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Raffles and the Massacre at Palembang

(Palembang in 1811 en 1812: J. C. Baud. Bijdragen tot en Taal-
Land-en Volkenkunde Van N. I. No. 1 Amsterdam 1852)

by C. E. WURTZBURG, M.C.

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Baud's article sets out to prove that Raffles was morally responsible for the brutal massacre of the Dutch Garrison and their families at Palembang in 1811. As it is still quoted in modern works dealing with Java (e.g. *Nusantara*, by Vlekke)¹, I felt it incumbent on me to examine it in connection with my own book on Raffles. Mr. D. Rahusen of Amsterdam kindly obtained a copy for me. I am also indebted to Mr. C. M. Morrell of the British Chamber of Commerce for the N.E.I. for translating the Dutch Narrative, and to Sir Richard Winstedt, for translating Malay Letters appended to it.

The Author. J. C. Baud was born in 1789, and was educated partly in England. He entered the Dutch Navy and arrived in Java with Janssens in 1810. After the fall of Java he obtained an introduction to Assey, through du Puy (who was already employed in the British Secretariat), and by this means became an Assistant Secretary. He was related by marriage to Muntinghe; they had married half-sisters. According to Furnivall², Baud was a blatantly unscrupulous careerist. He discarded his principles and his friends with equal readiness, if he thought his own career could thus be advanced. His scheming was very successful for a time. After various posts in the Netherlands Indies and in Holland, he became Governor-General (1833/6), but that was the end of his active career. His capacity for the turning his coat had by then become too notorious. His article is clearly inspired by hatred of Raffles. Every shred of evidence is given the worst possible construction. Whether this hatred arose from some personal affront from Raffles, or whether from the then fashionable attitude (which would for Baud be an adequate reason), I do not know. The narrative is carelessly written. In spite of the various authorities that he claims to have consulted, he seems to have been unable to get all his facts right.

The Background. In 1811 Raffles was established at Malacca as Agent for the Governor General of India (Lord Minto) with the Malay States. In modern language he was performing the func-

¹ "Nusantara" B. H. M. Vlekke (Harvard 1945).

² "Netherlands India", Furnivall (London 1939).

tions of a Military Intelligence Officer, collecting information and preparing the way for the invasion of Java. Among his other responsibilities he had to try to establish friendly relations with the ruling Princes and if possible secure a promise of assistance, or at least neutrality, during the Java operations. The Sultan of Palembang (Mahmud Badru'd-din) was one of those with whom Raffles got into communication.

After the capture of Java Raffles, now Lieutenant Governor, sent a Mission to Palembang to report the fact, to replace the Dutch Resident by a British officer and to negotiate, if the time seemed propitious, a treaty with the Sultan. The Mission was received with great hostility and kept in complete isolation. It returned to Java without achieving anything, but with a strong suspicion that the Dutch Garrison at Palembang had been massacred. It was found on arrival at Batavia that the suspicion had been fully justified. While the Mission had been away some of Raffles's Malay couriers had managed to escape from Palembang and make their way to Batavia. They reported that the Dutch garrison had been tricked into leaving their fort on the pretext that there was a ship waiting to take them to Java, and had been brutally murdered. A punitive expedition was despatched by Raffles under Gillespie. The attack on Palembang, 60 miles up-river, was difficult and hazardous. But Gillespie, with his usual dash and gallantry, carried out the operation brilliantly. Badru'd-din fled into the interior, with the State treasure. His brother Najimu'd-din was installed in his place, and a treaty concluded whereby Bangka and Billiton were ceded to Great Britain.

The presence in the background of Badru'd-din who, apart from possessing the royal treasure, was a more forceful figure and more respected by the Malays than Najimu'd-din, created a difficult situation. In 1813 Robison, the British Resident, thought it expedient to re-instate Badru'd-din and Najimu'd-din agreed to abdicate. Badru'd-din sent ambassadors and 200,000 Spanish dollars to Batavia as evidence of his goodwill. Robison had acted without any authority and was suspected of having been bribed. Raffles rejected the arrangement. Najimu'd-din returned to the throne and Badru'd-din to the jungle.

