‘There are too many factions in this village.’

The study of Islam and politics in Southeast Asia has been characterised recently by a broad emphasis on the macro-dynamics of politics, shifting roles of political and religious elites, and the role of Islamic norms and identity for the outcome of these processes. While this focus has produced a number of groundbreaking studies, the question of how religious practices and place-specific expressions of religious authority relate, historically, to the local intrusion of the state is rarely asked. In the study of Aceh, as a place ‘renowned’ for political Islam and associated expressions of popular ‘piety’, this is a particularly problematic shortcoming. How have Islamic norms been continued, changed, or discarded as reformist ulama and political leaders tried to make Aceh into a more ‘properly’ Islamic society? And how should we assess, as a part of this process, the role of the secular state? In order to formulate an answer to these question, the prevalent dichotomy between state and society must be deconstructed (Gupta 2006). Instead, we must look at the long-term processes of negotiation between state agents, religious experts, and ordinary Muslims protecting or appropriating individual space for action.

This chapter zooms in on the district (kebupaten) and sub-district (kecamatan) level. My main focus will be the sub-district of Indrapuri. This was the basis, from the 1930s until the mid-1950s, of PUSA ideologue Teungku Hasballah Indrapuri, and the place where Daud Beureueh declared his allegiance to the Darul Islam revolt in 1953. For a large part, this chapter is based on field notes of the late Chandra Jayawardena, a Sri Lankan born, British-trained anthropologist based in Sydney, Australia, where he became founding professor of the anthropology department at Macquarie University in 1969. Jayawardena conducted fieldwork in British Guyana, Fiji, Indonesia and Burma. He lived in Indrapuri in 1964 (seven months), 1971 (two months), 1972-73 (eight months) and again briefly in 1981. He published two articles on the basis of the material collected in Aceh: one on kinship (1977a), and one on marriage customs (1977b). Most of these data have remained unpublished, however. Although he intended to publish a monograph, entitled ‘Land, Labour and Society in Acheh Besar’, he passed away, in 1981, before being able to complete a manuscript. Later, the Aceh notes were donated by his wife, Yvonne Jayawardena, to the Macquarie University Archive. Kathryn Robinson was granted permission to digitize these notes, and publish them as an online resource for future students of Aceh. As far as I know, I am the first one to use them extensively. The Jayawardena notes give an exceptional insight in Acehnese rural society during the early 1970s. They cover a wide range of phenomena, including agricultural cycles, religious rituals, history, politics, and conflict, and deal for the largest part with Indrapuri.2

1 This includes the renewed attention for the historical trajectories of Islamist organisation, and the long term adaptation of these networks to the development of the state (Farish Noor 2004; Feillard 2011; Platzdasch 2009; Solahudin 2011). Other studies have looked critically at the capacity of the state, or of state-centered institutions (such as the judiciary or the military) to accommodate latent and manifest Islamist pressures (Arskal Salim 2008; Liow 2009; Luthfi Assyaukanie 2009; Mietzner 2009; Nur Ichwan 2006).

2 The Jayawardena notes can be found at www.asiapacific.anu.edu.au/blogs/acehfieldnotes/ (Accessed May-June 2012). It comprises the transliteration of a total of eight, hand-written notebooks of about 100 pages each. Jayawardena organized his field materials in nineteen different categories. The digitized
This chapter is divided in four sections. I start out with a brief review of some of the literature on Islam and the state in Acehnese society. The second section is based mostly on archival materials, and deals with historical trajectories of Islamic reformism in Aceh Besar (with a focus on the careers of Panglima Polem and Teungku Hasballah Indrapuri). The third section extends the narrative to the Japanese invasion and the Darul Islam rebellion. The fourth section turns more decidedly to the Jayawardena notes, and analyses the impact of PUSA-style reformism on village life in Indrapuri in the early 1970s. Information collected in the provincial archives in Banda Aceh completes the source material in this final section.

