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WHO KILLED BRIGADIER MALLABY?

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About 8:30 P.M. on the night of Tuesday, October 30, 1945, near the Jembatan Merah (Red Bridge) in Surabaya, the Commander of the 49th Indian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier A. W. S. Mallaby, C.I.E., O.B.E., was shot to death.

It was, of course, not unusual for senior military officers to be killed during the Second World War and its aftermath, but the death of Brigadier Mallaby aroused world-wide interest. In fact an eminent Indonesian has described it as:

... a disaster that decided the course of the history of Surabaya and also the course of our freedom struggle throughout Indonesia.¹

In 1973 there appeared what is probably the most complete account so far of the affair from the Indonesian point of view.² This series includes a detailed description of the prelude to the arrival of the Allied (British) forces in Surabaya, the failure of the negotiations leading to the outbreak of fighting between October 28 and 30, the killing of Mallaby on the evening of October 30 and the events that followed.

1. Extract from the seventh of a series of articles by Dr. Roeslan Abdulgani published in the *Surabaya Post* between October 25 and November 9, 1973, with the general title "*Seratus Hari di Surabaya yang menggemparkan Indonesia*" (The Hundred Days in Surabaya Which Shook Indonesia). These articles were kindly forwarded to me by Dr. Doel Arnowo. They were recently republished in book form under the same title (Jakarta: Yayasan Idayu, 1974). I will use the book pagination in my citations.

Other versions of how Brigadier Mallaby died include: A. J. F. Doulton, *The Fighting Cock: Being the History of the 23rd Indian Division, 1942-47* (Aldershot: Gale and Polden, 1951); L. H. O. Pugh, "*Soerabaja (NEI) 1945*," *Royal Artillery Journal*, LXXV, 4 (1948), pp. 320-49; Pusat SBPI [Sarikat Buruh Pertjetakan Indonesia?], *Dokumentasi Pemuda: Sekitar Proklamasi Indonesia Merdeka* (Jogjakarta: Badan Penerangan Pusat SBPI, 1948), p. 60; "Official Statement of the Surabaya Contact Bureau on the Death of Brigadier Mallaby," November 1, 1945, Indies Collection of the Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (IC-RVO), document no. 056029; S. Woodburn Kirby, *The War against Japan* (5 vols.; London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1957-69), V, p. 324; David Wehl, *The Birth of Indonesia* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1948), pp. 60-61; Great Britain, House of Commons, *Parliamentary Debates: Official Report* (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1909-); M. G. Abhyankar, *Valour Enshrined, a History of the Mahratta Light Infantry 1768-1947* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1971), p. 488; J.H.B., "Sailor in Sourabaya," *Blackwoods Magazine*, CCLX, 1570 (August 1946), pp. 73-84; "Report on Operations of 49 INH/INF/RDF, SOURABAJA 25 Oct-8 Nov 1945," from the papers of the late General E. C. Mansergh and kindly presented to me by the Royal Artillery Institution, London.

2. This is the Abdulgani series of "*Surabaya Post*" articles referred to in note 1. Abdulgani was himself a participant in the events described and much of his narrative is in the nature of "eyewitness" reporting.

By coincidence, I had also commenced a study of this episode and have recently come into possession of new evidence which differs in one or two important aspects from the Abdulgani version.³

It is the aim of this paper to investigate the circumstances of Brigadier Mallaby's death in the light of the evidence at my disposal and hopefully to find the answers to the following questions:

1. Who gave the troops of "D" Coy, 6 Mahratta (who were in the Internatio Building) the order to fire on the crowd?⁴
2. Who killed Brigadier Mallaby?
3. Who, if anyone, was to blame for Brigadier Mallaby's death?

Surabaya, August 20-October 29, 1945

The Japanese capitulated on August 15, 1945, after the dropping of atomic bombs respectively on Hiroshima (August 6) and Nagasaki (August 9). However, between the date of the Emperor's announcement of Japan's acceptance of the Allies' demand for unconditional surrender and the arrival of the first Allied (British) troops in Jakarta, there was a hiatus of 41 days. It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss fully the reasons for this delay, which was perhaps the most important single factor affecting everything that took place subsequently. But it is clear that during this six-week period the Indonesian revolutionary government was able to establish itself and gain an ascendancy over the Japanese occupation forces, a major part of which became thoroughly demoralized.

In Surabaya, news of the Proclamation of Independence was first heard on Saturday, August 18, over Radio Japan which had been taken over by pemuda groups.⁵ It was only on the next Monday that the full text of the Proklamasi Indonesia Merdeka was first published in the newspaper *Soeara Asia*.⁶

From August 22, 1945, onwards, various organizations in Surabaya, mostly led by pemuda elements, began--at first in a rather tentative manner--to take action to assert their newly proclaimed independence. This movement rapidly gained momentum until, by early October, the town was in the hands of the revolutionary movement and the Japanese rendered

3. This evidence comprises:
 - (a) A report compiled by Dr. R. C. Smith--formerly Captain R. C. Smith, 6th Battalion The Mahratta Regiment (6 Mahratta)--who was a liaison officer on Brigadier Mallaby's staff; also two letters from Captain Smith elaborating points in his report.
 - (b) A letter from Major K. Venu Gopal who was, at the time of the incident, company commander of 'D' Company, 6 Mahratta, which was posted in the Internatio Bank Building in Surabaya.
4. The abbreviation "Coy" is used for the military subunit "Company" numbering approximately 120 men.
5. Abdulgani, *Seratus Hari*, p. 12.
6. It is interesting to note that in both the Proclamation of Independence and the August 20 issue of *Soeara Asia*, the year is shown as "2605"--in accordance with the Japanese calendar.

completely impotent. In addition, a large amount of arms and ammunition was handed over by or seized from the Japanese and distributed among the population.⁷

The following "progress chart" gives, in outline, the sequence of events which culminated in Surabaya becoming virtually "an armed camp."⁸

Wednesday, August 22	Instruction received from Jakarta to set up a Komite Nasional Indonesia (KNI) and a security organization called Badan Keamanan Rakyat (BKR).
Thursday, August 23	Nightly blackout enforced by the Japanese cancelled.
Monday, August 27	Telegram received from Jakarta requesting that everyone fly the Sang Merah Putih (the flag of the Republic)--on August 29 and 30 to celebrate the first meeting in Jakarta of the Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat (KNIP). Announcement issued that the people of Surabaya would fly the flag from Wednesday, August 29 to Saturday, September 1. (This action is often referred to as the <i>vlaggen-actie</i>).
Tuesday, August 28	KNI Surabaya formed--consisting of thirty-two members headed by Doel Arnowo.
Monday, September 3	The Japanese Surabaya Syuu became the Keresidenan Surabaya of the Indonesian republic.
Tuesday, September 11	Mass meeting at the Lapangan Tambaksari where the crowd was addressed by Soemarsono, head of Pemuda Republik Indonesia (PRI), Resident Soedirman and Doel Arnowo.
Tuesday, September 11- Wednesday, September 19	Frequent clashes between pemuda and Dutch ex-internees who had walked out of the Japanese camps, culminating in the incident at the Yamato (Oranje) Hotel on September 19. A crowd of Indonesians hauled down the Dutch flag there and ran up the Sang Merah Putih. During a scuffle a Dutch lawyer, Mr. Ploegman, was killed. He was the first of many Dutch and Eurasians to become victims of mob violence. ⁹
Wednesday, September 19- mid-October: the <i>siap</i> period	Frequent clashes between Indonesians and Japanese and Dutch elements. Attacks on Japanese military and naval installations and the takeover of large stocks of arms, including tanks. Summary trials and executions in the Simpang Club. Manifestations of "mob-ism." ¹⁰
Sunday, September 23	Attack on the Japanese Kenpeitai Headquarters (now the site of the Tugu Pahlawan). Surrender and handover of arms by Japanese navy at Gubeng. ¹¹

7. The weapons handed over were believed to be 200 guns, 690 heavy and 700 light machine-guns, 25,000 rifles, 1,240 tommy guns, 3,360 revolvers and large quantities of ammunition. Kirby, *The War*, p. 331, n. 2.

8. Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), p. 154. See *ibid.*, pp. 126-29, 155-66, for a description of developments in Surabaya prior to the arrival of the 49 Brigade.

9. Abdulgani, *Seratus Hari*, p. 16. "With the death of Mr. Ploegman, our people began to smell blood. We realized that from now on we faced two enemies, the Japanese army and the Dutch ex-internees."

10. *Ibid.*, p. 23. "This mob-ism manifested itself in mob attacks not only on the Dutch, innocent women and children, but also on other nationalities."

11. This is described in a copy of an account in Japanese by a staff officer of the Japanese navy kindly sent to me under arrangements made by Benedict R. O'G.

