

THE POLITICAL MOVEMENT OF THE UNITY OF ULAMA THROUGHOUT ACEH (PUSA) AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE IN ACEH 1939-1962

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Abstract: The All Aceh Ulama Association (PUSA) is where reformist clerics from Aceh gather. PUSA was born based on their concerns about the socio-religious conditions in Aceh, which were trapped in rigid Islamic practices, so there had to be a breakthrough to change the education system in Aceh to make it more advanced. Since the first PUSA congress in 1940, this organization began to serve as a forum for conveying people's aspirations so that PUSA was actively involved in a series of political events in Aceh. The written discussion focuses on the period from 1939, the year of PUSA's formation, until 1962, the end of PUSA's political influence. This research is a social history study, so a socio-political approach is used to analyze the PUSA political movement. Meanwhile, the four method steps in research are heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography. The research results show that the political action carried out by PUSA aims to fight for Aceh to be free from all forms of colonialism and to implement Islamic Sharia. Some forms of PUSA political movements include holding a congress in Sigli, diplomacy with Japan, carrying out a rebellion against the Dutch, eradicating feudal practices and *uleebalang* power, and fighting for Aceh's rights in national politics in the DI/TII rebellion.

Keywords: PUSA, Political Movement, Aceh

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Introduction

Aceh, in the early 20th century, experienced a massive form of oppression from Dutch colonialists. In various sectors, the Dutch continued to carry out policies to weaken all forms of struggle of the Acehese people. In politics, the Dutch implemented a *devide et impera* policy, resulting in social segregation. The Dutch made a separation between ulama and *uleebalang*.¹ The ulama, who represented the people's struggle, became a group highly oppressed by the Dutch. In contrast, the *uleebalang* became a group supported by the Dutch by providing privileged status for them. This condition made many ulama furious and wanted to fight against the Dutch.

Physical resistance did not produce significant results then because the Dutch had more substantial weapons and military strength than the Acehese fighters. The struggle began to shift from physical resistance to struggle in the form of social and political organizations. Moreover, at that time in Aceh, modern national movement organizations were emerging, such as Serikat Islam (1916), Senkat Aceh Muda (1916), Serikat Aceh (1916), Boedi Oetomo (1918), Volkronderwijsbond Aceh (1918), Islam menjadi Satu (1919), Insulinde (1919), Kongsi Atjeh Sumatra (July 1920), Muhammadiyah (1927), Al-Muslim (1929), Pusaka (1929), JIB (1930), Taman Siswa (1932), and Parindra (1939)². That inspired Acehese scholars to want to form an organization that could be a forum for their struggle.

Issues in the field of education, Aceh also experienced very complicated problems. The Dutch ordered their military forces to continuously monitor every movement of education taught in *dayah* as a traditional educational institution in Aceh. Because they were worried that if *dayah* educational institutions continued to develop, *dayah* may

¹Dalam buku "*The Acehese*" yang kemudian diterjemahkan menjadi "*Aceh di Mata Kolonialis*" ditulis oleh Snouck Hurgronje, menjelaskan bahwa *uleebalang* atau kelompok bangsawan merupakan seorang yang dipertuan di wilayah atau negerinya masing-masing. Posisi mereka ini sebagai kepala wilayah *par excellence*. Sumber Snouck Hurgronje, *Aceh Di Mata Kolonialis* (Jakarta: Yayasan Soko Guru, 1985), 99.

² Rusdi Sufi, *Gerakan Nasionalisme Di Aceh (1900-1942)* (Banda Aceh: Balai Kajian Sejarah dan Nilai Trasional Banda Aceh, 1998), 87.

give birth to militant ulama and student figures so that they would again carry out massive resistance to the colonial government.

Their decision was extreme enough to burn down many traditional dayahs complete with their libraries. That has made the people of Aceh lose many great scholars and valuable sources of knowledge in the form of the work of great scholars in various disciplines, both Acehnese scholars and Middle Eastern scholars.³ Provocation and intimidation from the colonial government, which constantly monitored the activities of traditional education in Aceh, as well as many ulama and their followers who were still concerned with worship for the hereafter only, had made the people of Aceh narrow-minded in their understanding of Islam.

Those who study in this dayah strongly reject all knowledge produced by the West, such as English, mathematics, and other general sciences considered taboo and as the science of infidels.⁴ This view is then supported by some ulama who forbid knowledge from the West because it is considered not part of Islamic culture. Ultimately, this impacted the concept of dayah education, which continued to focus on religious studies alone without any desire for change toward progress.

Some modern scholars in Aceh have responded to this stagnant period. They have established educational institutions with Madrasah models that try to erase the general view of the Acehnese people in understanding Islam. The great desire possessed by these modern-minded scholars brought them to a moment to establish an association. This desire was further strengthened by a letter sent by Teungku Abdul Hamid Samalanga when he was studying religious knowledge in Mecca. This letter became a legitimization to hasten the formation of a forum that would focus on the movement to fix social and spiritual problems in Aceh.

Finally, on May 5, 1939, in Peusangan, Bireuen, this association was officially formed and named the All Aceh Ulama Association,

³ Marhamah, "Pendidikan Dayah Dan Perkembangannya Di Aceh," *At-Ta'dib: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Agama Islam* 10, no. 1 (2018): 74.