After the Dutch had re-occupied Java, Muntinghe was sent to Palembang as Commissioner. He behaved in a very autocratic way and Najimu'd-din appealed to Raffles in Bencoolen. Salmond was sent to Palembang and was taken prisoner by Muntinghe. Badru'd-din was meantime intriguing to recover his throne and, it is alleged, was prepared to spend money to obtain his ends. He also sent to Batavia some letters which he had received from Raffles in 1811. These, he argued, showed that Raffles, and not he, was

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morally responsible for the murder of the Dutch garrison. These letters came very opportunely for the Dutch. They wanted to get rid of Najimu'd-din, if only because he had been put on the throne by the British; but to replace him by the Sultan who had murdered their compatriots presented some difficulty. Now they felt their consciences clear. Najimu'd-din was exiled to Java and Badru'd-din put on the throne. To finish the story, Badru'd-din proved to be a very different Sultan from his brother. He declared his independence, and it cost the Dutch several expeditions before they finally succeeded in overcoming him.

The Narrative. This opens with the varying opinions which writers have expressed as to how far Raffles can be held accountable for the massacre. One writer ascribes the massacre to the attempts of the Dutch Resident to check the excesses of the Sultan. Temminck examines Raffles's alleged guilt and rejects it. de Sturler convicts Raffles. Veth claims that it is quite inconsistent with what is known of Raffles's character. "A fortuitous circumstance" says Baud, "places us in a position to clarify the point at issue". This was the copies of the letters which Badru'd-din sent to Batavia, in 1816. Then follows a prejudiced and inaccurate account of Raffles's career to date, and his responsibility for the attack on Java. The part of the article which concerns us here then begins:—

"One of the native Princes whom Raffles approached was Mahmud Badru'd-din, Sultan of Palembang. The British Agent had formed an exaggerated picture of the importance of alliance with this Sultan: "The Sultan (thus we hear him say in a letter to Lord Minto) had for a long time owed large sums to the Government at Batavia. It was known that he was exceptionally rich and the possessor of considerable, long accumulated, treasure". He (Raffles) was nervous lest the Sultan might be afraid of Daendels's reactions and take steps to pay the amount owing, which at that moment would be of the greatest importance to the Marshal's resources. "I know (thus continues Raffles) that the Marshal had not only threatened the Sultan but was preparing measures to enforce payment. These circumstances urged me to open negotiations because, whether the Sultan accepts or rejects my proposals, at any rate they would cause him to stay his hand in regard to any settlement with Marshal Daendels, while fresh courage would be instilled into the peoples of Bantam and the Lampongs, disheartened as they were by their latest setbacks." (Note. Apparently Raffles here refers to the capture of Tji-bongor by the Dutch Troops despatched by Daendels in the year 1809. Tji-bongor lies in the Pepper Bay and was strengthened by the Bantam and Lampong peoples assisted by foreign pirates. From Raffles' words it appears moreover that

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Raden Intang, who at that time was the ringleader of the Bantam insurgents, was in close collusion with the British). "If the Sultan had fallen in with my suggestion, we should have won a powerful ally, with whose help we could have made a serious demonstration on the side of Bantam without weakening our main attack. Moreover the Sultan's voluntary association with us would have removed from him the results of the course of the war in Europe, while we, without further trouble, would have found ourselves in possession of the tin monopoly." (Memoir,³ p. 42).

"After thus having learned from Raffles himself why he had hastened to begin an exchange of notes with the Palembang Prince we will pass on to a consideration of the notes prefacing the remark that those who conveyed his notes and verbal messages were Raden Muhammad alias Tengku Shariff Muhammad, a Malay, and Sayid Abu-Bakar, an Arab, both residing at Pulau Pinang, who apparently to conceal their mission, disguised themselves as traders.