Islam and the state in Acehnese society

Since the state was brought 'back in' the study of politics and society (Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol 1985), studies of Aceh have focused on the forces mobilizing 'the Acehnese' either in support of, or against, the 'central state'. In The blood and the people (1979), which deals with the dynamics of revolution in Aceh and North Sumatra, Anthony Reid viewed the social disintegration of that period as being derived from the relationship between local identity formation and central state assertions. The particular importance of this study was that it laid bare the fundamental weakness of the nascent Indonesian central state, drawing attention instead to the complex reality in places that were physically (but not necessarily in the minds of local actors) far removed from Jakarta. In The Republican Revolt (1985), the most detailed account of the Darul Islam rebellion in Aceh (1953-1962), Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin also regarded the relationship with the national state as the main 'problem' to be solved. According to his (rather simplistic) analysis, politicians in Medan and Jakarta saw the political process in Aceh primarily in terms of economic and electoral advantages, while 'the Acehnese', who were conscious of their historical heritage and cultural uniqueness, 'saw the problem differently'. Thus, for them the struggle came down to a question of 'who rules whom', as it 'had been evident in the history of Aceh ever since 1500 (…) that Aceh operated as a single nation which successfully extended its power into many parts of Sumatra' (Ibid:39).3

Another work that is important to mention here is Eric Morris’ dissertation (1983) about local inter-elite relations in the twentieth century. This study has proven to be invaluable for subsequent students of Aceh, as it traced in unprecedented detail the political alliances

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3 It is true that such ideas were circulated by Acehnese leaders. As Aspinall (2009:32-39) has showed, both ‘sides’ in the conflict were intent on casting their actions in ethnic language. Although for very different reasons, both stressed continuity with the Acehnese war against the Dutch. One of the main problems in the work of Sjamsuddin, then, is that it presented as static a number of dispositions that, in reality, were contested and highly versatile, and that he tended to project these images rather uncritically on to the populace as a whole.
and ideological predispositions that either drew political stake holders into ‘mainstream’ Indonesian politics, or drove them away.

The major problem with all of these works is that they have advanced a rather essentialist understanding of ‘Acehnese’ identity, resulting from the methodological choice to use Aceh as a case-study for understanding ‘centre-periphery’ relations in post-colonial Indonesia. The consequence is, invariably, that much of the nuance achieved in the discussion of local complexities is lost again in more generalising passages. For example, on the Darul Islam period Morris stated that, although Daud Beureueh had been unable to realise his ideal of making the Indonesian state more Islamic, he ‘had succeeded in impressing upon the centre the distinctive aspirations of the Acehnese’ (Ibid.:243). In the conclusion of his otherwise intricate discussion of the Suharto period, he presented the ideal of ‘realizing Islamic goals in this life’ as the ‘defining characteristic of Aceh within the Indonesian nation-state’ (Ibid:301-02).

Rather than reproducing the rather limited framework of a national state pitted against the interests of the Acehnese, in this chapter I want to investigate the process by which the national state became embedded in Acehnese society, and the effects of this process on local, village level contestations about religious practice and authority. One of my main sources of inspiration in this regard is the work of Michael Meeker and Michael Peletz, respectively on Turkey and Malaysia, and their emphasis on the way in which modern, secular state practices interact with local religious and political structures and configurations. On the one hand, the secular state promotes and facilitates a particular view of orthodox religion. On the other hand, local communities make use of the same structures and practices to advance their own interests. To view the state in this way is, I think, to show how interacting forms of religious and political authority have given shape to, and interfered with or encroached upon, the everyday lives of ordinary Muslims (cf. Barker and Van Klinken 2009).

In his work on Turkey, Michael Meeker (2002) asked the seemingly simple, but actually extremely complex, question of what was ‘left’ of the social and political structures of the Ottoman empire after Turkey became a republic in 1922. Meeker looked at this by studying the role of local elites in the district of Of, and the ways in which the ‘traditional’ ruling families appropriated, over a very long period of time, the discourses and techniques developed by the central state. According to Meeker, the construction of a secular polity facilitated, rather than obstructed, the dissemination of a more normative discourse of Islamic piety. These norms were not simply ‘imposed’ on society by the state or other powerful actors. Rather, a standardized system of Islamic norms had been important to the men of Of for many centuries, as an (outward) adherence to a ‘fixed’ set of practices facilitated commercial contacts between people coming from different places and belonging to different ethnicities. Local, place-specific beliefs and practices thus existed, side by side, with more Shari’a-minded sensibilities, but a normative model of Sunni orthodoxy took a more prominent public role under the influence of a growing national culture, which increased levels of mobility, as well as a more ‘egalitarian’ state system associated with secular modernity (cf. Dobbin 1983 and Hadler 2008 on West Sumatra).