⁴ M Anis, "Peran PUSA Terhadap Lembaga Pendidikan Madrasah Di Aceh Awal Abad XX," *Jurnal Seunenbok Lada* 2, no. 1 (2015): 60.

which was then familiarly known as the PUSA organization.⁵ The establishment of this organization brought good news for the changing face of education and social religion in Aceh. In its first congress, the scholars who attended formulated the direction of the PUSA movement, resulting in an agreement that PUSA would focus on three issues: *First*, efforts to maintain the spread of Islam. *Second*, to unify the understanding of the law. *Third*, to improve and unify the leer plan of religious lessons in religious schools. It was *fourth*, establishing a higher education institution and educating the youth in religion.⁶

With the dynamics of the problems in Aceh becoming more complex, the PUSA organization slowly shifted from focusing on educational and religious issues to becoming active in political movements. PUSA's involvement in political events in Aceh increased. This change began when, in 1941, some PUSA members began maneuvering politically by coming to diplomacy with the Japanese military in Malaysia.⁷ This diplomacy discussed the possibility of Japan assisting Aceh in expelling Dutch colonialism. That led to a rebellion by PUSA against the Dutch in early 1942.

This political movement continued after independence; in 1946, PUSA faced a dispute with fellow Acehnese, namely the aristocratic group or *uleebalang*, who was an elder in their respective region or country. In Aceh, the *uleebalang*, in addition to being the commander of the army, was also entrusted with heading the nanggroe or government by the Sultan of Aceh. They are usually titled Teuku for men and Cut for women.⁸

The dispute was caused by several factors, one of which occurred during the second Dutch aggression; this *uleebalang* group, with its political tactics, invited and expected the Dutch to regain

⁵ Agus Budi Wibowo, *Dinamika Dan Peran Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (PUSA)* (Banda Aceh: BPNB Aceh, 2005), 47.

⁶ Sufi, *Gerakan Nasionalisme Di Aceh (1900-1942)*.

⁷ Hasbi Amiruddin, *Perjuangan Ulama Aceh Di Tengah Konflik* (Banda Aceh: Ceninnets Press, 2004), 52.

⁸ Hasbullah, *Uleebalang: Dari Kesultanan Hingga Revolusi Sosial (1514-1946)*, 2015, 46.

control of Aceh.⁹ When under Dutch rule, this *uleebalang* group found a strategic position as regional rulers and was given special authority by the Dutch. Meanwhile, the ulama, who were members of PUSA, wanted the opposite, where they were unwilling if the Dutch had to come again. It was feared that this would torment the people of Aceh in the cruelty of colonialization of this windmill country. This difference led them to a social revolution known as the Cumbok War.

PUSA's involvement in the political arena was again present when Soekarno's policy unilaterally merged Aceh Province into the province of North Sumatra. This policy led to a rebellion driven by PUSA through its leader, Teungku Muhammad Daud Bereueh. This event eventually broke out and led to the Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia rebellion, better known as DI/TII, in 1953.¹⁰

This paper will limit its study to the political movements carried out by the PUSA organization. The period chosen is from 1939, the organization's beginning, until 1962, when PUSA lost its influence. That was marked by the end of the DI/TII rebellion and the establishment of peace in Aceh by granting special autonomy rights and forming the Aceh Special Region. The research questions that later became the formulation of the problem in this study are (1) What were the socio-political conditions in Aceh in the early 20th century (2) How was the history and development of the PUSA organization, (3) Why did PUSA as a forum for the association of ulama carry out political movements that had implications for socio-political life in Aceh.

In the search for previous apparatus that has discussed the theme of PUSA, several research results were found, including Hasbi Amiruddin (2004), who discusses the profile of Acehnese ulama and some of the central figures of PUSA and their thoughts. Agus Budi Wibowo (2005) discusses the history of the formation of the PUSA organization and the role and benefits of PUSA's presence in the social life of the Acehnese people. Hasanuddin Yusuf Adan (2014) describes

⁹ T Hajriansyach, "Perang Cumbok Di Aceh Pada 1945-1946," *Jurnal Ilmu Sejarah* 4, no. 6 (2019): 5.

¹⁰ M. Nur El Ibrahimy, *Teungku Muhammad Daud Bereueh Peranannya Dalam Pergolakan Di Aceh* (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 1986), 1.

the contributions and spirit that PUSA has made in helping the nation fight colonialism.

Furthermore, Madhan Anis (2015) discusses the distribution of madrasahs in Aceh in the 20th century and the role of PUSA as a gathering place for ulama. M. Nur El Ibrahimy (1986) discusses the role of PUSA's leader, Tgk. Daud Bereueh, in the DI/TII rebellion until the conflict resolution of the event. Hamdiah A. Latief (1992) discusses the contribution of the PUSA organization to educational reform in Aceh. Then Hasbi Amiruddin (2004) discusses the role of Acehese ulama in a series of conflict events in Aceh, including the role of PUSA when dealing with the Dutch and Japanese.

Based on these previous studies, this research focuses on how the political movement carried out by the PUSA organization and the influence it brought to the social and political life in Acehese society. That is interesting because PUSA, as an organization born to take care of educational and social diversity issues, transformed and became active in every political event in Aceh. They did not hesitate to invite the community to be involved in any rebellion against the rulers who were considered contrary to the Islamic provisions and values they adhered to.

The method used in the research is the historical method with a literature study approach. The first stage is heuristics, which is the process of collecting historical sources that are considered relevant and can contribute supporting data. The primary source in this research is a book written by M. Nur El Ibrahimy, a historical witness who was directly involved in PUSA's journey. There are also several archives of PUSA letters and proclamations and Dutch-language newspapers covering several events in Aceh concerning PUSA. Secondary sources are research reports that have been published in the form of books or journals.