"The first note from Raffles to the Sultan is not known to us, but we have the second written five days later and dated the 17th of the month of Dzul-Kaidah of the year 1224 (11th December, 1809). In it Raffles made himself known to the Sultan as a great Ruler, representative of Gilbert Lord Minto, the Raja exalted above all Rulers in the country of Bengal, who bowed before the flag of the King of England.

"After having recalled that, at the command of the Governor-General of British India, he wished to enter into negotiations with all the Malay Rulers, Raffles said he was first addressing the Palembang Sultan for whom he entertained a special affection and with whom he wished to enter into friendship, to the exclusion of others, *above all* the Dutch." Of what use (he asked) is it for my friend to allow the Dutch to remain in Palembang? They are malicious and will travel with my friend along the road to evil." (See Supplement No. 1).⁴

"Apparently this letter was transmitted by three British warships, as stated in a communication of the same date addressed to the *heads of Sunsang*, a village at the mouth of the Palembang river, whose residents are reassured that the intention of the British ships was the expulsion of the Dutch: "for whom" so Raffles concludes "you people cannot entertain

³ Memoir of the Life & Public Services of Sir T. S. Raffles by his widow (London 1830).

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friendship without becoming my enemies and those of all the British". (See Supplement No. 2)⁴

"In the next note written on the 8th day of the month Saafar 1225 (March 2nd 1811) Raffles expresses his satisfaction at the tenor and sincerity of one of the Sultan's replies; but at the same time is disappointed that no accredited representative has reached Malacca with whom everything could be discussed. Therefore Raffles now clearly states what he actually desires, for there is no time for longer deliberations; the matter must be settled without further postponement; further delay will not benefit the Sultan; *action must be taken*. To move the Sultan to speedy action, Raffles resorts to untruth, or at least to exaggeration, and endeavours to frighten the Sultan into throwing out the Dutch; "who" says he, "have recently and in secret brought arms into Palembang and have established a war centre (*tempat-perang*) at Tulang Bawang". (A village in the Lampongs not far from the Palembang boundaries). If this has taken place without your knowledge then you should exchange no further words with the Dutch, but cancel the existing treaty and ask for help from your real friends, the British."

"What is specially required of the Sultan is set out in three points. We will not dwell on the *first* which concerns relations with the British, or on the *third* touching the trade in tin and pepper; but will here furnish a literal translation of the *second* point, as the Sultan has referred to it in extenuation of the murder of the Dutch garrison. The passage reads as follows:—"In the second place you must throw out and destroy (*buang habiskan sa-kali-kali*) all the Dutch as well as their Resident, and those who reside in Palembang under Dutch rule. In future allow no (Dutchmen) to reside or enter. Dutch residents can do no good. No Dutchmen should be allowed to enter the country of Palembang nor any other white people except the British. Should the British desire to have a trading place (*loji*) they should be allowed to do so on conditions to be determined later."

"In another part of the letter is to be found an urgent warning to delay no longer:—"If the present moment is allowed to slip by, action will be useless."

"Finally Raffles's letter contains some pointers and advice in the event of the Sultan not wishing to break with the Dutch then and there. A complete copy of the treaty he wants

⁴ Summarised in the Appendix.

concluded is, he says, in the possession of Raden Muhammad; it lacks nothing but the signature, stamps and dates; the Sultan can affix these and then hand the deed to Raden Muhammad, who will return it when Raffles also has ratified the instrument. This can all be done secretly; an *English* ambassador will be publicly appointed when the Sultan desires. (See Supplement No. 3).⁵

“Apparently the Sultan did not ratify the agreement sent him, and Raden Muhammad returned with an evasive answer. (See Memoir, p. 43.)

“The next letter in the collection is of the 11th day of the month Rabiul-akhir of the year 1226 (22nd April 1811) and presses the Sultan for a decision; at the same time warning him that the Government vessel which conveys the letter can not remain longer than 24 hours, as the time has arrived to assemble all the ships destined to leave for Java.