A comparable argument was constructed by Michael Peletz (2002) in his study of the religious judiciary in the federal state of Negeri Sembilan in Malaysia. Peletz was concerned, in first instance, with the resilience of religious court procedures vis a vis Shari’a-minded state discourses on the family, the nation, and the economy, focusing on Islamic law and cultural politics as fundamentally gendered constructs. In Malaysia, perhaps more than anywhere else in the Muslim world, a traditional tolerance for
transgenders and homosexuals in the public sphere has given way in recent decades to hostility by the state, as well as by large segments of the urban middle class. Although observers have been used to frame this process in terms of the 'Islamisation', or 'Arabisation', of Malaysian society, Peletz states that, rather than being rooted in the strengthening of an 'Islamic' legal framework, this process is related to agents of the secular state trying to increase their control over those segments of society (including the Islamic judiciary) that used to function in ways largely autonomous from the state. Thus, he concludes that 'the largest threats to civil society [in Malaysia] lie not with one or another facet of Islamic jurisprudence (...) or with some other aspect of Islam, but with the thoroughly secular state' (Ibid:289). Rather than an 'Islamising' force, Islamic law is presented as a contested social sphere, in which different visions compete for hegemony. In recent decades, this sphere has increasingly (but never completely) coincided with the state.

I will make use of these insights throughout this chapter, but especially in the part where I turn to the field notes of Jayawardena, as an important source for the study of the everyday state in Acehnese society in the early 1970s. I will use the remainder of this section to introduce his work in somewhat more detail.

Chandra Jayawardena was taught anthropology in the Malinowskian tradition of structural-functionalism. With a firm grounding in classical European sociological theory, he showed himself dedicated to the task of putting ethnographic explorations in the service of a comparative sociology (K. Robinson 2006). According to Robinson, his work 'illuminates, even prefigures, the path taken by anthropology in moving beyond a preoccupation with the boundedness of the social worlds we study, the isomorphism of people, place, social structure and culture, to an appreciation of the complex manner in which local communities engage with the social dynamics of a wider world' (Ibid:242). This was certainly true with regard to his approach of religion as a theme of research. In the 1970s Jayawardena became critical of Durkheimian notions of religion, as well as interpretations of Weberian thought by anthropologists such as Clifford Geertz. In an unpublished paper about Islam and rebellion in Aceh he commented that Geertz 'fails to deal with "the facts that the basic tenets of Islam are accepted by all strata" and "to relate these common beliefs to the social structure or the social process"' (Ibid:252). Instead, he advanced an interpretation of Marxist and Weberian thought in which he emphasized the 'fundamental tension' between the 'universalising' aspect of religion and the realities of social life. Rebellions on the basis of religion, he believed, were always deemed to fail (Ibid:252-53).

According to Robinson, Jayawardena was particularly interested in the relationship between inequality, social conflict, and the 'tensions between ideologies in embedded forms of sociality' (Ibid:245). It is not surprising, then, that the passages in which he connected 'major' ideological tensions ('centralist' versus 'regionalist', Islamist versus secularist, etcetera) to the micro-dynamics of local contestations are among the richest of his notes. The final section of this chapter will be concerned with one such conflict. Before I move to an analysis of this material, however, it is important to have a more textured view of the specific historical context of Aceh. In the next two paragraphs, I will elaborate some major trajectories of Islamic reform in this area from the late colonial period until the early New Order. I will focus on two main exemplars. Panglima Polem (d. 1940) was one of the most powerful adat chiefs in the colonial period,

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4 This background stimulated Jayawardena to draw comparisons between social structures in '[t]he varied imperial histories of the two archipelagos with their long mercantile connections to the expansive global order' (namely Guyana in the 'West Indies' and Aceh in the 'East Indies') (K. Robinson 2006:254).
and a significant factor in the mediation between the colonial state and local political forces. Teungku Hasballah Indrapuri (d. 1956) was an exponent of the PUSA, regarded by some as the movement's ideological consciousness. Both figures engaged in shaping the possibilities for social and religious reform.