Friday, September 28	Arrival of Kapten Huijer (Royal Dutch Navy) "representing the Allied Command."
Monday-Friday, October 1-5	Further large-scale attacks on Japanese installations.
Saturday, October 6	Kapten Huijer and team taken off a train (to Jakarta), placed under arrest and subsequently thrown into Kalisosok jail. ¹²
Friday, October 12	Setting up of the Barisan Pemberontakan Rakjat Indonesia (BPRI) under Soetomo (Bung Tomo), whose nightly broadcasts over his own radio station (Radio Pemberontak) strongly influenced the people of East Java. Arrival of Soerjo, governor of East Java.
Friday and Monday, October 21 and 22	Mass meeting organized by the Nahdatul Ulama of Java and Madura. ¹³

From about October 20 until the arrival of the Allied Force, there was an uneasy lull. At this time the city was described as "a strong unified fortress."¹⁴

The Arrival of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade and the Outbreak of Fighting (October 25-30, 1945)

By late October, the stage was set for the arrival of the Allied Force comprising the 49th Indian Infantry Brigade Group¹⁵ under the command of Brigadier Mallaby. (See Appendix for the Order of Battle and composition of this brigade group.) The 49 Brigade was a formation of the 23rd Indian Division commanded by Major-General Hawthorn, whose headquarters had been established in Batavia (Jakarta). The division had seen fighting in India and Burma during 1944, mainly in the Imphal area. It had not taken part in the subsequent XIV Army campaign which cleared the Japanese from Burma. During this campaign 23 Division was in training for its role in the proposed amphibious assault on Singapore and Malaya planned for August 1945--code-named Zipper.¹⁶

Anderson. The narrative has been translated by Mrs. Willing of the Japanese Department of Monash University. A significant aspect of this account is its close similarity to the Huijer report (P. J. G. Huijer, "Report on the Surabaya Affair," IC-RVO, doc. no. 007177-007179). There has been a tendency among observers of this period to dismiss the Huijer report as unreliable because of its supposedly exaggerated pro-Dutch bias. In fact, most of the events described by Huijer are verified by this Japanese account.

12. Huijer, "Report"; Abdulgani, Seratus Hari, p. 22.
13. Anderson, Java, p. 157.
14. "Besides that, the Angkatan Muda with its branches in each government agency--railways, electricity, radio, education, and others--were already active. There were also workers' organizations with their militia; and the youth and militia of the Surabaya ulama. All these plus the mothers and daughters who ran the public kitchens and medical posts ensured that Surabaya at that time was a strong unified fortress." Abdulgani, Seratus Hari, p. 24. See also note 8 above.
15. The Force was termed a brigade group because, in addition to its normal brigade complement, it was accompanied by divisional troops, comprising a regiment of artillery and a transport column. For convenience, in this paper it will be referred to as 49 Brigade or abbreviated as 49 Bde.
16. Kirby, The War, p. 9.

On the surrender of the Japanese, the operation went ahead as planned and on September 9, 1945, 23 Division landed on the beaches of Port Dickson on the west coast of Malaya. The troops of the division were welcomed as liberators by the majority of the population and an impressive victory parade was held in Seremban. Brigadier Mallaby and his 49 Brigade took their place in the march-past.

Brigadier Mallaby had been appointed to the command of the brigade during the final stages of its training in India. According to one of his contemporaries, he was "a highly intelligent, quiet, pleasant, unassuming officer."¹⁷ He had been a staff officer for most of the war, his last appointment being Director of Military Operations (DMO) at General Headquarters, India, in Delhi. In this capacity he had been one of Admiral Mountbatten's chief advisers when he was appointed Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia.¹⁸ As DMO, he had been a major general, so he had dropped rank to take up the 49 Brigade appointment. He had not seen action with the brigade; in fact he had never previously held an operational command. It is, perhaps, one of the many tragedies of the Surabaya Affair that Mallaby's first active service command proved to be an unmitigated disaster.

The stay of 23 Division in Malaya was short-lived. Owing to the seriousness of the situation in Java, the division was soon ordered to sail to the Netherlands East Indies. The 49 Brigade embarked from Singapore in the last week of September and on Thursday, October 25, arrived at Tanjung Perak, the port of Surabaya.¹⁹ It was immediately clear that the brigade had not been properly briefed for its task. As Colonel Doulton put it, "Brigadier Mallaby stepped into a hornet's nest un-awares. . . ."²⁰ This lack of effective intelligence regarding the situation in Java could be traced back to the transfer of responsibility for the Netherlands East Indies from MacArthur's South-West Pacific Area Command to Mountbatten's South East Asia Command on August 15, 1945. In a much quoted extract from his Report, Mountbatten states:

Having taken over the NEI from the South-West Pacific Area without any Intelligence reports, I had been given no hint of the political situation which had arisen in Java. It was known of course, that an Indonesian Movement had been in existence before the war; and that it had been supported by prominent intellectuals, some of whom had suffered banishment for their participation in nationalist propaganda--but no information had been made available to me as to the fate of this movement under the Japanese occupation. Dr. H. J. van Mook, Lieut-Governor-General of the NEI who had come to Kandy on 1st September, had given me no reason to suppose that the reoccupation of Java would present any operational problem beyond that of rounding up the Japanese.²¹

Soon after landing, the brigade second-in-command made contact with the commander of the BKR, Dr. Moestopo, and the first of the many

17. Letter from Colonel A. J. F. Doulton, author of The Fighting Cock. Colonel Doulton was a senior officer on the staff of General Hawthorn at Headquarters 23 Division in Batavia.

18. Vice-Admiral the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff by the Supreme Commander, South-East Asia, 1943-1945 (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1969), Section A, paragraph 8.

19. Kirby, The War, p. 274.

20. Doulton in a 1973 letter to the author.

21. Mountbatten, Report, Section E, paragraph 37.

conferences took place.²² To bring the reader without delay to the events of the afternoon and evening of October 30, the main events that followed are outlined in brief below:

- Thursday, October 25 p.m. Leading elements of 49 Brigade landed and seized the quay and wharves. First meeting between an Indonesian delegation headed by the second-in-command of the BKR, Dr. Sugiri, and the second-in-command of 49 Brigade, Colonel Pugh. Later that night Colonel Pugh was taken to meet Moestopo.
- Friday, October 26 a.m. Brigadier Mallaby met the commander of the BKR, Dr. Moestopo, at the Ferwerda drawbridge. From there, they and their staffs drove through the town to the former British consulate building in Kayoon where they met the Indonesian governor of East Java, Soerjo. After much discussion the meeting broke up in a cordial atmosphere. One result was the setting up of administrative machinery in the shape of a "Contact Bureau" under the joint chairmanship of Colonel Pugh and Doel Arnowo. Brigade headquarters was established near the Courts of Justice.
- p.m. That night, Moestopo was asked by the field security officer (Captain Shaw) to lead him and his section to the jail to rescue Huijer and his party, and members of RAPWI²³ who had been imprisoned during most of October. Moestopo was unwilling, but when confronted by a platoon of Mahrattas, he finally consented with bad grace. This action was premature and ill-timed and did much to dispel the optimistic atmosphere that had been built earlier.
- Saturday, October 27 a.m. The situation took a dramatic turn for the worse as a result of a major error on the part of the Headquarters 23 Division. A Dakota aircraft from Jakarta dropped leaflets on the town, ordering the Indonesians to surrender their arms.²⁴ These demands inflamed the latent

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22. For a detailed study of the involved negotiations between the Indonesian leaders and the British see my forthcoming "The Role of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade in Surabaya, 25th October-10th November 1945."
23. R.A.P.W.I. (Rehabilitation of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees). This was the organization set up to succor ex-prisoners of war of the Japanese. Leading elements of RAPWI had parachuted into Surabaya in September 1945. The Indonesians, not without some foundation, considered RAPWI as a front organization for the reintroduction of Dutch rule.
24. As part of the plan to occupy certain key areas, leaflets had been dropped in West and Central Java by the R.A.F., acting on orders from HQ Allied Land Forces South East Asia. The leaflets exhorted the population to remain calm and await the arrival of the Allied Forces. The leaflets dropped on Surabaya, however, presumably prepared on the orders of HQ 23 Division in Jakarta, were much more peremptory in tone. They gave the Indonesians 48 hours to surrender their arms or risk being shot, and called for the clearing of the harbor area. (At the time of writing, it has not been possible to obtain a copy of this Surabaya leaflet.) The result was that the tenuous agreement worked out between Moestopo and Mallaby was completely nullified. According to Pugh, Moestopo "was frantic with emotion" and refused to believe that Mallaby was not responsible for the leaflet drop. Although Moestopo agreed to broadcast an explanation to the people that there was no intention on the part of the British to bring in Dutch troops, he had obviously lost trust in the British leadership and was no doubt concerned

suspicions of the Indonesians that the British intention was to render them helpless before handing them over to the Dutch.