After these sources are collected, the second stage is to conduct the verification process, which is checking the validity of a historical reference. This stage is also needed to criticize and sort out the sources most relevant to the research focus. The third stage is interpretation; this stage begins by providing performances of sources and data that

have been criticized before. By doing this interpretation and analysis, historical facts will be obtained about the transformation process of PUSA towards a political movement. After these three stages have been completed, the last stage in the historical method is historiography. The historical facts analyzed in this historiography will be presented as historical writing.

Result and Discussion

Socio-Political Conditions in Aceh in the 20th Century

In the early 20th century, Aceh experienced socio-political conditions controlled by Dutch colonialism. In various sectors, the Dutch continued to carry out policies to weaken all forms of struggle of the Acehnese people. In the field of education, the Dutch had implemented repressive measures against all lines of education in Aceh, which affected ulama and teungku as well as students in traditional Islamic educational institutions. This Dutch action was based on concern that if *dayah* educational institutions continued to develop, *dayah* may give birth to militant ulama and student figures so that they would again carry out massive resistance to the colonial government.¹¹ The Dutch finally implemented a reasonably strict policy to anticipate the potential for rebellion by supervising all *dayah* activities. Even their decision was quite extreme, burning down many traditional *dayahs* with libraries.

That has made the people of Aceh lose many great scholars and valuable sources of knowledge in the form of the work of great scholars in various disciplines of knowledge, both the result of Acehnese scholars and Middle Eastern scholars.¹² These events have constrained traditional education in Aceh, so it is not accessible to provide teaching knowledge related to progress and the spirit of struggle.

The only material that could be studied was about religious issues and pure worship, including the science of tawhid, kalam, tasawwuf, Arabic language, fiqh, and logic. In contrast to traditional

¹¹ Taufiq Abdullah, *Agama Dan Perubahan Sosial Di Aceh* (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 1993). 35

¹² Marhamah, "Pendidikan Dayah Dan Perkembangannya Di Aceh."

Acehnese education's rigid and old-fashioned nature, the Dutch colonial government had built modern educational institutions known as Dutch schools (*Kolonial Verslag*) and *volkschools*. These schools were specialized for Dutch children and some of the children of *uleebalang* or aristocrats who worked as employees of the colonial government.¹³

The politics of violence in practice could be considered a failure, so in the 20th century, the Dutch East Indies government changed its policy strategy to conquer Aceh and called the politics of pacification a continuation of the ideas of C. Snouck Hurgonje. The aim was to show a soft attitude towards the people of Aceh by showing a peaceful attitude through the political, economic, and cultural fields.

In the political field, the people of Aceh faced the social division implemented by the Dutch Government. They created a gap between the *ulama* and the *uleebalang* groups, which often caused social friction in the order of social life in Aceh. In addition, the Dutch also practiced *divide et impera* politics in Aceh by supporting the *uleebalang* to clash interests with the Acehnese *ulama*. The Dutch utilized several *uleebalang* with promises to accommodate their interests. The Dutch managed to bind some of these *uleebalang* with *Korte Verklaring*. After being extended in 1898, it was still renewed with the *Uniform Model Verklaring*.¹⁴

In this agreement, the Dutch emphasized the position of the *uleebalang* as king in their respective regions by giving him the place of *zelfbestuurder*. This kind of privilege has never been felt by the *ulama* group, which continues to be watched until it is ostracized because of their attitude that continues to rebel against the colonial government. Although the *uleebalang* were close to the Dutch, it did not mean that they fully accepted the presence of the Dutch because many of the feudals also fought against them. It can be seen from the enthusiasm of the *ulema* to establish religious schools, which is a form of resistance

¹³ Badrun Septian Fatianda, "Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (PUSA) Dan Reformasi Pendidikan Islam Di Aceh, 1939-1952," *Local History & Heritage* 2, no. 1 (2022): 23–30.

¹⁴ Hasbullah, *Uleebalang: Dari Kesultanan Hingga Revolusi Sosial (1514-1946)*.

to the establishment of secular schools owned by the colonial government.

The political turmoil in Aceh in the early 20th century also extended to the massive number of movements systematized in an organizational forum. The birth of national movement organizations on the island of Java also spread to Aceh. The community used this opportunity to join in the hope of contributing to expelling all forms of Dutch colonialism. Some examples of modern national movement organizations are the Serikat Islam (1916), Boedi Oetomo (1918), Islam menjadi Satu (1919), Insulinde (1919), Muhammadiyah (1927), Al-Muslim (1929), Taman Siswa (1932), and Parindra (1939).¹⁵

In addition, there were also organizations formed with a distinctive Acehnese style. The interest was to be able to fight for the aspirations of the Acehnese people who could not be conveyed in the national level organization. These organizations included Serikat Aceh Muda (1916), Atjeh Vereneging (1916), Volkronderwijsbond Aceh (1918), and Islam Kongsi Atjeh Sumatra (July 1920). However, this organization's presence has yet to change Aceh's fate, which still needs to catch up in the education sector and even its socio-political life.

Development of the PUSA Organization

The idea of forming the PUSA organization was influenced by the socio-religious conditions in Aceh in the early 20th century. It was when Aceh, a region with a strong Islamic faith, was trapped in rigid religious interpretations and practices. This condition also impacted Aceh's traditional education system, which experienced a significant decline. The most concrete evidence can be seen in educational institutions, namely *dayah* as a place for teaching and learning about Islam. In the *dayah* learning system, the sciences studied are only religious sciences for pure worship. Therefore, the curriculum applied only revolves around the science of tawhid, kalam, Sufism, Arabic language, fiqh, and logic.