The careers of Panglima Polem and Teungku Hasballah Indrapuri

As I have explained in Chapter 2, in the nineteenth century the area known as Aceh Besar ('Great Aceh' or 'Aceh Proper') was divided into three territorial units called "sagi." Of these three realms, the Sagi of the 22 Mukims was the wealthiest, the most populous, and therefore the most powerful. The federation was comprised of two "uleebalang"-ships – called the 7 Mukim Baet and the 5 Mukim Montasik – and 23 independent "mukim." Its ruler was entitled Panglima Polem: Lord Older Brother. When the Dutch military took control over the three "sagi" in the 1880s, Panglima Polem – who was one of the guardians of the young Sultan-elect – joined the royal family in Keumala. He died in 1891, after which his title was passed over to his son: Panglima Polem Sri Muda Perkasa Muhammad Daud. In 1903, just a few days after the capitulation of the Sultan, Panglima Polem was forced to surrender to the Dutch (Van 't Veer 1980:245). He returned to Aceh Besar as a functionary of the Dutch colonial government. His residence was located in the village of Lam Sih, in the heart of the region of Seulimeum, where his family occupied a large complex of houses.

J.J. van der Velde, who was based as a local administrator in Seulimeum in 1932, described Panglima Polem as a 'small, quiet man with a soft, somewhat dragging voice, very near-sighted, wearing glasses with very thick lenses' (Van der Velde 1982:48). Other descriptions make clear that he was a great enthusiast for progress and technology, being, for example, one of the few "uleebalang" who used a modern car (Zentgraaff 1928:281). Like other indigenous chiefs, Panglima Polem was regarded by the Dutch as the 'head of religion' in his domain. As we have seen, this was part of a the Dutch policy of subsuming the forces of Islam by supporting and strengthening "adat" chiefs. The case of Panglima Polem is particularly interesting, however, because it suggests that religious authority became more, rather than less important as a factor of political capital in the late colonial period. In the nineteenth century the struggle for power and resources was a matter of kinship relations, tactical alliances, and military power. By the late colonial period indigenous chiefs vied for social and political influence by combining business endeavours with their position in the colonial bureaucracy and the mediation of local conflicts through indigenous institutions (cf. Sutherland 1979). Religious authority was one of the major channels, then, through which local power struggles were played out. This process was manifested in contestations over financial arrangements (such as the collection of zakat), as well as the control over religious places (mosques, sacred graves), and rituals.

One sign of this transformation was the creation of an early form of religious bureaucracy at the local level. Reportedly, Panglima Polem collected zakat (religious tithes) throughout the Sagi. Some of Chandra Jayawardena's older interlocutors

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5 In the early 1920s access to Seulimeum was greatly improved with the construction of a bridge over the Aceh River. According to Zentgraaff (1928:281), this bridge – a highly prestigious project – was a reward for Panglima Polem's submission, and his support for the colonial government.

6 Unsurprisingly, this led to conflicts with other chiefs. For example, in 1930 a financial dispute arose between Panglima Polem and Teuku Machmoed of Lam Panaih Leungah. To solve the problem, an ad hoc musapat was installed, consisting of "uleebalang" from outside the district, and chaired by the Assistent-Resident of Aceh Besar. Panglima Polem was put in the right, and Teuku Machmoed was ordered to pay a
remembered the professionalisation of the zakat collection at district level. Three out of seven shares of zakat were raised in the form of padi (unpeeled rice), which were then sold in order to pay the allowances of religious judges (kadi) and teachers, and establish schools and mosques throughout the Sagi. Initially, padi was collected in a large warehouse located at the Indrapuri market. Later, a more formal organisation was established, and managed by Syahbandar Hasjmy, the father of later governor Ali Hasjmy (1956-1964).7