“Raffles continues: ‘As the Dutch are still in Palembang, I am sending *four cases of Government rifles*. Each case contains *twenty rifles—thus there are eighty in the four cases*. In addition there are *ten sealed baskets (krepik) containing cartridges filled with powder and shot*. I hope that you will receive all these in good order. You should write me quickly in regard to anything else you need — ships, men, arms.’

“Finally he sends to the Sultan copies of former letters entrusted to Raden Muhammad, because, he says, I do not know whether they have been received or not. (See Supplement 4).⁶

“The last letter in our collection was written to the Sultan by Captain Macdonald, conveying an order concerning a warship anchored in the Palembang estuary. He mentions a letter to be handed to the Sultan by his own hand, but, as Raden Muhammad and Sayid Abu-Bakar have told him that the Sultan’s residence is far from the anchorage, he sends Sayid Abu-Bakar in his place to deliver both the letters and *four cases of rifles and ten cases of gunpowder* and he expresses his desire that the Sultan send him someone of good standing: ‘to whom he can confide the instructions received from a higher level in regard to the *Dutch*, and from whom he can learn what are the Sultan’s orders about the *Dutch*.’ (See Supplement No. 5).⁶

⁵ See Appendix.

⁶ See Appendix.

"The reply to this letter is not known to us, nor if further negotiations took place. From Raffles's notes one is led to think he drew his emissaries' attention to the island of Bangka when it appeared that the desired result at Palembang was not to be obtained as quickly as he wished. ('Suspecting from the procrastination of the Sultan of Palembang the turn which the negotiations were likely to take and being aware of the immense importance of the island of Bangka, I directed my agents to use every means in their power to obtain the most particular account of the island and its productions, as well as of the nature of the Government and the disposition of the inhabitants.' (Memoir, p. 43). Moreover we discover that the emissaries were at Muntok (Bangka) on July 22nd, 1811, under instructions from Raffles to await him there until further orders, or to follow him to Batavia if the Sultan did not grant them permission to remain at Muntok. It appears further that at the invitation of the Sultan, they had proceeded from Bangka to Palembang, where they were when the massacre took place. (See Supplement No. 6).⁷

"Properly to understand Raffles's orders quoted above and the rest of this narrative, it must be remembered that the British expedition of ninety sail left Malacca on June 18th, 1811 and dropped anchor off Batavia on August 4th; that after a series of engagements the strong fortified encampment at Meester-Cornelis was occupied by the British; that on the 11th September Lord Minto issued a proclamation at Batavia declaring that Java and dependencies had become one of the territories of the British East India Company, and that General Janssens capitulated on the 18th of the month, when that part of Java not yet in British possession, as well as the outer possessions, were surrendered to the British.

"We have seen that the Sultan was for a long time fruitlessly urged by Raffles to *act*. On September 14th, 1811, he decided to do so. The Dutch fort was overpowered by means of a trick and then sacked and, together with the adjoining buildings, was demolished; the officials and soldiers (24 European and 63 Javanese) were thrown into a boat, taken down stream and put to death. Unwillingly one observes in this bloody event the fulfilment of what was so urgently recommended to the Sultan—*throw out and destroy*.

"The details are related in some of the books referred to on the first page. Raffles's two emissaries who, as stated were in Palembang at the time of the massacre, and two persons

⁷ See Appendix.

who escaped the bloodbath, Willem van de Wetering Buys and his sister Louise wife of the second Resident, Haarvlegter, who was also murdered, have produced narratives less generally known. (see Supplements 6, 7 & 8).⁸

“At the beginning of November, 1811, the occurrence was not yet known in Batavia. Mr. Raffles, since September 11 vested with the dignity of Lieutenant-Governor, sent a Commission to Palembang to take over the factory in accordance with the capitulation of September 18th, to renew the old treaties (with some modifications) and to instal a British Resident, Lieutenant Jackson. The Sultan refused to adopt the Commission’s proposals; he held its members in a state of captivity, so that they had no free intercourse with the residents, and he made it known that he had had the fort and buildings demolished after having sent away all the Dutch; that he had done all this at the desire of the British Government and before the conquest of Java was completed and considered himself restored to independence. The Commission returned to Java, not knowing of the massacre, but suspecting, that something had taken place which had been concealed from them.