¹⁵ Sufi, *Gerakan Nasionalisme Di Aceh (1900-1942)*.

Conditions were further exacerbated by the policies implemented by the Dutch government in Aceh. The Dutch ordered their military forces to continuously monitor every move of the education taught in this *dayah*. Because they are worried that if *dayah* educational institutions continue to develop, *dayah* may return and give birth to militant ulama and student figures so that they will again carry out massive resistance to the colonial government. Even their decision was quite extreme, burning down many traditional *dayahs* with libraries. That has made the people of Aceh lose many great scholars and valuable sources of knowledge in the form of the works of great scholars in various scientific disciplines, both the results of Acehnese scholars and Middle Eastern scholars.¹⁶

Provocation and intimidation from the colonial government, which kept a close eye on traditional education activities in Aceh, and the fact that many ulama and their followers were still concerned with worship for the afterlife alone made Acehnese people narrow-minded in their understanding of Islam. They firmly rejected all knowledge produced by the West, such as English, mathematics, and other general sciences, considered taboo and the science of infidels.¹⁷ This view is then supported by some ulama who forbid knowledge from the West because it is considered not included in the environment of Islamic science and culture. Finally, this impacts the concept of *dayah* education, which continues to be fixated on religious studies alone without wanting to change towards progress.

The issue was taken very seriously by several Acehnese scholars with modern views. The idea of Islamic reform in Aceh slowly began to find a bright spot, and this was reinforced by the arrival of a letter sent by Sheikh Abdul Hamid Samalanga in Mecca to Teungku Abdurrahman Meunasah Meucap. This letter contained information about the Ikhawanul Muslimin's success in modernizing Islamic education in Egypt and an invitation to advance education in Aceh.

¹⁶ Marhamah, "Pendidikan Dayah Dan Perkembangannya Di Aceh."

¹⁷ Anis, "Peran PUSA Terhadap Lembaga Pendidikan Madrasah Di Aceh Awal Abad XX."

This letter was welcomed and was accompanied by the emergence of madrasas that had slowly tried to face the direction of progress.

These modern-minded scholars then established Madrasahs as educational institutions that could combine religious and general knowledge. This idea was their proof to bring the people of Aceh towards progress. Some of the madrasahs that were established included *Madrasah Al-Khairiyah Mesjid Raya* in Banda Aceh, *Madrasah Al Muslim* in Peusangan, and *Madrasah Ablus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah* in the city of Idi.¹⁸ However, the presence of these madrasahs has yet to be able to entirely change the face of education and religion of the Acehnese people, who are still challenged to move in the direction of the times.

The issue raised concerns among some of the ulama, such as Tgk. Muhammad Daud Beureueh and Tgk. Abdurrahman to Tgk. Ismail Yakub, on that basis, an awareness arose to form a forum for the struggle that could unite the ulama in Aceh and improve the lives of Aceh, especially in education, society, and religion. Finally, Tgk Abdurrahman invited all prominent scholars in Aceh to attend a meeting between scholars on May 5, 1939, on the campus of Madrasah Al Muslim Peusangan, Matang Glumpang Dua, Bireuen. The deliberation resulted in the official formation of a regional organization called PUSA (Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh).

Following the Articles of Association of the PUSA organization, Tgk. Muhammad Daud Bereueh was appointed as chairman and Tgk. M. Nur El Ibrahimy as secretary. The center of PUSA's activities was located in the city of Sigli. The PUSA organization then expanded throughout Aceh in a short time. The objectives of the establishment of the PUSA movement were to broadcast, uphold, and defend the syiar of Islam; unify understanding on legal lighting; improve and unify the *leer plan* of religious lessons in religious schools; and strive to establish Islamic colleges and educate youth and sons and daughters of Islam in religion. The presence of the PUSA organization in the Acehnese community made the renewal of the religious education system in Aceh even more substantial, so many

¹⁸ Anis.

madrastas appeared in the Acehese region, which was born from the efforts of PUSA.

After obtaining agreement with all members, PUSA built a modern school named Normal Institute or Normal Islamic College. Tgk. M. Nur El Ibrahimy, a scholar who graduated from Al-Azhar University Cairo, was given the mandate to be the school's leader. In addition to appointing the head of the school, a Board of Trustees was also formed, which was managed by Tgk. Abdurrahman Meunasah Meucap. As a modern school that combines religious and general knowledge, the teachers used as teaching staff are experts such as Tgk. M. Nur El Ibrahimy teaches religious studies, Arabic, and Education Science. The second was Meneer Muhammad, a graduate of Rech Hoge School Jakarta who served as the teaching staff of general science, Dutch, and English.¹⁹

The rapid development of the Normal Institute has brought positive interest from the Acehese community towards the PUSA organization. Some Acehese people think that PUSA is a pioneer and a driving force for Aceh, which has been too rigid and old-fashioned. PUSA was stigmatized as the unifier of the Islamic Acehese community. Thus, the organization became very close to the people, even Tgk. Muhammad Daud Bereueh was held as the “Father of Aceh Consciousness.”²⁰ Although it received a lot of praise, there were still some people who disagreed and did not like the PUSA movement that wanted to eradicate falsehood and religious practices that had long been rooted in Aceh. Those who criticized were Tgk. M. Saleh Iboih and Tgk. M. Amin Jumboih was a conservative scholar from Pidie.²¹

The PUSA Political Movement and its Implications

As has been stated in various historical literature, PUSA, as one of the national movement organizations born and existing in Aceh, has become a role model and representative of the ulama's struggle in

¹⁹ Wibowo, *Dinamika Dan Peran Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (PUSA)*.