The interference of Panglima Polem in such matters caused regular conflicts with lower placed uleebalang. Consider, for example, an ongoing conflict between Panglima Polem and Teuku Tjhi’ Baet, the uleebalang of the 7 Mukim Baet. In the course of the nineteenth century the uleebalang of the 7 Mukim Baet had increased their influence within the realm of the 22 Mukim, challenging even the authority of Panglima Polem (Snouck Hurgronje 1893-95:I.141). Toward the Dutch government T. Tjhi’ Baet maintained that the 7 Mukim were an independent territory, and that he had great suspicion of the Panglima Polem’s craving for power (Van der Velde 1982:48). In 1930 the conflict was driven to a crisis when Panglima Polem suddenly announced his intention of performing the Friday prayer in the Baet mosque.8 T. Tjhi’ Baet was ordered to provide sufficient people in order for the prayer to be ‘valid’ according to Islamic law, a move which he perceived as an explicit infringement of his personal authority. He stated that he ‘had no time’ to meet this request. Panglima Polem then made an issue of the matter by turning up anyway. Arriving at the mosque, and ‘discovering’ that no one was there, he lodged an official complaint with the government about T. Tjhi’ Baet’s lack of respect. T. Tjhi’ Baet, in turn, claimed that Panglima Polem had no right to interfere in the affairs of the 7 Mukim Baet. A compromise was arranged, allowing Panglima Polem to pray in the Baet mosque, but only once. He was also urged by the Dutch to stop interfering with the affairs of fellow chiefs. Teuku Tjhi’ Baet was ordered not to be disrespectful. The conflict kept festering, however, until the end of Dutch colonial rule.9

Dutch administrators portrayed Panglima Polem as a ‘true’ Acehnese, as they emphasized his knowledge of adat and Islamic law, as well as his reputation as a cultural conservative. In the mid-1920s Panglima Polem actively campaigned against a new kind of dance, called the seulaweuet (‘salutations’), which was popular among the younger generation.10 This dance, performed exclusively by women, formed a threat to moral compensation of 2672 guilders. The trial damaged Panglima Polem’s standing among his colleagues. One report stated: ‘[The chiefs] condemn the fact that an “Orang Besar” [important person] gets involved in a perkaraan [affair] with one of his subordinate chiefs’. See ‘Verslag 1e halfjaar 1930’; ‘Politiek verslag betreffende den politieken toestand in het gouvernement Atjeh en Onderhoorigheden gedurende het jaar 1930’, 23 Januari 1931, NL-HaNa, Politieke Verslagen, 2.10.52.01, inv. nr. 7, microfische 101-102.

7 Chandra Jayawardena Notes (henceforth CJN), 15 March 1971 (VII:62-64). I will return to Ali Hasjmy in the next section.
8 ‘Politiek verslag 1930’.
9 In 1932 T. Tjhi’ Baet failed to pay his respects at the residence of Panglima Polem at Hari Raya Idulfitri (the celebration of the end of the fasting month), presumably intending to publicly embarrass him (the Governor, as well as a great number of other chiefs, were present at the occasion). While no formal sanctions followed, T. Tjhi’ Baet was ‘strongly lectured’ by the authorities for his lack of respect. See ‘Politiek Verslag 1930’; and ‘Politiek-politieenel verslag 1932’. Things did not improve from here. Piekar (1949:59-60) tells us that T. Tjhi’ Baet’s ostentatious refusal to celebrate Hari Raya Idulfitri in Lam Sih became a tradition, repeating itself every year until the end of the colonial period.
10 According to one report, Panglima Polem’s call to abolish the dance was supported by most uleebalang in Aceh Besar. P. Scholten, Memorie van Overgave van de onderafdeeling Lam Meulo (1933). NL-HaNa, Koloniën/Memories van Overgave, 2.10.39, inv. nr. 607.
decency. Thus, when a band of dancers from Padang Tiji arrived in Seulimeum to give a performance, he summoned the leader of the band, bought off the arrangement, and ordered him to ‘withdraw with his dancing girls’ (Zentgraaff 1928:223-34). Despite this focus on conservative public norms, it is difficult to situate Panglima Polem on an ideological continuum between ‘reformist’ and ‘traditionalist’ dispositions. His stance toward the kaum muda movement and the politics of educational reform was generally supportive. The reformist Perguruan Islam school in Seulimeum enjoyed his protection. He was a supporter of the idea of providing the Dutch school-system with modern religious education by incorporating religious lessons in the Volksschool curriculum, and he even founded his own reformist school, the Madrasah Islamijah Menengah, in Lam Paku. There is no indication, however, that he entertained a particularly ‘scripturalist’ attitude toward the practice of Islamic law. Thus, I think it is important to regard his reformist attitude in the context of a more general struggle for social control, rather than focusing on the extent to which he supported the Islamic modernist movement.

