

## The Narration of the Death of General Mallaby

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After negotiations were concluded during the day, then at around 1:00 pm, the entourage of Bung Karno and General Hawthorn departed back to Jakarta. We could safely escort them to the Morokrembangan airfield, in the midst of gunfire in some area.

The Contact Bureau immediately convened in the Governor’s office. This time not take place in Mr. Surio office room but in the Mr. Sudirman office. The meeting began at about 3:00 pm, and has appointed me and Captain Shaw as joint secretary of Contact Bureau. Because of my “counterpart” is a captain, I have got “captain” rank since that time, in the hierarchy of TRIP (*Tentara Republik Indonesia Pelajar/Student Army of the Republic Indonesia*) and TKR (*Tentara Keamanan Rakyat/People’s Peace-keeping Army*).

The main problem which had to be solved quickly was how to make effective the terms of the cease-fire agreed earlier. For even though on October 29 night Bung Karno had announced a ceasefire agreement, and our radios and Bung Tomo [rebel] radios had constantly announced the approval of Bung Karno and General Hawthorn, but it must be understood that our youth’s and people’s who were besieging British troops could not be expected to capture the news immediately. Report continued to come in, that the situation was still unstable at Lindeteves Building near the Jembatan Semut (The Ant Bridge) and the Internatio Building near the Jembatan Merah (The Red Bridge).

Unanimously the members of the Contact Bureau, which was in session, decided to visit two places together, and to promote ceasefire on that place.

At about in 5:00 pm, in a convoy of 8 cars we first drove to the Lindeteves Building. It was clear that firing had ceased there. We quickly continue our journey to the Internatio Building.

In that place, on Tuesday afternoon of October 30, 1945 happened a disaster that decided the course of the history of Surabaya and also the course of our freedom struggle throughout Indonesia.

General Mallaby was killed near the building. Until recently there are a lot of mazy information about the murder of General Mallaby. It would be difficult to determine clearly

who the killer was, and how the murder took place. Did any of us shoot him while he was in Mr. Dirman's car, a gray Lincoln car, which we provide for him? Or was it because the British own grenade that was inside the car exploded and caused his killing? Or was it not possible that he was killed because of the British bullet at that time with continuous firing from the Internatio Building and addressed to our people and to the rows of Contact Bureau that were held near the Jembatan Merah? Or was it true that Mallaby really dead and not "mysteriously" disappeared?

Except for the last possibility, the real fact is that Mallaby was killed in the middle of the firing. Just how he was shot and by whom, will be veiled in the secrets of history. Moreover because of the *visum et repertum* from the corpse of General Mallaby was not available at all at that time. By presenting the above as a limitation, let me try to tell what I can still remember about my own experiences at that time. I completed also with the explanations from Mr. Muhammad (now retired Governor in Telukbetung, South Sumatra), Tjak Doel Arnowo, Kundan, and others figures who at that time played a role in the front of the historic Internatio Building.

Back to the situation in the Internatio Building in 30 October 1945 at about 05.15 pm. When the convey of cars of the Contact Bureau arrived in front of the Internatio Building, the firing stopped. Our cars were swamped by dozens of our *pemuda* (youth) and *rakyat* (people) who were highly excited state. They demanded that the British leadership in our party order the unit beleaguered in the building to surrender. At least at that afternoon they were transported to the harbor area and left their weapon behind. In turn Mr. Dirman, Mr. Doel Arnowo, and Mr. 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 next morning. The explanation of Mr. Dirman, Tjak Doel and Mr. Sungkono were accepted accordingly. 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 youth and people led by person who appeared to be in a hysterical state. He carried the Red and White flag, which the red colouring 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 besieged in the Internatio Building be ordered to surrender forthwith, or be transported immediately that

evening to the harbor and leaving their arm 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 fired wildly in the direction of our people.

We were forced to halt again. And we got out of the cars. Mr. Dirman, Mr. Doel Arnowo, and Mr. 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 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 upon behind the smashed windows and the lattice work of the building we could clearly see how their guns were aiming 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 them shouted: “Not the old one, Sir. 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 Mr. Muhammad [an officer of the TKR] accompany Shaw into the building. And to facilitate discussions inside the building we requested Mr. Kundan [an Indian resident of Surabaya who acted as “official interpreter” for the Contact Bureau representative, that is Captain Shaw, Mr. Muhammad, and Mr. Kundan.

We ordered them not to stay long in the building. The command should be delivered within ten minutes. With the exception of Mr. Muhammad’s car, the conveyance 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 Internatio Building.

After almost ten minutes had passed, we saw Mr. Kundan emerge from the door and shouted to us that Captain Shaw and Mr. Muhammad required a few more minutes, when I saw a grenade explosion in front of the building from which had clearly been thrown from inside the building by the British unit, followed by a volley fire from the basement and 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. Most of the Contact Bureau members of the Indonesian side were outside the car, while General Mallaby with two members of his staff, Captain Smith and Captain Laughland still sat inside the car.

I saw clearly that those who commenced firing were the British and not our people. It is certain that this sudden burst of fire caused many casualties among the crowd and to our youth. 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. Mr. Sungkono, Tjak Doel Arnowo, Dr. Mursito (son-in-law of Mr. Dirman), Kusnandar and I, crouching to avoid the bullets, jumped straight into the Kali Mas and sheltered beside its bank. A moment later we were followed by several youth and other people whom we did not know, some among them bleeding from wound from British bullets. Instead, some fall from the road into Kali Mas river, and fall over to our shoulders, so that our clothes are splashed with blood. The firing from the building increased in intensity and also the retaliatory fire from our people and youth.

“Where is Mr. Dirman?” our question a moment later.