²⁰ Ismuha, “Mengenang Kembali Lahirnya PUSA, 30 Tahun Yang Lalu,” *Buletin Darussalam* (Banda Aceh, 1996), 46.

²¹ Wibowo, *Dinamika Dan Peran Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (PUSA)*.

fighting for the aspirations of the Acehese people. This organization was formed as a form of unity and contribution of the ulama to the socio-political conditions of Aceh, which at that time experienced setbacks in various sectors of life. We should be grateful that the emergence of these modern and reformist scholars has succeeded in gradually changing the life order of the Acehese people.

This change can only be done through political channels, so PUSA must make political efforts to fight for Aceh as a prosperous region in all lines of life. The following will explain a descriptive analysis related to the political movement carried out by the PUSA organization in Aceh.

1. PUSA Congress in 1940

In 1940, in Blang Asan, Sigli City, the PUSA organization held a grand meeting with all its members spread across all branches of the organization in Aceh. That was the first congress held by PUSA since its establishment in May 1939. In this congress, PUSA members from various social status backgrounds gathered. They included modernist ulama, conservative nationalist youth groups, and anti-colonial *uleebalang*. They attended with a mission to discuss their problems and aspirations. Interestingly, this congress also had guests from outside, namely Mahmud Yunus and Encik Rahman El Junusiyah from West Sumatra.

The congress was very tough, and there was much debate about the organization's continued influence on the people of Aceh. One of the speakers had to be taken down from the podium because his speech sharply criticized the political policies of the Dutch government. The Dutch supervised the congress but needed more power to dissolve it because of the large number of participants. Finally, with all the arguments and debates, the congress made three main decisions, namely:

- a. The formation of PUSA youth organizations named Kasyafatul Islam (KI) and Muslimat PUSA was led by Amir Husin Al Mujahid and Tgk. Nyak Asna Daud Beureueh (wife of Tgk. Mohd. Daud Beureueh).

- b. Establishing laws related to religious issues, supervising the PUSA movement following religious provisions, and forming the Majelis Taufiziah Syarriyah PUSA led by Tgk. H. Hasballah Indrapuri.
- c. Establish a PUSA Broadcasting and Publishing section focusing on publishing the official PUSA magazine.

With the results of this congress, PUSA began to develop in terms of organizational movements. The scope of its role began to expand by not only focusing on efforts to improve the education sector but, more than that, as a forum to fight for the aspirations of the Acehnese people to achieve independence and prosperity as soon as possible. Through the Broadcasting and Publishing section, PUSA also managed to publish the magazine "*Penyoeloh*" under the leadership of Tgk. Ismail Yakob. This magazine was published in Bireun and printed in Medan. This magazine played an important role as a source of information and a forum for Acehnese intellectuals to express their thoughts about the spirit of gaining independence.

2. Diplomacy with Japan in 1941-1942

The occupation and colonization of Aceh by the Dutch government made the people in PUSA furious, and they had to be expelled from Aceh as soon as possible. Various ways have been done to realize this mission. The scholars of PUSA often meet to discuss what strategies they can run, finally, after hearing that Japan had successfully controlled the Malaya region from British rule. The idea emerged from the ulama in PUSA to invite Japan to Aceh so that Japan's known strong military power could defeat the Dutch troops.²²

PUSA then sent a delegation to meet the Japanese in Penang, Malaya. The commission amounted to four people consisting of Tgk. Abdul Hamid Samalanga, H. Ahmad Batee, Tgk. Abdul Samad Seunebok Rambong, and Petua Husain. They departed from Aceh through the port of Idi using a ship. Arriving

²² Amiruddin, *Perjuangan Ulama Aceh Di Tengah Konflik*.

there, they met a group of Japanese people called Fujiwarakikan. The diplomacy process went smoothly, and the PUSA delegation requested the Japanese government to help them expel the Dutch from Aceh. Tgk. Abdul Hamid even asked for weapons for the benefit of the PUSA group when they wanted to attack the Dutch.²³

This request for cooperation was very well received by the Japanese, who at that time did have ambitions to become the sole ruler in the Asian region. This cooperation also opened the way for Japan to enter Aceh comfortably. There was a reason why PUSA was willing to accept collaboration with Japan. M. Joenos Djamil mentioned that PUSA had made a careful calculation to invite Japan to Aceh as the only best alternative to expel the Dutch. Because inevitably, one day, Japan will enter Aceh. According to him, the famously British solid troops alone could not stem the Japanese army, let alone Aceh, who could prevent Japan from entering Aceh.²⁴

3. Rebelled against the Dutch in 1942

PUSA officials had planted the seeds of hostility towards the Dutch throughout their scouting organization through Kasyafatul Islam (KI), an association of young people. Through this KI, the spirit of rebellion against the Dutch echoed throughout all corners of Aceh. They wanted to repeat the history of their ancestors who dared to die in the Sabi war. Finally, after receiving a positive response from all PUSA members and the people, this organization later established itself as a form of anti-Dutch Government movement that was dangerous.²⁵

After successfully cooperating and receiving Japanese assistance, PUSA felt optimistic about expelling the Dutch

²³ Ibrahimy, *Teungku Muhammad Daud Bereueh Peranannya Dalam Pergolakan Di Aceh*.

²⁴ M. Joenos Djamil, *Rinayat Barisan "F" (Fujimura Kikan)* (Kutaraja, 1944), 70.