“Soon after the return of the Commission, in December, 1811, the secret was out. Mr. Raffles received Raden Muhammad’s and Sayid Abu-Bakar’s declaration from Malacca. (See Supplement No. 6). It was then decided to send an expedition to Palembang, which, however, in view of the then prevailing west monsoon, could not leave till March 1812. Palembang was occupied, the Sultan Mahmud Badru’d-din who had fled to the interior was dethroned and his brother Ahmad Najimu’d-din installed in his place, in return for the cession of Bangka and Billiton.

“The public documents drawn up in this connection by Raffles are very remarkable. He ascribes the *causus belli* not to the massacre of 14th September, 1811, but to the commission of butchery *after the Dutch had invoked the protection of the British power already established in Java.*¹⁰ (‘Having taken into full and mature consideration all the circumstances connected with the conduct of the Sultan of Palembang; the barbarous and treacherous manner in which that Prince directed the murder of the European Resident and establishment, *after they had claimed the protection of the British power, already, paramount on Java*’ and further ‘the

⁸ Not reproduced.

⁹ Not reproduced.

¹⁰ Baud states that this protection was not claimed by the Dutch.

demolition of the fort and public buildings and the indiscriminate destruction of European property of every description, *after being aware of the success of the British arms on Java*, (Java Govt. Gazette extraordinary, 30th May, 1812.).

“Observe here what appears to us must be the conclusion of every well-informed neutral reader of the documents in question.

“The promotion of the success of the expedition against Java was the mainspring which motivated Raffles’s actions; the idea of the expedition had no sooner arisen than he saw in it a means of satisfying his ambitions. It speaks for itself that anyone of his stamp, placed as he was, would not easily allow objections to restrain him and would not have been specially scrupulous in the choice of his methods. Open alliance with the Sultan of Palembang could, it appeared to him, powerfully contribute towards the conquest of Java; and so he continued his efforts to persuade the Monarch to be a party to this, so that he would have irrevocably broken with the Dutch Government and would have been obliged to seek his salvation in the friendship of Britain.

“That Raffles, by use of the expressions, ‘throw out and destroy’ (*buang habiskan sa-kali-kali*) would have expressly meant a massacre in cold blood, may be open to doubt. But he egged on the Sultan to overpower the fort, and sent him firearms, powder and shot for that purpose. Now one cannot well accept that, knowing as he did the mentality and character of the Malays, and knowing that the giving of quarter is rare in their methods of warfare, Raffles would have imagined that Sultan Mahmud Badru’d-din having overwhelmed the fort would treat with magnanimity prisoners repeatedly represented to him by Raffles as his bitterest enemies.

“If in addition there is taken into consideration, that in the documents published in 1812 Raffles considers the massacre punishable, not so much in the abstract as in connection with the time when it took place, then we shall not be accused of exaggeration when we suggest that even if it had occurred to him that his inflammatory letters might well cause the sacrifice of the Dutch at Palembang, he would not have been deflected from sending them, as long as he cherished the hope of thereby furthering the attainment of his ambitious objectives. The Netherlands Directors General have therefore said none to much, when in their well-known protest, of 5th October, 1818, about the machinations which led to the Palembang massacre they declared:—‘it should have been foreseen that

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this was bound to be the outcome of these underhand, manifestly imprudent and indelicate, if not criminal, activities—activities which as a form of policy must be condemned; which even in a state of war are morally indefensible; which could compromise the honour and interests of a nation, however high its standard of political honesty.’”

The latter part of the article does not really concern us. Briefly, Baud produces an involved legalistic argument to prove that Raffles, in dealing with Palembang, juggled for his own discreditable purposes with the short period between the capture of Meester Cornelis when the English became *de facto* rulers of Java, and the capitulation of Janssens, when they became *de jure* masters of such parts of Java and its dependencies as they did not already control *de facto*. Baud then goes on to prove—to his own satisfaction—that the Sultan of Palembang very cleverly made his move after the victory of the British was assured, but before the sovereignty legally passed to the British by the official capitulation. Personally I question if Raffles ever appreciated the subtle point raised by Baud or would have thought much of it, if he had. That the Sultan was so versed in legal technicalities seems even less credible.