“He’s already secured,” said Dr. Mursito, son-in-law who always faithfully follows and accompanies his father-in-law.

This time Dr Mursito apart from Mr. Dirman, because of the noise and chaotic situation. But he saw how Mr. Dirman who was near the Jembatan Merah could be protected by some of our youth, and kept safely across to Kembang Jepun.

We were all relieved by the news that Mr. Dirman has been secured. When I was a student in HBS school, I assume that Mr. Dirman and his political party, PBI and Parindra, as “moderate” people and “political-sissy”, then I felt guilty, because in the turbulence situation of Surabaya all this time, his courage and loyalty were extraordinary in carrying out the ideals of the proclamation of independence. He was more faithful and braver than many bright-spoken youth which acting like cowboys. Pak Dirman never rest for all this time, his office and his home always open for us, and in the midst of anxiety and danger, he always came in the front row. Though his age at that time was elderly, compared with my generation who at that time in the age of 30 years in average.

Meanwhile there were several other youth who were able to escape from the British fire. One of them jumped to the edge of the Kali Mas River near us, then whispered to us: “It’s been fixed, Sir.”

“What’s been fixed?” asked Tjak Doel Arnowo.

“The British General, Sir. 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 youth

We were rather stunned at hearing the youth story and we instructed him: “Not a word. Don’t tell this story to anyone else!”

Indeed, a moment before the youth had jumped to the edge of Kali Mas River 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 meters from where we were taking cover.

In the meantime, the shooting went even more exciting. Dark started to declined.

In the meantime, in the midst of the darkness and the whizzing of bullets both fired from the Internatio Building as well as from our youth, then came the voice of Bung Tomo through his Rebel Radio, which was broadcast with a fiery voice, that in the front of Internatio Building there was a battle between the British army and us. It was also explained that Muhammad and Kundan were inside the building.

With this fiery Bung Tomo broadcast, ambulances were moving.

The clock shows at 6.30 pm. Some of the youth who took shelter with us started to crossing the river by swimming. The risk of being shot by British troops from the Internatio Building has decreased. But on the contrary, the river water began to rise up, and has reached half our bodies. We have to find a way out of the riverbank. Otherwise, we would be inundated by river water. The only way was through under the bridge which was somewhat deeper. By holding on tightly to each other, and slowly over the mud with water coming to our chest and neck, the five of us, namely Mr. Sungkono, Dr. Mursito, Kusnandar, Tjak Doel Arnowo, and me end up at the south side of Jembatan Merah. And therein where we could get out of the riverbank, because it’s beyond the firing target of the British troopers.

We walked to the central Police headquarter, to get a report on the progress of the situation. Apparently we heard that Mr. Dirman has arrived safely at his home, so did Kundan. Mr. Muhammad was still stuck in the Internatio Building. The report about the safety of other members of Contact Bureau could be asked and confirmed, with the exception of the members from the British side. Everything was reported by Tjak Doel Arnowo by telephone call to Mr. Surio. At past 09.00 pm, I arrived home with clothes full of mud-water and blood splashes.

What really caused the British troops to started shooting at us, when the members of Contact Bureau were still in the front of Internatio Building, awaiting for the Contact Bureau deputy Captain Shaw, Mr. Muhammad, and Kundan came out the building?

Let me point out here were what Kundan told as he accompanied Captain Shaw entered the Internatio Building.

Kundan stated that while he was standing close to General Mallaby car, he himself heard General 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 order to open fire. Apparently estimated that the people and youth will be in turmoil by the fire shot and will flee, so that the British troops will be able to break out of the building and went to the port area which in their control. Kundan remember the reaction of Captain Shaw, who said this would be very dangerous for the General Mallaby himself. But the General Mallaby considered that, as a military officer, he could not accept the surrender terms of the Indonesians. Apparently Mallaby has lost his patient. Meanwhile Kundan could not delivered what he have heard to us, because Captain Shaw and Mr. Muhammad had already entered the building, and he had to follow.

The Kundan testimony open up two aspects in this case. Firstly, it can be understood that General Mallaby opinionate that it is impossible for any military army to simply surrender its weapon to the people. But General Mallaby secret order to Captain Shaw behind us to start shooting within 10 minutes was a very unjustifiable attitude. It violates the military code and ethics.

Let us now pay attention to Mr. Muhammad statement about what he experienced on that Tuesday afternoon and evening of October 30, 1945 in the inside of the Internatio Building.

Mr. Muhammad who now [1973] resides in Telukbetung South Sumatra as a retired governor, recounted it as follows:

When we stepped through the door of the Internatio Building, we had to surrender our pistols to the guard who was fully armed; then we follow 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 telephone communication with their headquarters in Westerbuitenweg Street 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 running out, Kundan whispered to me that he did not trust their suspicious "goings on" and he straight-away left the waiting room. In fact I stood up with the intention of following Kundan, but two Indian soldiers 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 Mr. Soedirman, Resident, car was burnt out.

The fire from the building was answered by a fusillade from dozens of firearms outside the building until "*horen en zien verging*" (made hear and see fading). Unfortunately, the armchair that I sit in was located in the back of the glass wall, so that when the glass was hit, rain glass ruins fall over my head. Nevertheless I did not cringe, because if I was doomed to death I would only have a short moment to feel the pain. But I felt tense and really horrified when we heard the cue from outside to burn the Internatio Building. Fortunately, about 10:00 pm 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 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 1:00 pm the complete Indian unit stationed at the Internatio Building, vacated the building and was transported in TKR trucks to the British Headquarters at Westerbuitenweg Street and one hour later I was able to leave my detention room to a moving welcome from the crowd outside....."

So this is the statement of Mr. Muhammad. This information generally in line with the description of Kundan.