and nobles that might have been one of the reasons behind its closure in 1909. Al-Imam, No. 25, November 1908, p. 234 Al-Imam, No. 14, April 1907, p. 316.
is quite small, they managed to flourish in Malaya and became successful traders and entrepreneurs.

However, the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the shipping industry in the region did not last long as they have to face stiff competition from European shipping companies. The Hadhrami Arabs’ shipping companies were not able to compete with European shipping companies such as the British, Dutch and German shipping companies. In fact, there was bitter rivalry between the European shipping companies themselves in the trade in South East Asia. The rivalry among the European shipping companies during the inter-war years of the 20th century affected the trade and economy of the countries in South East Asia.

The 1920s to 1930s were the years that had seen as rapid development in publication and Malay journalism in Malaya as a result of awareness that arose among the Malay intelligentsias and the Malay Arab descendants who received their education in West Asia. This period also witnessed the seeds of the Malay spirit of nationalism in the country that was driven by the Islamic reform movement from West Asia, especially from Egypt. *Kaum Muda* or the young reformist group used media as a tool to propagate the ideas of reform and *Islah* to the society. The swift progress of the printing industry in Malaya contributed to the emergence of local newspapers featuring domestic and foreign issues.

The Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya in the 20th century were not only involved in the publication of newspapers and magazines but had also promoted ideas of religious reform to the society through these journals. Newspapers like *al-Imam*, *al-Ikhwan*, *Saudara* and *Warta Malaya* were mediums of reform used by *Kaum Muda* or the young reformists who mostly had religious education backgrounds from the Middle East, in particular Egypt. In Egypt, they were exposed and influenced by the idea of reform and *Islah* in the country. Religious figures and reformists like Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi and Syaikh Tahir Jalaluddin al-Azhami were among those who were actively involved in
religious reform or *Islah* movement in Malaya through journalism. They joined the editorial board of reformist journals such as *al-Imam*, *al-Ikhwan*, *Saudara* and *Warta Malaya*. Although these newspapers were published by Arabs, the issues concerned were still related to the social, political and economic development of Malaya, especially for the Malays.

Most reformist newspapers and magazines published in Malaya that saw the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs had actively struggled to demand that the Malays must be given more chances to be involved in the administration of Malaya. Nevertheless, they took a moderate approach in criticizing the British colonial administration. That could have been the reason why *Saudara* managed to survive until 1941 and had kept steady in the publishing world in Malaya compared to other reformist journals such as *al-Imam* (1906-1909) and *al-Ikhwan* (1926-1931) that only survived for about two to six years. Past experiences had taught Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi to be less vocal in criticizing and to not touch on the issues of Malay rulers and aristocrats and the British administration in Malaya to save *Saudara*. The newspapers *Saudara* (1928-1941) and *Warta Malaya* (1930-1942) lasted more than 10 years and these newspapers were less anti-colonial compared to the former two.

The struggles shown by Malay reformists of Hadhrami Arab descent through pen had created political awareness among the Malays. Internal issues that become polemic among the Malays such as *talkin* recitation and *taqlid* practices were hotly debated between the *Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua* and were widely published in newspapers in Malaya, particularly *Saudara*. Through the articles and writings in these newspapers and magazines, the Malays were reminded and alerted to their real situation when they were all this while in the comfort zone of modesty. The Malays, particularly the uneducated ones were not exposed to the city modern life of competition. Newspapers had managed to raise awareness among the Malays of their political, economic and social conditions that in due course united the Malays through
various social activities and organizations such as PASPAM, Syarikat Bekerjasama in the villages, and Malay states’ based organizations such as Kesatuan Melayu Singapura and Kesatuan Melayu Selangor intended to safeguard the welfare of the Malays. Eventually, these organizations managed to produce politicians and reformists who struggled for the country's independence in the later years.