An abstract of the Malay letters referred to by Baud will be found in the Appendix.

Commentary. Baud makes great capital out of the Malay phrase *buang habiskan sa-kali-kali* which he interprets to mean “throw out and destroy”. It is true that the Malay letters sent by Raffles are, according to Sir Richard Winstedt, in execrable Malay. (It is a pity that Raffles did not ask Farquhar to assist him. Farquhar’s scribe wrote impeccable Malay). At the same time this phrase does not, in fact, mean what Baud says it does. It means “evict without exception” or “get completely rid of”. It might have a sinister meaning, but not necessarily or even probably in this context. In any case it is not a direct incitement to murder, as Baud would have us believe.

It has been noted by Baud that the first letter of the series sent by the Sultan to Batavia, had a reference to an earlier letter, a copy of which was stated to be enclosed with it. The Sultan did not send this enclosure to Batavia, and I suggest he did not do so deliberately. A draft of it (in English) is to be found in the India Office Library (Raffles Collection Vol. IV). It is undated, but undoubtedly it is the letter in question.

After reporting his arrival at Malacca for the purpose of explaining the seizure of native craft by British naval vessels (this

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was the ostensible object of Raffles's appointment as Agent to the Governor General—i.e. in modern parlance the "cover" story), Raffles refers to news he has received of a Dutch force proceeding to the Palembang River. In reference to this he writes:—

"Since my arrival at Malacca I have heard with much concern of the approach of a Dutch Force to the mouth of the Palembang River and I lose no time in despatching this letter to put your Majesty on your guard against the evil machinations of the Dutch, a Nation that is desirous of enriching itself from the property of your Majesty, as it has done with that of every Prince of the East with whom it has had connection. . . . I would recommend your Majesty to drive them out of your country at once, but if your Majesty has reasons for not doing so and is desirous of the friendship and assistance of the English, let your Majesty inform me thereof in a letter, stating every particular and send a Confidential Agent of ability and discretion to negotiate with me at Malacca. For I have power over many ships of war and if I think proper to do it, I can drive the Dutch out even if they were 10,000 in number."

This at once puts a different interpretation on the letters. The arms and ammunition sent and the encouragement to "evict" the Dutch "without exception" do not refer just to the Resident and his tiny garrison, but to a threatened invasion of Palembang. Evidence exists to prove that Raffles really had received some news to warrant him writing thus to the Sultan, because in fact three Dutch cruisers of four guns each, four gun-boats and ten merchant vessels had left Java for, and did arrive at, Palembang. It is true that their object apparently was to obtain tin, which the Sultan refused to give them, except for hard cash, but Raffles could not be aware of their exact purpose till he subsequently received a despatch from Captain Bowen of the *Phoenix*, dated 23rd January, 1811, reporting why this expedition had come, and that it had now departed. Probably the original news of the fleet movement had reached Raffles from the same source.

Raffles had written to Minto on 15th December, 1810 (before he knew what the Dutch fleet was up to) as follows:¹¹—

"As the Sultan of Palembang is one of the richest of the Malay Chieftains and is literally said to have godowns stored with Dollars and Gold hoarded by his ancestors, I have considered it a point of some importance to prevent Daendels from availing himself of this extensive source of supply and in

¹¹ India Office Library—Raffles Collection Vol. XIII.

consequence wrote to the Sultan immediately on my arrival here, urging him to be on his guard against Dutch operations and assuring him of the friendship of the English should he be desirous of getting rid of them. Having since heard that part of the Dutch vessels have been permitted to go up the River and that they are likely to succeed in whatever object they have in view, I have this day despatched a Second Letter entrusted to Tengku Muhammad, a relation of the Sultan's. . ."