Sunday, October 28 a.m. During the morning the British put up road blocks in order to commandeer civilian-owned motor vehicles. Arms found in the vehicles were confiscated. These incidents, small in themselves, aggravated an already tense situation. By the afternoon the Indonesians had completed their preparations and at about 4:30 p.m. attacks were made in overwhelming force simultaneously upon isolated posts, units and individuals.²⁵

Sunday-Monday, October 28-29 The situation of 49 Brigade rapidly deteriorated until it was faced with possible extermination. Fears were also felt for the safety of the 6,000 internees, most of whom were concentrated in the Darmo area.

p.m. An urgent message was sent to Jakarta requesting the intervention of Sukarno. He agreed to fly to Surabaya.

Monday, October 29 a.m. Sukarno arrived together with Hatta and Amir Sjarifuddin. After consultation with Brigadier Mallaby he agreed to broadcast the terms of a truce. This calmed the situation. However, Radio Pemberontak continued to call for a renewal of fighting.

p.m.

Tuesday, October 30 a.m. General Hawthorn, Commander 23 Division, arrived, and after a preliminary conference with Sukarno and Hatta, agreed to a meeting in the Government Building. The British were represented by Mallaby and Hawthorn, with a few staff officers; the Jakarta delegation consisted of Sukarno, Hatta and Sjarifuddin; the Surabaya group comprised Soedirman, Muhammed, Soerjo, Sungkono, Soetomo and pemuda leaders. After bitter argument and altercation a truce was agreed upon. The details were left to be worked out between Brigadier Mallaby and Indonesian officials. The Contact Bureau was to be resuscitated.

p.m. Assuming the danger to the Brigade was now over, General Hawthorn, together with Sukarno and his party, emplaned for Jakarta about 2 p.m.

One of the factors which did not seem to be appreciated by those outside Surabaya was the lack of control on the part of Indonesian

about the possible danger to himself in appearing to "support" British intentions. As it happened, he did not broadcast. Instead there were inflammatory calls from Radio Surabaya for a general uprising.

25. Accounts differ as to the numbers of the forces engaged. Abdulgani (Seratus Hari, p. 32) gives the British forces as 6,000--certainly an overestimate. He does not give the strength of the Indonesian side. Wehl (The Birth of Indonesia, p. 55) estimates the Indonesian force at "20,000 armed and Japanese-trained regular troops supported by tanks and an uncontrolled mob of about 120,000 armed with rifles, swords and spears. . . ." Anderson, who certainly cannot be regarded as an enthusiastic advocate of the British cause, puts the 49 Brigade strength at 4,000 which, he states, was attacked by an "estimated 120,000 pemuda" (Anderson, Java, p. 161). The Mansergh Report gives the estimated strength of the Indonesian forces as: "TKR (Tentara Keamanan Rakjat), 15,000; Police, 800; Mob, 75,000 (armed with rifles, and 25,000 spearmen); with a further 5,000 TKR available outside." Whatever the figure, it is clear that troops of 49 Brigade, most of whom were dispersed all over the city, were greatly outnumbered.

leaders over their followers. As Pugh put it, "They [the British High Command] accepted the assurances of Sukarno and other leaders without further question, little realising their inability to hold the fanatical and excited masses."²⁶

In fact, after the departure of Sukarno and Hawthorn, fighting flared up again and by 3:00 p.m. a particularly serious situation was building up around the Bank Building in the Internatio Square (see map on p. 109 below). Here "D" Coy, 6 Mahratta was being hard pressed by hundreds of armed Indonesians who were demanding its surrender. The company commander, Major K. Venu Gopal, signaled to Brigade Headquarters that he would have to return enemy fire. About 3:30 p.m., Brigadier Mallaby, whose belief--some might think in the prevailing situation, a naive belief--in the genuine desire of the Indonesians to cease fighting remained unshaken, drove into the square. Carrying a white flag he walked alone across the square to the Bank Building and told Major Venu Gopal that all efforts were being made to implement the truce and ordered him not to fire unless actually assaulted. He then returned to Brigade Headquarters. However, hearing of another violation of the truce, he sent his brigade major and a Major Harte (who had come from Jakarta with Sukarno's party) to protest to the Indonesian Headquarters some three hundred yards away. These two officers were arrested, and later seized and shot by the mob.²⁷ At 4:00 p.m. yet another urgent signal was received from Major Venu Gopal that he was again being closely invested. Notwithstanding the fact that his brigade major and Major Harte had not returned from their mission, Brigadier Mallaby decided once more to intervene personally. He prepared to set out on his last journey.

The Killing of Brigadier Mallaby

The most complete accounts we have of the events that followed in the next few hours are, from the Indonesian point of view, that given by Abdulgani in his *Surabaya Post* series and, from the British point of view, the report of Captain R. C. Smith,²⁸ with two supporting letters explaining specific points in it. Superimposed, as it were, on these two accounts is that of Major K. Venu Gopal who was at the "receiving end" in Internatio Square. His story is vital in that it throws light on what happened inside the Bank Building just prior to the outbreak of shooting. To facilitate a comparative study of the vital period between approximately 4:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m., relevant extracts from the Abdulgani and Smith versions are set out side by side according to time sequence. Where necessary I have added by own comments in parentheses.

26. Pugh, "Soerabaja," p. 328.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 339; Doulton, *The Fighting Cock*, p. 261.

28. Captain Smith submitted his first report on the death of Brigadier Mallaby the following day, October 31. In February 1946, however, he was ordered to prepare a more detailed report in answer to the version of events given by Mr. Tom Driberg in the House of Commons (see p. 102 below). It is this second report which is quoted in this paper. It is interesting to note that the description given in Captain Smith's first report of the Brigadier's last moments differs in one significant detail from that contained in his second report (see note 41).

The Abdulgani Account

The main problem which had to be solved quickly was how to make effective the terms of the cease-fire agreed earlier. . . . Reports continued to come in that the situation was still unstable (*tidak mereda*) at the Lindeteves Building near the Jembatan Semut and the Internatio Building near the Jembatan Merah. Unanimously the members of the Contact Bureau, which was in session, decided to visit the two places together. . . . About 5:00 p.m.,²⁹ in a convoy of 8 cars we first drove to the Lindeteves Building. It was clear that firing had ceased there. We quickly continued our journey to the Internatio Building. . . .

When the convoy of cars of the Contact Bureau arrived in front of the Internatio Building about 5:15 p.m., the firing stopped. Our cars were swamped (*dikerumuni*) by dozens of our pemuda and the people (*rakyat*) who were in a highly excited state (*sangat bersemangat sekali*). They demanded that the British leadership in our party order the unit beleaguered in the building to surrender. . . . In

The Report by Capt. R. C. Smith

At approximately 1730 hrs. on 30th October, Capt. T. L. Laughland and I were ordered by Col. L. H. O. Pugh, DSO, 2 i/c (Second-in-Command) of the Bde., to proceed to the Government offices, where we were each to collect an Indonesian representative. From there one of us was to go north, and the other south, through the town, and try to persuade the mobs to go back to their barracks. Brigadier Mallaby was at this time in conference with the Governor in the Government Offices.³⁰

On arrival there, we were told by the Brigadier that the Indonesians had refused to treat with anyone except him. Accordingly we set off with the Brigadier and the FSO (Field Security Officer), Capt. Shaw, plus the leaders of the various parties, in several cars, the foremost of which was flying the white flag.³¹

The first place to which we went was a large building about 150 yards west of the Kali Mas River, which runs north and south through the town. One Coy of 6 Mahrattas had been having a very stiff fight in this building against about five hundred Indonesians, and had been in considerable difficulties.³²

29. Abdulgani, *Seratus Hari*, p. 47. There is a discrepancy in the time of departure as compared with Smith's report. Smith states that he did not leave the Brigade Headquarters until 1730 hrs. The convoy would then have left for the Lindeteves Building at approximately 1745 hrs (5:45 p.m.). Major Venu Gopal states that the Brigadier's convoy arrived at 4:30 p.m. Clearly he is mistaken. In the circumstances it is perhaps understandable that the accounts vary as to exact times of departure and arrival of the Contact Bureau convoy. Here the italics are my own.

30. It is interesting to note that Brigadier Mallaby was no longer at his Brigade Headquarters. He may then not have known that his brigade major and Major Harte had not returned from investigating a previous cease-fire violation (see above).