²⁵ Ibrahimy, *Teungku Muhammad Daud Bereueh Peranannya Dalam Pergolakan Di Aceh*.

completely from Aceh. They then planned to carry out simultaneous attacks on Dutch government posts. This plan began with several PUSA leaders meeting at night at Teuku Nyak Arif's residence in Lamnyong, Banda Aceh. Those who attended the meeting were Tgk. Muhammad Daud Bereueh, Chairman of PUSA, Tgk. Abdul Wahab Seulimeum, Head of PUSA Aceh Raya Branch, Teuku Nyak Arif, Commander of Sagi XXVI Mukim, Teuku Ahmad *Uleebalang* Jeunib, and Teuku M. Ali Panglima Polem, Commander of Sagi XXII Mukim.²⁶

During the meeting, they agreed and swore allegiance to Islam, the nation, and the homeland. They were willing to cooperate with the Dai Nippon empire to fight the Dutch to formulate rebellion tactics on behalf of PUSA and the people of Aceh. After this meeting, the chairman of PUSA appointed Teuku Nyak Arif as the general advisor of PUSA in planning the rebellion against the Dutch. PUSA also prepared a welcome for the arrival of the Japanese army and was ready to support Japan's mission to become the ruler and protector of security in Greater East Asia.

The actual involvement of PUSA in political issues to try to achieve the goal of expelling the Dutch has been noted by Paul Van't Veer in his book states:

“However, it has also become a fact that the sons and grandsons of famous Acehnese heroes, such as the sagi commanders of the XXII and mukim XXVI, Teungku Panglima Polim and Teuku Nyak Arif, participated in these uprisings, but they were not the core. There were two types of core: the fifth colony formed by the Japanese on Penang Island and a religious organization, PUSA, which had acted as an underground movement in the resistance. The head of PUSA was Tgk. M. Daud Bereueh from Sigli, one of the most prominent leaders. The sagi commanders were more like participants than leaders.”²⁷

Van't Veer's statement above clearly describes PUSA as one of the crucial forces that threatened the continuity of the

²⁶ Ibrahimy.

²⁷ Paul Van't Veer, *Perang Belanda Di Aceh* (Banda Aceh: PDIA, 1981), 374.

Dutch government in Aceh and even in Indonesia. Action in this direction began in December 1941 when PUSA officials commanded by Daud Beureueh held a meeting at the residence of Teuku Nyak Arif. Even to emphasize the seriousness of PUSA to fight the Dutch physically, they conducted political diplomacy in 1942. As the only strong power from Asia, Japan was chosen to be a strategic partner in pounding the Dutch troops.²⁸

Tgk. Muhammad Daud Bereueh began to organize propaganda lines throughout Aceh that would be commanded by PUSA youth leaders and organizations. The planning of this attack started from Sigli, the headquarters of this organization. In February 1942, the first rebellion was launched in Seulimuem, Aceh Besar: the ulama, Tgk. Abdul Wahab Seulimuem and Tgk. Hasballah Indrapuri and the PUSA youth organized this rebellion. In March 1942, a second major rebellion occurred in Calang, then West Aceh. This rebellion was a political ploy by PUSA to push back the Dutch immediately. This courage was undoubtedly due to the support of the Japanese, who also wanted to expel all European influence from the Asian region.

4. Cumbok War and the Abolition of Feudalism in Aceh in 1946

The feudal system has long dominated the social fabric of Acehnese society. This system has existed since 1900, brought by the Dutch East Indies government. This condition made the Dutch approach the *uleebalang* group to be given privileges in managing the government in each territory and being authorized as landlords. The Dutch have succeeded in binding the *uleebalang* through the *Korte Verklaring* agreement, which has been extended since 1898 and updated to the *Uniform Model Verklaring*. In the agreement, the Dutch gave the position of *zelfbestuurder* to the *uleebalang*.

The powers granted to him gave him greater legitimacy, such as massive control over land; levies such as the 10% levy and

²⁸ Wibowo, *Dinamika Dan Peran Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (PUSA)*.

the implementation of inheritance law; transfer of ownership of land left to him by the owner; monopolies; confiscation of land; the right to mobilize forced labor; and taxes on irrigation. Some *uleebalang* are even still trying in a way that is not legal, such as embezzling taxes.²⁹ The activities carried out by the *uleebalang* were increased by the negative actions of a handful of *uleebalang* who violated Islamic law, such as gambling and madat (drunkenness), which, of course, disturbed the community. The *uleebalang's* almost unlimited power allows them to do whatever they want.³⁰

That caused outrage among the ulama, who were members of PUSA. They had long wanted to abolish the feudal system that had proven only to cause misery to the lower classes. The ulama's anger accumulated after Indonesia's independence in 1945. PUSA had planned a political strategy to attack and overthrow the feudal rulers in Aceh through a war known as the Cumbok War. This mission was finally accomplished during the Cumbok War, which resulted in a social revolution in Aceh.

The Cumbok War was a war between the ulama group and the *uleebalang* (noble) group, and this war was centered in the Pidie Aceh area. The battle, known as one of the forms of social revolution, lasted from December 4, 1945, until it ended on January 16, 1946. The Cumbok War was a form of PUSA's political movement to overthrow the feudal system run by the *uleebalang* group. PUSA wanted the democratic system to be practiced in Aceh without the intervention of the adherents of the feudal concept. As M. Nur El Ibrahimy said, replacing the feudal system with a democratic system is not a '*tueng bila*' or revenge. Why did the PUSA scholars immediately respond to the legal efforts of the central government so that the Cumbok Incident and the sad Social Revolution in Aceh's history could be avoided? The PUSA ulama asserted that if they did not act quickly to destroy

²⁹ Anthony Reid, *Perjuangan Rakyat, Revolusi, Dan Hancurnya Kerajaan Di Sumatra* (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1987), 65.