In the India Office Library there are drafts or translations of further correspondence between Raffles and the Sultan. It is difficult to follow, as several of the letters are undated and their sequence cannot be determined with accuracy. But one thing emerges clearly from a Memorandum handed to Tengku Radin Muhammad (together with a draft treaty to be taken to the Sultan—this included a clause that he should dismiss the Dutch Resident) and that is that Raffles was trying to induce the Sultan to throw over his allegiance to the Dutch *before* the British invasion of Java. Raffles had his eyes firmly fixed on Bangka and Billiton. If Palembang asserted its independence before Java was captured, the British could then make a treaty with an independent sovereign for the cession of Bangka. This would remain a British possession, even if Java was restored later to the Dutch. The Memorandum explains this, without of course referring in any way to Bangka.

The Sultan naturally played for time. He wrote to Raffles that he had no wish to get mixed up in strife between the British and the Dutch, but he had asked Batavia to re-call the Resident forthwith. "If . . . any fault should occur on the part of the Hollanders, we shall immediately accomplish our object by force, but if we were so to act without reason, we should undoubtedly be blamed by our friend for our conduct." (This reads curiously in the light of events):

In a subsequent letter the Sultan referred again to the recall of the Resident and the other Hollanders and added this rather sinister remark "If they (the authorities in Java) are not speedy in taking them off, some misfortune will befall them and the blame will not be mine."

Probably it was as a result of this letter that Captain MacDonald was particularly asked by Raffles to try to arrange for the evacuation of the Resident and party, to Malacca, as MacDonald records in his *Narrative*.¹² According to MacDonald the Sultan refused, for fear the Dutch might take reprisals on his relatives who were then in Batavia. One wonders whether the

12 "Narrative of early life and services of Captain D. Macdonald, I.N." (3rd Edition, Weymouth N.D.).

following message from the Sultan to Raffles refers to the request Raffles had made through MacDonal. The Sultan in acknowledging a letter received through MacDonal writes "With regard to the Hollanders in the kingdom of Palembang, we request our friend to entertain no doubts or displeasure."

Raffles left with Minto for Java without reaching any finality with Palembang. The Sultan waited till he was sure who was winning in Java and then proclaimed his independence and signalled it by butchering the Dutch.

Raffles wrote to Minto on 12th January, 1812—"It appears that the Sultan, as was expected, allowed the Dutch Factory to remain until he heard of the fall of Java and then like a villain (most unexpectedly) ordered them away and Report, too true I fear, [says] allowed them to be cut off and murdered, for no soul of them has ever reached a European port. He has razed the Dutch Fort and Storehouses to the ground and declared his independence, covering himself as well as he can by his confidence in the known liberality of the E. I. Government. . . .two Ambassadors are now here from Palembang. . . .in his letters the Sultan informs me they (the Dutch) were sent away before the Expedition. . . ."

While it can no doubt be argued that at that period to encourage the eviction of the Hollanders, inevitably exposed the Dutch Resident and party to the risk of being murdered. I cannot agree that this forces one to the conclusion that Raffles was morally guilty of that murder; still less that he deliberately incited the Sultan to commit the crime, as Baud asserts.

Britain was at war with the Dutch and was therefore perfectly entitled to try to detach Dutch subsidiaries from her and to arm them to expel the Dutch or resist any incursion by the Dutch. The arms and ammunition clearly were not sent to Palembang for the purpose of murdering the Resident. They were sent to assist the Sultan to expel or resist Dutch armed forces. The Sultan did not require them to murder the Dutch and did not, in fact, use them for that purpose. As far as the British were concerned, the negotiations with Palembang were abortive. The Sultan had no intention whatever of making any treaty with us. His plan was to sit on the fence. If the Dutch won, he did nothing. If they were beaten, he intended to proclaim his independence, counting on the pre-occupation of the English victors in Java to leave him alone, or confident that he could successfully withstand their attack if they did come against him. He would have murdered the Resident and his party just as he would have declared his independence, if he had never received a word from Raffles at Malacca. But for

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the escape of Raffles's couriers, the Sultan would have persisted in his story that the garrison had sailed away, and must have been lost at sea.