31. Each car was driven by an Indonesian driver.

32. Captain Smith does not mention that the party first checked the situation at the Lindeteves Building.

turn Pak Dirman [Soedirman], Pak Doel Arnowo and Pak Sungkono stood on the bonnets of their cars and told the people milling around them that their demands could not be fulfilled in view of the agreement reached between President Sukarno and General Hawthorn that morning. We asked the people to be patient. We explained that the British units were to be allowed to stay inside the Internatio Building that night and would not leave it. They would be transported to the docks under TKR escort the next morning. The explanations of Pak Dirman, Pak Doel and Pak Sungkono were accepted judiciously. With that the Contact Bureau convoy continued its journey in the direction of the Jembatan Merah. Suddenly from the road junction between the Internatio Building and the Telephone Building came another group of pemuda and people [rakyat] led by a person who appeared to be in a hysterical state. He carried the Red and White flag. . . . He explained to me proudly that the red coloring was the blood of a British soldier! This new group stopped the Contact Bureau convoy for the second time. They issued the same demands as the first group. That is, that the British unit be ordered to surrender forthwith, or be transported immediately that evening to the docks leaving their arms behind. They said that as long as the British troops remained in the building, the people around it would not feel safe and they would continue to feel threatened, because several times the British unit had fired wildly in the direction of our people. We were forced to halt again. And we all got out of the cars. Pak Dirman, Pak Doel Arnowo and Pak Sungkono repeated their explanations as to why these demands could not be met. And again we asked the people to remain calm. The tension abated somewhat but then they requested a guarantee that the British unit would not open fire again that night. "Right," we said. After discussion with General Mallaby and his staff, General Mallaby himself said he was prepared to enter the building and give this order to

On our arrival there, the mob was collected round the cars, and the various party leaders made speeches to them, in an attempt to persuade them to return to their barracks. The speeches were at first quite well received, and the necessary promises given.

We then got into our cars and set off for the next position. We had only gone about 100 yards when we were stopped by the mob approximately 20 yards from the Kali Mas. From then on the situation rapidly deteriorated. The mob leaders began to incite the mob, and the party leaders gradually lost control. The mob, which up to that time had seemed fairly friendly towards us, became distinctly menacing: swords were waved, and pistols pointed at us and we were left with very little doubt as to their intentions.

Eventually, the mob demanded that the troops in the building laid [sic] down their arms and marched [sic] out: they and us [sic] were guaranteed a safe-conduct back to the air field. The Brigadier flatly refused to consider this proposal. After further pressure, however, Capt. Shaw, who was well known to some of the Indonesians through his job as FSO, and who had been under a considerable strain since our arrival in Surabaya,³³ agreed to the terms on his own responsibility. The Brigadier at once countermanded this: on further consideration, he decided that the company had been in so bad a position before, that any further fighting would lead to their being wiped out. He did not believe in the safe conduct in so far as it applied to us, but thought that some at least of the Company might get away. Accordingly Capt. Shaw was sent into the building to give the necessary orders.³⁴

33. This is a very significant comment. See note 54 below.

34. This vacillation on the part of Brigadier Mallaby is perhaps indicative of his state of mind at the time. It is clear now that his last order to Captain Shaw was that the personnel of "D" Coy should lay down their arms and come out unarmed, in hope of a safe-conduct.

his unit. Frankly we felt apprehensive about General Mallaby, especially if he was accompanied by his staff, entering the building without us. Because a situation would then arise where there would be no British leaders outside the building but just we [Indonesians]. The presence of General Mallaby with us outside the building acted as a sort of brake on the British unit inside the building from firing upon us. Because from behind the smashed windows and the lattice work of the building we could clearly see how their guns were trained on us! Frankly we required General Mallaby as a hostage! That was the reason we agreed that Captain Shaw only would enter the building. This was in accordance with the pressure of the crowd, some of whom shouted: "Not the old one, Pak, but order the young ones only to enter." Those whom they meant by the "young ones," were members of his [Mallaby's] staff. After Captain Shaw got out of the car, there remained in the car besides General Mallaby, Captain Smith and Captain Laughland. As well as Captain Shaw, we requested that Pak Muhammad [an officer of the TKR] accompany Shaw into the building. And to facilitate discussions inside the building we requested that Saudara Kundan [an Indian resident of Surabaya who acted as "official interpreter" for the Contact Bureau] should accompany them as interpreter. Thus three people entered the building as representatives of the Contact Bureau, that is Captain Shaw, Pak Muhammad and Sdr. Kundan. We ordered them not to stay long in the building. . . .

With the exception of Pak Muhammad's car, the convoy turned right and slowly drove in the direction of the Jembatan Merah. There we halted a moment to await the return of the deputation from the International Building. After almost ten minutes had passed, we saw Saudara Kundan emerge from the door of the building, but he was alone. He had just got outside the door and shouted to us that Captain Shaw and Pak Muhammad required a few more minutes, when I saw a grenade explosion in front of the building from a grenade which had clearly been thrown from inside the building by the British unit, followed by a volley of fire from the basement and

The rest of us were disarmed--except for a grenade which Capt. Laughland managed to keep concealed--and made to sit in one of the cars.³⁵

The Brigadier was on the side nearest to the Kali Mas, Capt. Laughland in the middle, and myself on the outside nearest to the building in which our troops were.

When Captain Shaw got into the building, the Indonesians brought up a machine gun to cover the entrance. He and the company commander decided that any attempt to walk out unarmed would lead to a massacre and so the order to open fire was given.³⁶

35. In fact it was Soedirman's car. See Abdulgani, Seratus Hari, p. 47.

36. This implies an agreement between Captain Shaw and Major Venu Gopal. But see Venu Gopal's statement below.

the upper storeys aimed at all of us who were dispersed in the triangular area [of the square] and at the roads in front of the building, also at the Contact Bureau convoy. . . .³⁷

I saw clearly that those who commenced firing were the British and not our people.³⁸

It is certain that this sudden burst of fire caused many casualties among the crowd and to our pemuda. I saw several sprawled on the ground dead or severely wounded. In the middle of the chaos and confusion in which there was a danger we could be killed, we scattered and sought shelter individually. Pak Sungkono, Tjak Doel Arnowo, Dr. Mursito (son-in-law of Pak Dirman) Kusnandar and I, crouching to avoid the bullets, jumped straight into the Kali Mas and sheltered beside its banks. A moment later we were followed by several pemuda and other people whom we did not know, some among them bleeding from wounds from British bullets. . . . The firing from the building increased in intensity and also the retaliatory fire from our people and pemuda. . . .

Meanwhile there were several other pemuda who were able to escape from the British fire. One of them jumped to the edge of the Kali Mas near us, then whispered to us:

"It's been fixed, Pak [*Sudah beres*, Pak]."

"What's been fixed?" asked Tjak Doel Arnowo.

"The British General, Pak. His car has exploded and has been burnt out."

"Who blew it up?" we asked straight-away.

"Don't know. There was a grenade which exploded in the car, but there were some people from our side who fired at the car," continued the pemuda.

We were rather stunned [*agak kaget*] at hearing the pemuda's story and we instructed him:

As soon as the firing started, the three of us who were in the car crouched down on the floor as far as possible.

An Indonesian came up to the Brigadier's window with a rifle. He fired four shots at the three of us, all of which missed. He then went away while we shammed dead. The battle went on for about two and a half hours, to about 2030 hrs, by which time it was dark. At the end of that time, the firing died down to some extent, and we could hear shouting as though the Indonesians were being collected. Two of them came up to the car and attempted to drive it away. That failed and one of them opened the back door on the Brigadier's side.

The Brigadier moved, and as they saw from that that he was still alive, he spoke to them and asked to be taken to one of the party leaders. The two Indonesians went away to discuss this, and one of them came back to the front door on the Brigadier's side. The Brigadier spoke to him again, the Indonesian answered, and then

37. Abdulgani therefore categorically states that the troops of "D" Coy fired on the convoy, which was about 100 yards away from the building. Compare Major Venu Gopal's statement below.

38. This in fact is confirmed by Smith's report and Venu Gopal's statement.

"Not a word. Don't tell this story to anyone else!"

Indeed, a moment before the pemuda had jumped to the edge of the Kali Mas where we were sheltering, we all heard an explosion and firing near us, that is, from the direction of the Contact Bureau convoy which was about 5 metres from where we were taking cover.³⁹

[Abdulgani then goes on to relate that the voice of Bung Tomo was heard over the radio "in the darkness and whizzing of bullets." He puts the time at 6:30 or later. (Surely it must have been later? Smith states that the firing went on for over two hours.)

