From horsepower to electrification
Tramways in Batavia-Jakarta
1869 – 1962
by drs (Msc) Dirk Teeuwen, The Netherlands 1910

Because of the summarizing character of this article there is no arrangement in chapters and paragraphs. A tram line map is placed on page 5. Account of sources regarding text and pictures could be found on page 11.

Finally the street-car traffic at Batavia / Jakarta came in the hands of the N. V. Bataviasche Verkeers Maatschappij BVM / Batavia Traffic Company Ltd., which company was founded in 1930 July 31st. This enterprise has been in operation until 1942 March 17th and afterwards. BVM was the outcome of an amalgamation of:
- the Nederlandsch-Indische Tramweg-Maatschappij NITM / Dutch East-Indian Steamtram Company - dating from 1881;
- and the Batavia Electrische Tram-Maatschappij BETM / Batavia Electric Tramway Company from the year 1897.

The NITM company’s predecessor, the Bataviasche Tramweg-Maatschappij BTM / Batavia Tramway Company as well as the Firma / Firm Dummler & Co, started the horse-tram line nr 1: Old Batavia / Jakarta Kota (Amsterdam Gate at the northern end of Prinsenstraat / Jl Cengke) – Molenvliet / Jl Gaja Madah – Harmonie / Harmoni on April 20th 1869. (More text on page 2)
Later that year also line nr 2 was brought into operation: Harmonie - Tanah Abang and back to Harmonie - Noordwijk – Kramat - Meester Cornelis / Mester. After 1882 the horse-tram lines have been reconstructed into steam-tram lines and gradually the traffic was expanded.

The old steam-tram service of the mentioned company NITM, which was antiquated in 1930 and the simple electric system of the other one company BETM, were reorganized and turned into a complete automatic electric system. This rebuilding of the electrification of the various lines, as well as the adaptation to the techniques of the electric streetcars, were effected on March 1\textsuperscript{st} 1934. (More text on page 4)
4. Steam-tram, Binnen Nieuwpoortstraat / Jl Pintu Besar Utara
Oud Batavia / Jakarta Kota 1927

5. Steam-tram heading north, Binnen Nieuwpoortstraat / Jl Pintu Besar Utara
near Stadhuisplein / Taman Fatahillah
Oud Batavia / Jakarta Kota 1911
The total length of the lines was 40 km divided over 6 lines. The main line, nr 1, from Old Batavia / Jakarta Kota to Meester Cornelis / Mester, had a length of 14 km.

The traffic was divided into 1st and 2nd / 3rd class, the latter especially destined for Natives whereas on a flat truck, a so-called pikolan, facilities were offered for the transportation of fish, vegetables, fruit, etc., which was typical of Batavia.

Of the passenger traffic about 15 percent came for the account of the 1st and 85 percent for the 2nd / 3rd class. The rolling stock of the company consisted in 1937 of: 42 large motor cars, 39 small motor cars, 23 flat trucks and 52 trailers.

On the main line Old Batavia – Meester Cornelis a daily 6-minute service was maintained. In the afternoon after office hours a 7,5-minute service whereas on the other ones 7,5- and 10-minute services were maintained. The colonial authorities expected a favourable effect from the electrification. But a serious decline in the traffic commenced since 1930 and the subsequent crisis years.

The year 1920 was a top year: the former two companies carried more than 21 million passengers whereas in 1930 11 million passengers were carried and this number decreased in 1936 to slightly less than 6 million. Since 1936 the traffic was increasing again. The increase was stimulated by tariff reductions. But nevertheless the serious competition by motorbuses, taxis and horse-carriages as well as the growth of the bicycle traffic meant a continuous threat to the Batavia street-car service.

In 1942 the Japanese Seibu Rikuyo Kioko Djakarta Shiden confiscated the Dutch colonial N. V. Bataviasche Verkeerkeersmaatschappij BVM / Batavia Traffic Company Ltd. The latter “returned” in 1947 and was seized by the Perusuhaan Pengangkutan Djakarta (PPD) on July 1st 1954. (More text on page 5)
Between 1952 and 1962 the exploitation of the Batavia / Jakarta tramways came to an end, caused by financial losses. One of the many examples of the energy with which the Dutch colonial authorities from 1880 until 1942 tried to solve lags in economic and social development - in this case the stimulation of public transportation in Batavia / Jakarta – was from 1962 only a memory.