³⁰ Hasbullah, *Uleebalang: Dari Kesultanan Hingga Revolusi Sosial (1514-1946)*.

the Cumbok group, the Dutch would land in Aceh again. If this happened, it would complicate the struggle of the Republic of Indonesia because Aceh was the gateway for colonial powers to enter the Indonesian islands to the east of Aceh.³¹

On March 16, 1946, the PUSA and Pesindo Aceh clerical groups succeeded in arresting the *uleebalang*, who were considered to have betrayed independence by supporting the Dutch to control Indonesia. As a result of this tragedy, many of the *uleebalang* and their families were killed, and many decided to flee. After the Social Revolution, PUSA and the people chose to be represented by the Aceh Regional Liberation Army (TPR) in its session on March 12, 1946, which appointed a member of the general staff of the Sumatra command in Aceh, Teungku Amir Husin Al Mujahid.

A few weeks later, the *uleebalang* figures considered pro-Netherlands were asked to appear before the Deputy Resident of Aceh Teuku Muhammad Amin. These figures included Teuku Hamid Azwar, Syamaun Gaharu, Teungku Hasbi As Shiddieqie, Teuku Sheikh Ibrahim (Father), Teuku Husin Trumon, Teuku Lambaet, Teuku Ali Basyah Peukan Bada. To Teuku Muhammad Amin, they were deliberately detained to save them from public threats. That was done to protect them until an unspecified time limit. Teuku Nyak Arief, the former Resident of Aceh, was detained with his younger brother Teuku Abdul Hamid during his 'sick leave' as Resident of Aceh.

After the arrest, the feudal order in Aceh was officially abolished, but instead of solving the problem, it created a new trial. The problem was the debate over the ownership rights of the properties that the *uleebalang* group had left behind. This matter became so complicated that it had to be resolved at the national level by Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo in the plenary of the House of Representatives on November 2, 1953. He said that the matter, considered very complicated, needed to be handed over to another body with expertise in civil law issues. However, North

³¹ Ibrahimy, *Teungku Muhammad Daud Bereueh Peranannya Dalam Pergolakan Di Aceh*.

Sumatra Governor S. M. Amin disagreed with Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo's idea. The collection and inventory of *uleebalang* property was only completed a year after the Cumbok Incident and the Social Revolution passed. As a result, the relationship between PUSA and the *uleebalang* family in the issue of the inheritance of the *uleebalang* who had died in the excesses of the Cumbok Incident and the Social Revolution in Aceh triggered the outbreak of the DI/TII in Aceh in September 1953.³²

5. Response to National Politics and the DI/TII Rebellion

PUSA was one of the organizations that had matured administratively, and human resources required them to appear in political events. PUSA through its chairman Tgk. Muhammad Daud Beureueh began to be considered one of the forces to defend Indonesian independence, which was still vulnerable to Dutch aggression. The success of PUSA in suppressing the *uleebalang*, who were considered "treasonous" against the Indonesian nation, was appreciated by the Indonesian government. In July 1947, Tgk. Muhammad Daud Beureueh was appointed Military Governor of Aceh, Langkat, and Tanah Karo with the rank of Major General. He was chosen to defend the territory of Aceh and North Sumatra, which at that time wanted to be invaded by the Dutch, who had succeeded in occupying Medan. In the battle known as the "Medan Area" incident, Teungku Daud Beureueh formed the Medan Area Regiment consisting of three battalions of the Indonesian People's Army (TRI), and PUSA also played a role in sending its troops to Medan until the war of independence was over.³³

When the Dutch Government carried out its second military aggression, many areas were successfully conquered. They became puppet states such as East Indonesian, Pasudan, and East Sumatra, prepared as federal states. However, Aceh was one of the

³² Ibrahimy.

³³ Ismuha, *Ulama Aceh Dalam Perspektif Sejarah* (Jakarta: Lembaga Ekonomi dan Kemasyarakatan Nasional LIPI, 1976), 75.

areas that the Dutch still could not control.³⁴ Indonesia's condition at that time was being pressed until President Soekarno decided to fly to Aceh to gather the help of the Acehnese people to help save Indonesia's fate. The Dutch had tried to persuade PUSA leaders to want to become a Dutch federal state. However, as a community representation, PUSA rejected the offer and decided on loyalty to the Republic of Indonesia.

PUSA's political stance to be loyal to the republic also remained firm amidst the insistence of non-PUSA scholars and their followers to re-declare Aceh as a Sultanate that could enforce its laws. Such was the principle of PUSA that it chose to remain loyal together to build a new country called Indonesia. PUSA initiated fundraising from the people of Aceh so that money was collected to buy two airplanes. The airplanes were then donated to Soekarno to be used for state purposes. At that time, Soekarno promised to give Aceh the privilege of practicing its Islamic shari'a law.