Abdulgani then describes how he waded to safety together with Sungkono, Dr. Mur-sito, Kusnandar and Doel Arnowo.]⁴⁰

suddenly reached his hand in through the front window, and shot the Brigadier. It took from fifteen seconds to half-a-minute for the Brigadier to die, but from the noise he made at the end, there was absolutely no doubt that he was dead.⁴¹ As soon as he had fired, the Indonesian ducked down beside the car, and remained there until after the Brigadier was dead. I took the pin out of the grenade which Capt. Laughland had previously passed to me, and waited. The Indonesian appeared again, and fired another shot which grazed Capt. Laughland's shoulder. I let go the lever of the grenade, held it for two seconds to make sure it was not returned and threw it out of the open door by the Brigadier's body. As soon as it had exploded, Capt. Laughland and I went out of the door on my side of the car, waited for a short time, then ran around the car and dived into the Kali Mas. As the two Indonesians by the side of the car did not attempt to interfere with us it is presumed that they were killed by the grenade--which also set the back seat of the car on fire. After five hours in the Kali Mas, we managed to reach our troops in the Dock area.

The Statements of Kundan, Muhammad and Major Venu Gopal

In Article 8 of his series, Abdulgani gives an account of interviews he had with Kundan and Muhammad.⁴²

Kundan stated that while he was standing close to Brigadier Mallaby's car he himself heard Brigadier Mallaby order Captain Shaw to go into the building, wait ten minutes, and if the crowd in front of the building could not be calmed down, they ("D" Coy) were to open fire. Kundan "remembers the reaction" of Captain Shaw, who said this would be very dangerous for Brigadier Mallaby himself but that the brigadier considered that, as a military officer, he could not accept the surrender terms of the Indonesians. This version is contradicted by Captain Smith. In a letter to me (dated February 20, 1974) he wrote:

I have no recollection of the conversation that the Indian interpreter reported and while I certainly could not state that I heard everything that happened, I think I should have remembered this, if

39. Abdulgani, Seratus Hari, pp. 47-53.

40. Ibid., p. 54.

41. This was the first time that these details of the final moments of Brigadier Mallaby had been made public. In this second report Smith offered the following explanation: "In the report made by Capt. Laughland and myself the following morning we stated that the Brigadier was killed instantly. This was done in order to spare the feelings of his family."

42. Abdulgani, Seratus Hari, pp. 58-63.

Going back to my report, the position of all of us was very closely grouped around one car so that there was only a matter of a very few feet between us. Therefore, Brigadier Mallaby was certainly able to hear when Captain Shaw agreed to the demands of the mob, which was why he was able to countermand it immediately. As I said, he then changed his mind in the hope that some of the men at least might reach safety, *but the orders that he gave Captain Shaw were that the troops in the building should lay down their arms and come out unarmed, in the hope of safe-conduct [my italics].*

I definitely did not hear any suggestion that they should be ordered to open fire after a certain length of time had elapsed. The one thing that has always been quite firmly established in my memory is that the orders to fire were given by Captain Shaw once he had got into the building.⁴³

When we stepped through the door of the building we had to surrender our pistols to the guard, who was fully armed; then we followed Captain Shaw up to the second story. Arriving there, we were invited to wait outside the open door of what appeared to be the office of the [unit] commander. We saw Captain Shaw quickly get into telephonic communication with their headquarters in Jalan Westerhuizenweg at Tanjung Perak and, not long after, we saw a mortar set up in front of the room with the open door. After ten minutes had almost elapsed, Saudara Kundan whispered to me that he did not trust their suspicious "goings on" (*ia tidak mempercayai gerak-gerik mereka yang mencurigakan*) and he straight-away left the waiting room. In fact I stood up, with the intention of following Sdr. Kundan, but two Indian soldiers⁴⁴ squatted in front of me and motioned me to remain seated. I realized that I had become a prisoner. As the door of the room remained open, I guessed that the mortar bombs were aimed at the convoy near the Jembatan Merah, possibly with the intention of causing panic among the people when that target was hit, thus giving Mallaby the opportunity of escaping. It was clear that my guess was correct because Bapak Residen Soedirman's car was burnt out.⁴⁵ The fire from the building was answered by a fusillade from dozens of firearms outside the building. . . . About 10 p.m. I heard orders from the loudspeakers for a cessation of hostilities. Not long after this announcement, Captain Shaw met me and told me that General Mallaby had been killed by the people while his other comrades had managed to make their escape. He added that the death of Mallaby

43. But see statement by Major Venu Gopal below.

44. Like most Indonesian commentators, Muhammad mistakenly refers to the soldiers as Gurkhas. See Appendix regarding this error of nomenclature.

45. With all due respect to Muhammad, I think he is guessing incorrectly here. He did not see Soedirman's car destroyed by a mortar bomb, because we know that Residen Soedirman's car was the one in which Brigadier Mallaby and his two liaison officers were crouching. Our authority for this is Abdulgani who states in Article 7: "Was it someone from our side who shot him [Mallaby] while he was in Pak Birman's grey Lincoln which we had allocated to him?" (Seratus Hari, p. 47).

would certainly be avenged by the British military with all the force at their command, that is on land, sea and air.

The next day about 1 p.m. the complete Indian unit stationed at the Internatio Building vacated the building and was transported in TKR trucks to the British Headquarters at Jalan Westerbuitenweg and one hour later we were able to leave our detention room to a moving welcome from the crowd outside. . . .⁴⁶

So, what did happen in the Internatio Building after the entry of Captain Shaw, Kundan and Muhammad? From Muhammad's statement it is clear that, from the moment he stepped into the Internatio Building, he did not see much of the ensuing action. Kundan had left the building and the firing which broke out prevented him from returning. Unfortunately, it has not yet been possible to contact that enigmatic figure, Captain Shaw, but I have finally been able to obtain evidence from the other key figure, the company commander of "D" Company 6 Mah-ratta--besieged in the Internatio Bank Building. He was a king's commissioned officer (see Appendix for a brief explanation of Indian Army ranks) named Major K. Venu Gopal. In a letter to me (dated August 8, 1974) he stated:

Let me first give you some background. "D" Coy had been under fire off and on and had already had casualties. The firing came from other buildings on the square and by and large we were able to contain it. We could, however, see that armed men barred all the exits from the square. The previous day I had been to Battalion HQ for a conference but then fighting broke out again and I was stranded until I rejoined the Company at night during one of the so-called truces. I call it so-called because on return to the Bank building I discovered that I could not withdraw a section of mine posted in the Jail nearby. In fact they were imprisoned and later murdered. Regarding the 4:30 p.m. visit I shall give below what I remember of the scene which remains fairly vividly etched in my memory.

When Brig. Mallaby (BM) left after his first visit armed Indonesians again started massing in the square. We already knew that the surrounding buildings were manned and our position was getting worse as armed men were coming very near the building. When BM returned at 4:30 p.m.⁴⁷ the situation was almost out of control. A few Indonesians (I presume local leaders) surrounded BM and they had to push through the crowd to get him near the Bank Building and he once again told me⁴⁸ that there was a chance for the truce being extended. After he said this 2 or 3 Indonesians made speeches but I could see that the crowd was not going to listen to speeches for long. Meanwhile BM was being hustled away from the speakers and eventually they too had to stop talking and they were being hustled away in another direction.

Meanwhile armed Indonesians swarmed over to the Veranda of the building and I had to bluntly tell them that I would fire if they started pressing into the building. By this time I could not see BM or the LOs [Liaison Officers] because of the crowds on the veranda.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

47. Regarding time of Brigadier Mallaby's second visit to the Bank Building, see note 29 above.

48. In fact the brigadier, hemmed in by the crowd, could only convey his orders by shouting them across a distance of ten yards (Wehl, *The Birth of Indonesia*, p. 60).

Just then Capt. Shaw and Kundan (I did not know their names at that time) tried to get into the building but were prevented. Kundan then shouted to the crowd that he would get us to surrender and he and Capt. Shaw were then allowed to go into the building if they took an Indonesian officer with them. I allowed them in hoping to play for time. After a little time Kundan went out of the building, leaving Capt. Shaw and the Indonesian officer behind.⁴⁹

Soon thereafter the armed men started pushing in and I was left with no option but to open fire. The decision was mine and mine alone. [These words are underlined by Major Venu Gopal in his letter.] Capt. Smith is correct when he says that BM did not give any orders to Capt. Shaw.⁵⁰

We soon cleared the square and just as the last people were running away we could hear shots being fired into a car (presumably the BM's car). BM most certainly was not killed by our firing because we stopped as soon as we cleared the armed mob from the veranda and the immediate vicinity of the building. . . .

Before commenting on the foregoing statements, two further versions of the incident will be outlined in brief.