7. Batavia, railway lines, 1937

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7.a Batavia, tramlines 1937

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Explanation 7.a

Amsterdamsche Poort = northern end of Jl Cengke
Nieuwpoortpoortstraat = Jl Pintu Besar
Molenvliet West = Jl Gajah Mada
Harmonie = Harmoni
Rijswijkstraat = Jl Majapahit
Koningsplein = Medan Merdeka
Rijswijk = Jl Veteran
Van Heutszplein = Jl Cut Mutia
Oude Tamarindelaan = Jl KH Wahid Hasyim
Matramanweg = Jl Mataram Raya
Gouverneurskantoor = Old Town Hall = Jakarta City Museum, Taman Fatahilah
1, 2, etc. = tram-line numbers

8. Steam-tram on Stadhuisplein / Taman Fatahilah
The old building next to the Ned-Lloyd office is Café Batavia nowadays.
Old Batavia / Jakarta Kota 1927

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9. Steam-tram (see at the right side of this picture the plume of smoke) on Rijswijk / Jl Veteran
Batavia / Jakarta 1924

10. Electric tramway, Kramat
Batavia / Jakarta 1936

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11. Stationsplein / Taman Stasiun Kota
Electric tram in front of Bank Impor-Expot, formerly the Nederlandsche Handelmaatschappij NHM. Mark this pikolan (luggage coach, see text).
Old Batavia / Jakarta Kota 1936

12. Watch this man: dozing, maybe sleeping. Ostensibly! His proper wakefulness meant a cutthroat competition with the tramway companies. His horse - in heat and sun - suffers from dehydration: so far as I can see.

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12. Tram driving into Rijswijkse Straat / Jl Majapahit, colonial shopping street
nr 1
Harmoni, Batavia / Jakarta 1936

13. Important transfer location on the northern end of Molenvliet West / Jl
Gajah Mada (southern end), Batavia / Jakarta 1934
Top right one can see a part of the Hotel Des Indes.

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14. Hotel Des Indes, Molenvliet West / Jl Gajah Mada 
Batavia / Jakarta 1936

15. Along tram line 1: the Department (Ministry) of Civil Public Works along 
Molenvliet West / Jl Gajah Mada 
Batavia / Jakarta 1927

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16. Picolan coach: fruits, chickens, etc., etc.
From: Duparc, H. J. A.: Trams en tramlijnen, de elektrische stadstrams op Java; Rotterdam 1972

17. Tram (line nr 1) approaches through Prinsenstraat / Jl Cengke its finish: the Amsterdam Gate
Batavia / Jakarta 1934
One of my favourite romantic colonial pictures: the world, the way it felt and the way it was!!

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18. The Amsterdam Gate, Batavia / Jakarta 1905
Tramway rail is visible at right.

Account, sources:
a. Pictures 1, 2, 6, 9, 12, 17: private lithograph and picture-postcard collection
Dirk Teeuwen, Holland
Originally, pictures 1 and 2 are from:
Perelaer: Het kamerlid Van Berkenstein in Nederlandsch-Indië; Leiden Holland
1880
Library Dirk Teeuwen Holland
b. Picture 18: Gezichten uit Nederlandsch-Indië, aangeboden door de
Amsterdamsche Maatschappij van Levensverzekering; Amsterdam 1907 p. 7
Library Dirk Teeuwen, Holland
c. Pictures 3, 4: Vries, J. J. de (Infantry Captain, retired); Jaarboek van Batavia
en omstreken; Batavia 1927
Library Dirk Teeuwen Holland
d. Picture 5: Colijn, H. (editing): Neerlands Indië; Amsterdam 1911
Library Dirk Teeuwen Holland
e. Pictures 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15: Municipality of Batavia: Batavia as a
commercial, industrial and residential center; Batavia 1937
Library Dirk Teeuwen Holland

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Those were our colonial days!
How could they ever end!
Such a day was our friend.
And deserved a song of praise
(19. Molenvliet, Batavia – Jakarta 1920)