But disaster struck when President Soekarno unilaterally incorporated Aceh into North Sumatra Province. This political policy angered the PUSA people and the entire Acehnese community. They felt they had been betrayed and their dignity trampled upon. This disappointment was also a continuation of the events in August 1951. Security conditions became tense at that time when the Indonesian government, through the AA brigade army, conducted massive raids on PUSA members. This raid was intended due to the suspicion that PUSA was considered to hold weapons (Japanese booty) still. The searches were carried out forcibly and unnaturally in the homes of PUSA officials, one of which belonged to Daud Beureuh. According to El Ibrahimy,

³⁴ Dalam laporan surat kabar Belanda "Java Bude" bertanggal 28 Oktober 1953 melaporkan, Pada awal tahun 1951 tampaknya perdamaian telah kembali ke Aceh, namun menjelang akhir tahun itu ada tanda-tanda bahwa PUSA aktif kembali. PUSA menuntut Aceh menjadi provinsi otonom. Tuntutan ini disampaikan pada Kongres PUSA di Langsa pada awal tahun 1953. Tidak berhenti pada Kongres ini. Daud Beureuh mengadakan pertemuan di mana-mana, dan pada bulan Mei tahun ini ada rumor bahwa Kartosuwirjo dari DI telah tiba di Aceh

this raid was carried out as revenge for the "feudal remnants" who suffered defeat in the Cumbok War.³⁵

On October 8, 1951, PUSA sent President Sukarno a letter of objection to this raid. In his letter to President Sukarno, Abu Beureueh firmly stated that he did not mind being arrested, but not on fabricated grounds. For this reason, Abu Daod Beureueh also said that in facing the arbitrariness of the army in carrying out weapons raids, the Acehnese people would go through three stages. First, the patient stage; second, the hate stage; and third, the fight stage. "*Now that the people are in the second stage, we need your wisdom to avoid unwanted things,*" said Abu Daod Beureueh in his letter.³⁶

In April 1953, the leadership of PUSA and the ulemas in the country organized an all-Indonesian congress of ulama in Medan. Teungku Muhammad Daud Beureuh appeared at the helm of the congress and agreed to fight for their aspirations in the upcoming general elections so that the Indonesian state would be transformed into the Islamic State of Indonesia. The various political pressures applied by the Indonesian government made the PUSA scholars angry. They decided to separate from Indonesia and launch a rebellion in 1953 known as the Darul Islam/Tentara Nasional Indonesia (DI/TII) event.³⁷ According to Cornelis van Dijk (1981) in his book *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam*, the DI/TII rebellion in Aceh led by Tengku Mohammad Daud Beureueh was more due to ideological, political, social, economic, and cultural disappointment with the Indonesian Central Government.³⁸ This rebellion resulted in another bloody incident that occurred in Aceh. Finally, in 1963, the conflict ended

³⁵ Ibrahimy, *Teungku Muhammad Daud Beureueh Peranannya Dalam Pergolakan Di Aceh*.

³⁶ Ibrahimy.

³⁷ Dalam surat kabar Belanda "Newsgier" tanggal 25 September 1953 melaporkan bahwa pemberontakan DI/TII di Aceh dimotori oleh kelompok PUSA.

³⁸ Suadi Zainal, "Transformasi Konflik Aceh Dan Relasi Sosial-Politik Di Era Desentralisasi," *MASYARAKAT: Jurnal Sosiologi* 21, no. 1 (2016): 86, <https://doi.org/10.7454/mjs.v21i1.4757>.

after the Indonesian government approved Aceh's application for special status and was granted autonomy in religion, customs, and education.

Aceh's bid to become a particular autonomous region has been long and complicated. Many dynamics up to the blood battle underlie the Indonesian Government to give this status immediately. Finally, with all considerations and to realize peace in Aceh, the Central Government issued a decree of the Prime Minister of Indonesia No. 1/Missi/1959 as a legal sign of Aceh becoming an autonomous region.

Conclusion

Aceh, in the early 20th century until the date of independence, experienced complex socio-political dynamics. The people of Aceh faced colonialization by the Dutch and Japanese governments. During the Dutch rule, all aspects of Acehnese life were controlled with policies severely restricting freedom. In the education sector, the Acehnese people were still very much shackled to the traditional education model, which was far from progress. Meanwhile, in political matters, the *Devide et Impera* policy became the most powerful tool for the Dutch to divide the social life of the Acehnese people. Then, in those years, the birth of the national movement organization became a breath of fresh air for the people of Aceh to channel their aspirations through more systematic channels.

The existence of PUSA as an organization for gathering Acehnese scholars originated from the concerns of several scholars, such as Tgk. Muhammad Daud Beureueh and Tgk. Abdurrahman to Tgk. Ismail Yakub towards the social conditions of Acehnese diversity. On that basis, there was an awareness to form a forum for the struggle that could unite the ulama in Aceh. Finally, on May 5, 1939, at the Madrasah Al Muslim Peusangan campus, Matang Glumpang Dua, Bireuen. According to the results of the PUSA deliberation, Tgk. Muhammad Daud Bereueh was appointed as chairman and Tgk. M. Nur El Ibrahimy as secretary. PUSA has expanded throughout Aceh and became the community's property in a relatively short time. The

objectives of the establishment of the PUSA movement were to broadcast, uphold, and defend the propagation of Islam, to unify the understanding of legal lighting, to improve and unify the *leer plan* of religious lessons in religious schools, and to endeavor to establish Islamic colleges and educate the youth and children of Islam in religion. The mission carried out by PUSA succeeded in changing the face of Acehnese society to be more open in facing the changing times.

Since the first congress of PUSA was held in Sigli in 1940, PUSA began to experience changes in the direction of the movement. They had agreed to make the organization more influential for the people of Aceh. This influence began to appear when PUSA was actively involved in political events, including the results of the congress, which wanted to bring PUSA to appear as a forum for the aspirations of the Acehnese people so that it could mobilize the community to expel the Dutch, PUSA was also active in diplomacy with the Japanese to invite them to come to Aceh, to rebel against the Dutch in 1942. Then, PUSA was also involved in waging war with the *uleebalang* group until it became the mastermind behind the DI/TII rebellion in Aceh from 1953 to 1962.

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