On November 1, 1945, over the signature of Doel Arnowo, a document entitled "Announcement of the Surabaya Contact Bureau" was published. In the final paragraph, the conclusion was reached that:

If in fact Brigadier Mallaby is dead it cannot be ascertained for certain whether his death was caused by firing from the crowd or from Gurkha [sic] fire. However it is clear that if he is dead it happened in the course of a disturbance caused by firing first started by the Gurkhas. In this disturbance the other members of the Contact Bureau who were in the square bore the same risk. . . .⁵¹

On February 20, 1946, the Labour Member of Parliament Mr. Tom Driberg stated in the House of Commons:

. . . some of the press reports from Indonesia have not been entirely responsible. In particular, I have learned from officers who have recently returned that some of the stories which have been told, not only in the newspapers, but, I am sorry to say, from the Government Front Bench in his House, have been very far from accurate and have unnecessarily imparted prejudice and blackened the character of the Indonesians. One story in particular concerns the lamented death of Brigadier Mallaby. That was announced to us as a foul murder, and we accepted it as such. I have learned from officers who were present when it happened the exact details and it is perfectly clear

49. This tallies with Muhammad's account. See above.

50. By this, presumably Major Venu Gopal means that Captain Shaw did not relay any order to fire from Brigadier Mallaby. In fact as we have seen from the Smith report, Captain Shaw's orders were to tell Major Venu Gopal to lay down his arms. This order apparently was not passed on, or if it was, it was ignored. According to Muhammad's account, Captain Shaw went straight to the telephone to contact base headquarters at Tanjung Perak.

51. Doel Arnowo, in an interview with Anderson (August 13, 1962) said he was convinced that Mallaby had been accidentally shot by his own men. (Anderson, Java, pp. 162-63, n. 87.)

that Brigadier Mallaby was not murdered but was honourably killed in action. . . .⁵²

Mr. Driberg continued:

The incident was somewhat confused--as such incidents are--but it took place in and near Union Square in Surabaya. There had been discussions about a truce earlier in the day. A large crowd of Indonesians--a mob if you like--had gathered in the square and were in a rather excited state. About 20 Indians, in a building on the other side of the square, had been cut off from telephonic communication and did not know about the truce.⁵³ They were firing sporadically on the mob. Brigadier Mallaby came out from the discussions, walked straight into the crowd, with great courage, and shouted to the Indians to cease fire. They obeyed him. Possibly half an hour later, the mob in the square became turbulent again. Brigadier Mallaby, at a certain point in the proceedings, ordered the Indians to open fire again. They opened fire with two Bren guns and the mob dispersed and went to cover; then fighting broke out again in good earnest. It is apparent that when Brigadier Mallaby gave the order to open fire again, the truce was in fact broken, at any rate locally. Twenty minutes to half an hour after that, he was most unfortunately killed in his car--although even now it is not absolutely certain whether he was killed by Indonesians or by a grenade thrown by an Indian officer at some Indonesians who were approaching his car, which exploded simultaneously with the attack on him.

I do not think this amounts to a charge of foul murder . . . because my information came absolutely at first hand from a British officer who was actually on the spot at the moment, whose bona fides I have no reason to question. . . .⁵⁴

* * *

In Article 7 of his series, Abdulgani wrote that "The fact is that General Mallaby was killed during an exchange of fire between the two sides. Only how he was killed and by whom is veiled in the mists of history. . . ."⁵⁵ In this section of the paper I hope to draw aside the veil and give the answers to the three questions posed at the start.

52. See Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates, CDXIX (1945-46), cols. 1213-15.

53. But compare Muhammad's statement, in which he said Captain Shaw telephoned base headquarters from the building.

54. As there were only four British officers there, who was Mr. Driberg's informant "actually on the spot at the moment"? It could hardly have been Brigadier Mallaby. It was not Captain Smith or Captain Laughland who were in the car when the brigadier was shot and who submitted a joint report to that effect the next day. We are left with Captain Shaw. In a letter to me, dated November 23, 1973, Captain Smith wrote: "The essential fact is that the brigadier was murdered in cold blood--without even the excuse 'while attempting to escape.' I have always wondered who was Mr. Driberg's informant though I suppose there was only one person who had any covering up to do." The implication is that it was Captain Shaw, who may also have been suffering under a sense of grievance and strain (see Captain Smith's comment on p. 96). He was posted away from the brigade to Singapore shortly afterwards. Abdulgani notes in Article 10: "From November 1 to 10 the Contact Bureau met continuously. But it may be said that those attending were not always the ones who had been originally appointed. Especially on the English side. . . . Captain Shaw, my counterpart, was seldom seen. . . ." Seratus Hari, p. 64.

55. Ibid., p. 49.

Question 1. *Who gave the troops of "D" Coy, 6 Mahratta, the order to fire on the crowd?*

Abdulgani is quite sure it was Brigadier Mallaby. In Article 9 he stated:

It is clear that it was General Mallaby who, through Captain Shaw, gave the order to fire on us when a period of 10 minutes had elapsed. It is also clear that their tactic was to fire on the cars occupied by the Indonesian members of the Contact Bureau. In my opinion it was General Mallaby who was responsible for the ugly incidents affecting the relationship of the Indonesian Republic and the British in Surabaya and also for his own death in the ensuing turmoil.⁵⁶

ere a decision has to be made in the light of the statements made by Captain Smith, Kundan and Major Venu Gopal. Whether or not Kundan thought he heard Brigadier Mallaby give instructions to Shaw to relay orders to "D" Coy to open fire is not really significant in view of Major Venu Gopal's adamant assertion that *he and he alone decided upon the order to fire*. It is also Captain Smith's firm impression that Brigadier Mallaby's last order was that the troops of "D" Coy should march out unarmed in the hope of obtaining a safe conduct. On the evidence, I believe the answer to Question 1 is:

- (a) Brigadier Mallaby did not give Captain Shaw the order that "D" Coy should fire on the crowd.
- (b) This order was given on his own initiative by Major Venu Gopal.

Question 2. *Who killed Brigadier Mallaby?*

If the evidence of Captain Smith is accepted, it would negate Doel Arnowo's conviction that Brigadier Mallaby was killed by one of his own men. The statements of Smith, Venu Gopal and Abdulgani all make nonsense of the extraordinary version put forward by Mr. Driberg in the House of Commons.

When we compare the accounts of Abdulgani and Captain Smith, apart from minor discrepancies relating to times, there is a very close similarity between them. It is only in the description of what happened after the firing started and the Indonesian members of the Contact Bureau made a dash for the Kali Mas, leaving behind the Brigadier and his two liaison officers in the grey Lincoln car, that their accounts diverge. However, regarding Mallaby's final moments, Captain Smith has the advantage over Abdulgani in that he was an eyewitness. I submit that Captain Smith is a credible witness. He is not dogmatic. We may recall that he wrote: "... However, in all fairness, I must say that there were moments when my attention was distracted. . . ." He also had an acute eye for detail. Regarding the firing of four shots into the car before the killing of Mallaby he observed:

I have no idea what happened to the four shots from the rifleman. He approached the car from the left (the Brigadier's side) with the rifle at the ready, and looking at the three of us. I am not ashamed to say at this point I shut my eyes and started counting the shots!

56. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

I think all three of us were equally surprised at finding both ourselves and the others alive afterwards! 57

On the actual murder of Mallaby, he recalled:

... the Indonesian who killed the Brigadier was a young lad around 16 or 17 approximately, but it was too dark to see whether he was wearing any sort of uniform. The weapon was an automatic pistol. . . . 58

During his escape, swimming up the Kali Mas to the Dock area, he notes:

Certain incidents stand out in my memory of that swim--the difficulty of untying shoelaces while treading water--lying up in some reeds while the occupants of a boat a few yards from us settled down for the night--having to dive under a couple of corpses that were blocking our way. . . .

and

... the whole incident--and, in fact the whole of our stay in Sourabaya--made an indelible impression. I understand that a great deal of politics was mixed up in it, but as a military operation, it was a disaster. . . . 59

After weighing the evidence I am satisfied that the answer to Question 2 is that Brigadier Mallaby was shot by an unidentified Indonesian.

Question 3. Who, if anyone, was to blame for Brigadier Mallaby's death?