When he found that his secret had come out, and still more when he realised he had gravely underestimated the energy and the bravery of the British and had to flee, the Sultan never suggested that he had only been doing what Raffles had asked him to do. When Robison, acting on his own authority, put him back on the throne, the Sultan sent 200,000 Spanish Dollars to Batavia as a mark of goodwill; but again did not plead that he had only been acting on the advice of Raffles. Nor did he do so when Raffles repudiated Robison's treaty.

When the Dutch returned and were obviously trying to get rid of his brother because he had been put on the throne by the British, Badru'ddin was astute enough to see that if he could find some excuse for the Dutch to restore him to his throne, in spite of the murder of their compatriots, they would certainly reinstate him. The selection of letters he sent privately to Batavia provided the excuse. What the Dutch did not see, however, was the complete correspondence, particularly the first letter Raffles ever wrote to the Sultan, with its emphasis on the prospect of a Dutch invasion of Palembang. Nor could they foresee that the Sultan was still playing his own game. That they discovered only when they had put him back on the throne, and had to fight hard to get rid of him again.

I have gone to some trouble to examine Baud's case against Raffles, because in spite of his hatred of Raffles, it is sufficiently plausible to require an answer. But having done that I should add that, while in his political manoeuvres Raffles, like his Dutch adversaries, sailed at times pretty close to the wind, I entirely agree with Professor Veth that murder was not in keeping with his well-known character.

Appendix.

Correspondence contained in the Supplement to Baud's article, summarised in English by Sir Richard Winstedt.

First letter. Reports arrival at Malacca and goes on "I am very fond of you and beg you become my candid friend and not to be friendly hereafter with others. What is the use of letting the Dutch live in Palembang? They are very bad people and want to take a bad line with you. So I am very sorry you are not good friends with the English Company. If you want to be its friend, you must make up your mind and reply to this and my former letter and with (sic) all the negotiations with you I ask you to send a representative (*Wakil*) to me."

Second letter. "3 warships have arrived here and I hear that there are Dutch ships before Palembang and now I want to chase them and don't be afraid

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I shall do any harm to Malays, great and small. Do not fear and do not consort with the Dutch because I am ordering warships to chase the Dutch ships. But if you consort with the Dutch, you will become the enemy of me and all the English".

Third letter. Raffles acknowledges with pleasure the letter sent through Radin Mahomed, but regrets no envoy has come from Palembang. The Dutch are before Palembang."¹³ So the Sultan should at once ask the help of the English as follows:—

- (1) From now on you must make an agreement with the English that shall last as long as the sun and the moon.
- (2) You must evict (*buang*) *all* the Dutch without exception and their Resident and all their dependents; do not let them live in Palembang. Henceforth let no Dutch or other foreigners live in Palembang but let the English open a lodge (*loge*) if they wish."
- (3) You must give the English permission to buy tin, pepper, etc. and not sell to other ships without a British pass.
- (4) You must send an envoy to Malacca and I will send one to Palembang to fix up an agreement. Meanwhile I send Radin Mahomed as my Agent.

Fourth letter. Deplores no answer from Palembang and now sends for a reply by a ship that can only wait 24 hours, because a naval fleet is leaving Malacca to attack Java. As the Dutch are at Palembang I send four cases of 80 muskets in all as well as 10 baskets of cartridges filled with powder and shot. I can send you whatever you want, ships, men or arms (22.4.1811).

Fifth letter. Captain MacDonald encloses a letter from the Governor General of Bengal who has ordered him to take it himself. But he sends Sayid Abubakar with two letters, one from the Governor General and one from himself, with four cases of muskets, 10 cases of gunpowder. "As for the Dutch, I am instructed by the Big Man to evict them but it will be as you wish."

¹³ The Malay is very confused and it is not clear whether the Dutch have set up a secret store of arms or whether Raffles is proposing to do so. Sir Richard Winstedt believes the latter is the correct interpretation.