Abdulgani, representing the Indonesian viewpoint, quite clearly lays the blame on Mallaby himself. The official British viewpoint, as expressed in the Mansergh Report, is that: "Brigadier Mallaby was murdered in cold blood after being deserted by the Indonesian members of the Contact Bureau, when trying to implement the terms of a cease-fire previously agreed to by both sides." This latter verdict appears to me to beg the question: "Why was Brigadier Mallaby in the Internatio Square in the first place?" In my opinion he should never have placed himself in such a compromising situation. The role of a senior commander is to give cool, reasoned leadership, not to go dashing off and involve oneself in direct confrontations with armed mobs. It seems clear that at that time Mallaby was a very shaken man. The 49 Brigade had been his first active command and his handling of the brigade in Surabaya had resulted in a shambles. It is of course easy to criticize this gallant officer in the light of hindsight, and I do not suggest that all the blame for the disaster should be placed on him. 60 However, Brigadier Mallaby was ultimately responsible for the actions of those

57. Letter dated November 23, 1973.

58. Letter dated February 20, 1974.

59. Ibid.

60. It was of course a "disaster" only from the British point of view. The Indonesians regarded it as a victory. See the opening paragraphs of the famous short story "Surabaya" by Idrus: "People were drunk with victory. Everything had exceeded their dreams and expectations . . ." in the anthology Gema Tanah Air (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1959), p. 306. This story has been translated into English by S. U. Nababan and Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, and published in Indonesia, 5 (April 1968), pp. 1-28.

under his command and about 6:30 p.m. on the night of October 30, 1945, while he was still negotiating with the Indonesian members of the Contact Bureau, Major Venu Gopal ordered the men of "D" Coy to fire on the crowd. From that moment on Brigadier Mallaby's life was forfeit. In the circumstances the only answer that can be given to Question 3 is that Brigadier Mallaby was himself responsible for the situation that resulted in his death.

* * *

Even to those unversed in the exercise of military command, it would appear at first sight that Mallaby made a number of elementary errors:

1. He dispersed his troops in "penny packets" all over the town without securing his lines of communication.
2. He completely underestimated the leadership, strength and fighting spirit of the Indonesians.
3. It took him too long to appreciate the potential danger to his dispersed troops, who carried no reserves of ammunition. (We have it on the authority of Wehl that even as late as the afternoon of Sunday, October 28, there were still soldiers wandering about Surabaya on sight-seeing and shopping trips!)

In his letter of November 23, 1973, Captain Smith observed:

... Brigadier Mallaby had wanted to mount the operation in the normal way--establish a bridge-head, and then gradually go through the town with our lines of communication secured. Instead we were ordered to guard various--admittedly important--areas such as the power station, the waterworks and so on. This involved splitting up the brigade, so that when the trouble started these odd sections and platoons were mopped up with great ease by the Indonesians. . . .

If this statement is accepted it throws a very different light on Mallaby's performance and on the conduct of operations by Headquarters 23 Division. The staff of 23 Division was also responsible for that major error of judgment--the leaflet-dropping raid on October 27--when negotiations between Mustopo and Mallaby were at a delicate stage. Then there was the ignorance of the real situation in Surabaya. This appalling lack of effective intelligence permeated the whole of South East Asia Command from its headquarters in Singapore down to the lowest formations. Colonel Doulton, who said that "Brigadier Mallaby walked into a hornet's nest unawares," was himself a senior staff officer of the formation directing the 49 Brigade operation!

It is clear, therefore, that the full story behind 49 Brigade's "failure" is yet to be told. However, from the evidence available, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Brigadier Mallaby's superiors, particularly the staff of 23 Division and perhaps even more senior commanders in Batavia and Singapore, must bear a substantial part of the blame for the 49 Brigade debacle.

In some ways death may have come as a merciful relief for the unlucky Mallaby. One wonders what his thoughts were as he lay crouched in the back of Soedirman's Lincoln sedan. What a squalid end to a brilliant career. Up to 1945 all had been success for this intelligent, urbane officer. He had been an adviser to Mountbatten, a major general

at 42--he appeared destined to reach the highest ranks in his profession. After the 49 Brigade disaster, his career would have been finished. He would almost certainly have had to face a Court of Enquiry, and might even have been court-martialed for incompetence. The British Army rarely tolerates failure; when it occurs, scapegoats have to be found. Many survivors of the initial Surabaya fighting still feel bitter over the treatment they received from the army establishment. Colonel Doulton commented:

5th Indian Division rightly received a notable message of congratulations from the C-in-C A.L.F.S.E.A. [Allies Land Forces South East Asia] at the end of their task, but some felt that 49 Bde should also have been honoured. In the long and glorious history of the Indian Army, there can have been few battles where the odds were greater and few that gave finer proof of the loyalty, discipline, courage and endurance of the Indian soldier. . . .⁶¹

He also wrote that

In the eyes of the Army the fact that 5th Indian Division had come in was taken to represent failure on the part of 49 Brigade and 23 Division. It's a hard world!⁶²

General Pugh (former Second-in-Command 49 Brigade) has also told me how shabbily he was treated after the 'Surabaya Affair', but has requested that the details be not published.⁶³

Brigadier Mallaby's body was returned to the British by Dr. Sugiri on the morning of November 8, 1945. Apparently Mallaby's body had been taken to the General Hospital where it had been in Dr. Sugiri's care.⁶⁴ He was buried on the same day at the edge of the airfield. Present at the funeral were Vice-Admiral Patterson, representing the Commander-in-Chief, A.L.F.S.E.A., and Major General Mansergh, commanding 5th Indian Division,⁶⁵ which was shortly to advance on and take Surabaya. According to Abdulgani, Mallaby's body was subsequently transferred by the Dutch to the Kembang Kuning Dutch War Cemetery, British Commonwealth Section, grave 13, Plot row 2-A.⁶⁶ From there the brigadier's remains were transferred to the War Cemetery at Menteng Pulo, Jakarta, in grave location VG2. The headstone reads:

Brigadier A. W. S. Mallaby, CIE, OBE.
2nd PUNJAB REGIMENT
30th OCTOBER 1945, AGE 45.
"MORE BRAVE FOR THIS
THAT HE HATH MUCH TO LOVE"

61. Doulton, The Fighting Cock, p. 266.
62. Letter to writer, August 4, 1973.
63. Letter to writer, August 7, 1973.
64. It is perhaps ironic that Mallaby's body was returned by Dr. Sugiri who was the first Indonesian to make contact with the British on the evening of October 25. Colonel Pugh described the Sugiri party's Japanese-type uniforms and accoutrements and "the way they bowed and hissed through their teeth in the Japanese manner" (Pugh, "Soerabaja," p. 324). See also p. 92 above, under Thursday, October 25, p.m.
65. War Diary 49th Indian Infantry Brigade.
66. Abdulgani, Seratus Hari, p. 66.

Appendix

Note on the Composition of 49th
Indian Infantry Brigade Group

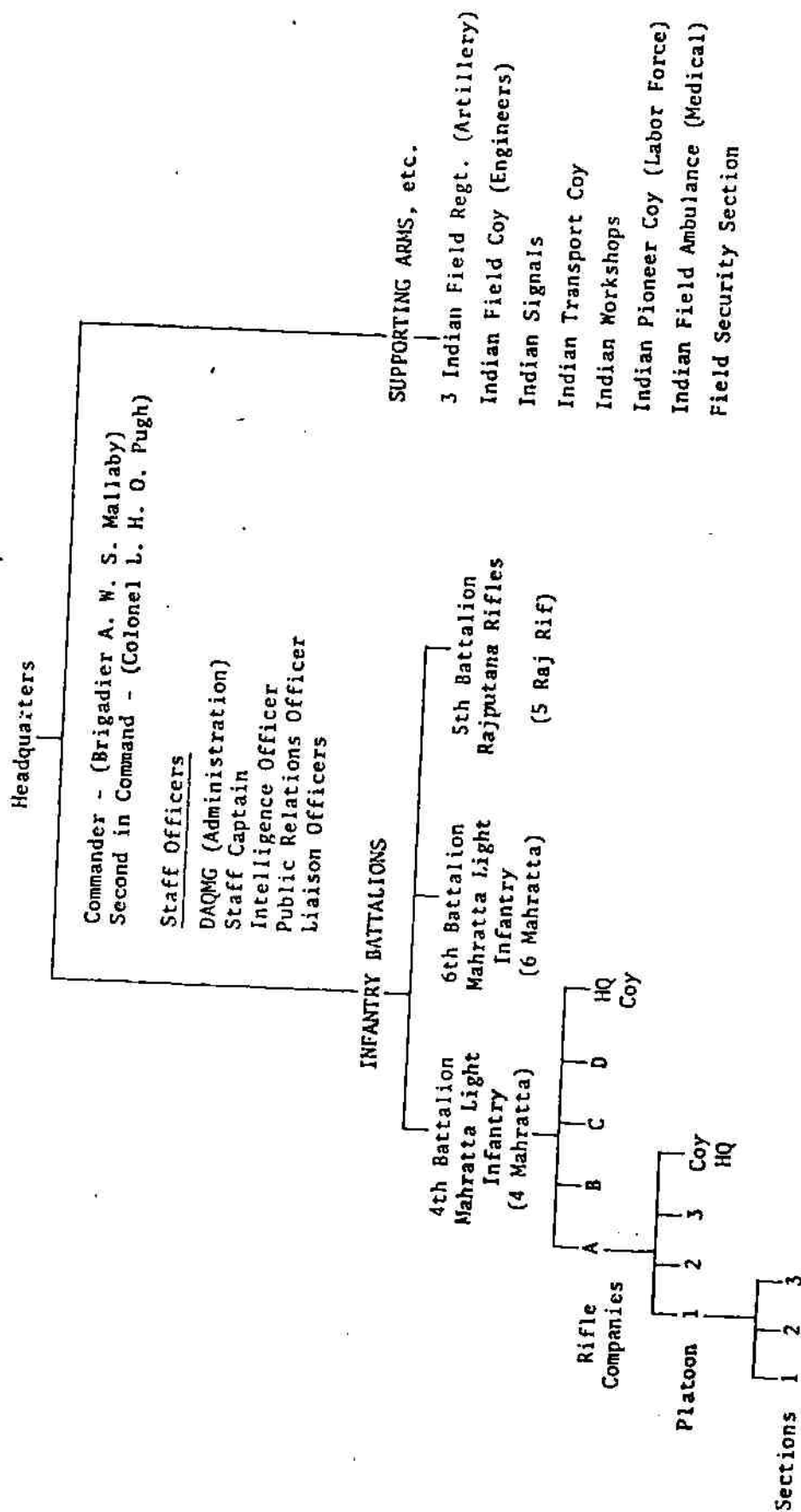
The Allied Force which arrived in Surabaya on October 25, 1945, was in fact the 49th Indian Infantry Brigade Group. Although this formation is often referred to as British Forces, the bulk of the soldiers were regular troops of the Indian Army under the command of British and Indian officers. Subunits below company level were commanded by Indian Viceroy's Commissioned Officers (VCOs) and Indian Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs). There were a few British NCOs with units of the supporting arms (Signals, Transport and Workshops, etc.). There were a small number of Indian King's Commissioned Officers (KCOs) whose status was equivalent to that of their British counterparts. (One such KCO was Major K. Venu Gopal, commanding "D" Company, 6 Mahratta in the Internatio Bank Building between October 28 and 30, 1945.)

In most accounts of the Surabaya Affair, the troops of 49 Brigade are referred to as Gurkhas.⁶⁷ Gurkha regiments have a well-earned reputation as first-class infantry with the Indian and British Armies. *But there were no Gurkha units with 49 Bde.* (See the attached Order of Battle.) Gurkha infantry first made their appearance in Surabaya on November 10, 1945, as part of 123 Indian Infantry Brigade of 5th Indian Division, and took part in the initial advance on the city.

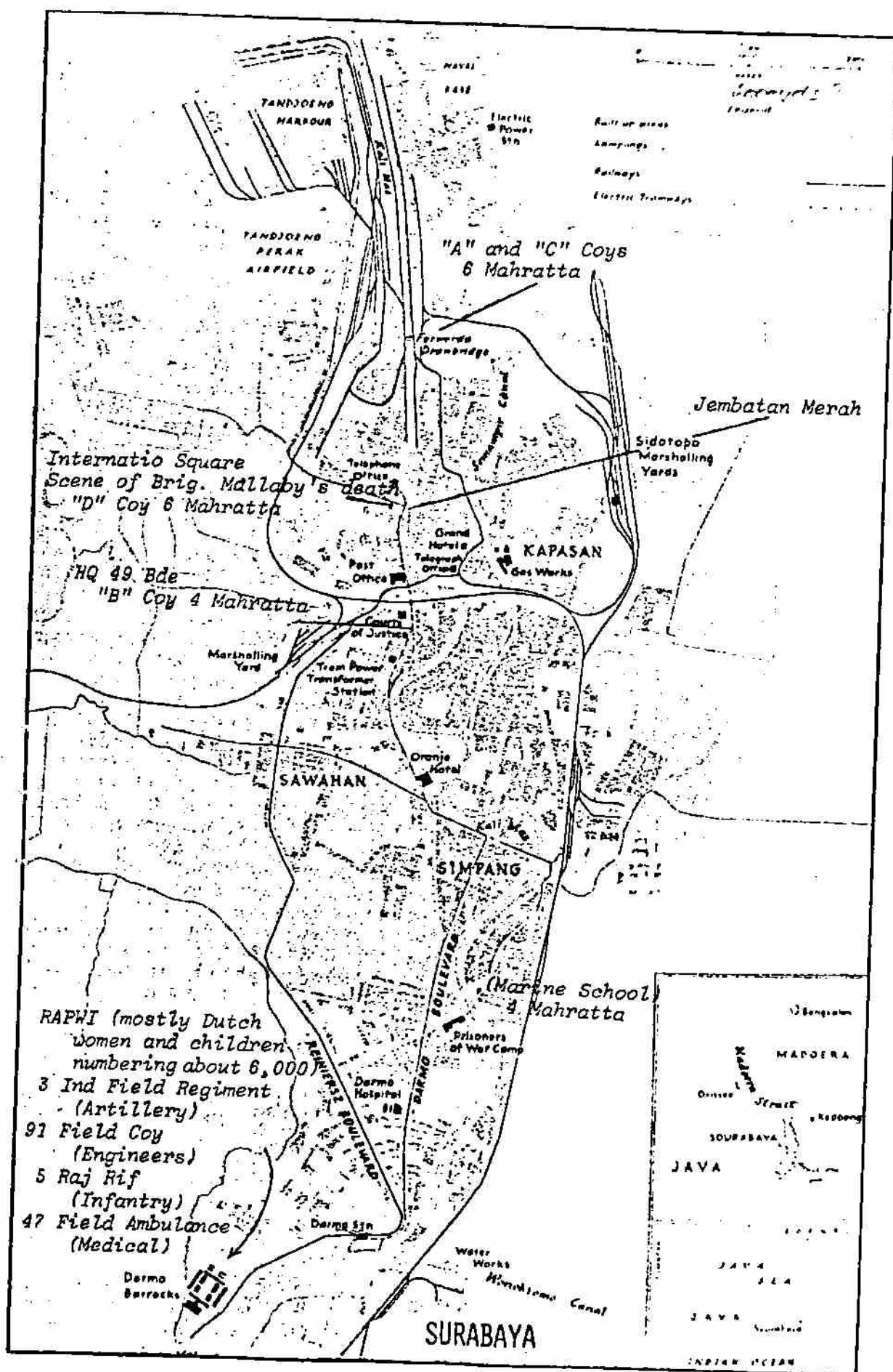
The infantry of 49 Bde (on whom the main burden of the fighting fell) consisted of two battalions of Mahrattas and one battalion of Rajputs. The Mahratta Regiment draws its men from the area around Bombay while the Rajputana Rifles' recruiting area is in the state of Rajputana to the north. Both of these groups have strong martial traditions. There is no doubt that they strongly upheld their traditions in desperate fighting against overwhelming odds during the period October 28-30, 1945. Specifically, the battalions involved were 4th Battalion, the Mahratta Light Infantry (4 Mahratta); 6th Battalion, the Mahratta Light Infantry (6 Mahratta); 5th Battalion, Rajputana Rifles (5 Raj Rif). The locations of these battalions are shown on the map above. Each battalion would have numbered about 700-800 men, organized into 4 rifle companies and a headquarters company. Each company consisted of 3 platoons and a company headquarters. A platoon numbered about 30 men subdivided into sections of 10 under the command of a Naik or Lance-Naik (equivalent to the British Army ranks of corporal or lance-corporal). Much of the October fighting in Surabaya was at the platoon and section level, thus putting a premium on the morale, discipline and on the leadership of junior NCOs. In the Darmo area to the south of the town, the main burden of the fighting in defense of the Darmo Hospital and Internment Camp area (where most of the Dutch women and children internees were concentrated) fell on the men of the 5 Raj Rif and the 3rd Indian Field Artillery Regiment, the latter under the command of Lt. Colonel Rendall. Col. Rendall was able to site many of the regiment's twenty-four field guns which fired over open sights at selected targets and caused much havoc among the attacking Indonesian forces. Once this concentration of infantry and artillery had been effected the Darmo area was never in any real danger of being overrun.

67. For example, see Abdulgani, Seratus Hari; Anderson, Java, p. 159; Moestopo, "Rahasia Kesaktian 'Bambu Runcing' Dapat Mengalahkan Senjata2 Modern Jepang Dizaman Revolusi 1945," Variasi, 39 (August 16, 1974), pp. 20, 32-33; and others.

Outline Order of Battle of 49th Indian Infantry Brigade Group, October 25-30, 1945



The whole Brigade complement would have numbered approximately 4,000 officers and men.



RAPWI (mostly Dutch women and children numbering about 6,000)
 3 Ind Field Regiment (Artillery)
 91 Field Coy (Engineers)
 5 Raj Rif (Infantry)
 47 Field Ambulance (Medical)