When Panglima Polem returned to Seulimeum in 1903, one of his priorities was to restore the religious infrastructure which had suffered badly from the war. According to Jayawardena’s older interlocutors, he asked Teungku Eumpetrieng, a well-known ulama from nearby Sibreh, to restore the site of the Indrapuri mosque, the oldest surviving mosque in Aceh, in 1917 or -18. According to Snouck Hurgronje this was one of the ‘Great Mosques’ founded in the seventeenth century by Sultan Iskandar Muda (Snouck Hurgronje 1893-95:186-87), which included the Mesjid Baiturrahman in Banda Aceh, and one for each Sagi: Indrapuri (Sagi of the 22 Mukim), Indrapurwa (Sagi of the 25 Mukim), and Indrapatra (Sagi of the 26 Mukim). Of the old Sagi mosques, in the nineteenth century only Indrapuri survived, and still functioned as a regional centre of religious study (of the other two mosques, only ‘traces remained’; Ibid.:1.87). Reportedly, upon hearing Panglima Polem’s request, Teungku Eumpetrieng, perhaps in a joint petition with other ulama from

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11 According to Zentgraaff (1928:223), in Pidie alone there were at least eight companies of trained seulaweuet dancers, which travelled around the region performing at a charge.

12 See Zentgraaff 1928:298; and Piekkaar1949:61. Reportedly, Panglima Polem considered it as ‘very desirable’ if the Dutch administration would be more actively involved in matters of religion. Interestingly, one of his main arguments why this measure could be carried out easily, for that Aceh was not, like Minangkabau, made up of different Islamic ‘sects’. H. Zentgraaff, ‘Het Atjehsch als voertaal. Nieuwe tendenzen’, Indische Post, cited in Deli Courant, 9 March 1932.

13 Panglima Polem was one of the permanent members of the musapat in Seulimeum. According to Van der Velde (1982:48), this court met three times per week (which was relatively often), rotating between the market towns of Seulimeum, Sibreh, and Padangtiji. The other two permanent members were Teuku Tji’ Baet, uleebalang of the 7 Mukim Baet, and Teuku Main, uleebalang of the 5 Mukim Montasik. One of the issues this court dealt with frequently in the early 1930s was requests by married women to be allowed to divorce their husbands, either because they did not receive sufficient living costs (napakah), or because they had been abandoned (Ibid: 50-52). Van der Velde (who had written a doctoral dissertation about the practice of Islamic law before his departure to Indonesia, and was therefore particularly interested in these matters) was present at many court sessions in Seulimeum, and found that women were often put in the right, even if their husbands were not there to give their own testimony. Their husbands – if present – usually denied the charges, so it was difficult to establish who was speaking the truth. In many of the cases which Van der Velde witnessed, however, the court asked the women to swear a purification oath. Directed by the ulama, the woman would be asked to ‘put her hand on the Quran, repeat after him “Wallahi, tallahi”, and swear that she had not been durhaka [unfaithful] and that her husband did not provide for her’. Subsequently, the musapat would give the judgment ‘pasah’, after which the woman was free, if she wished, to marry another man. In Van der Velde’s view, this indicated that it was usual for the court in Seulimeum to let adat ‘triumph’ over Islamic law, arguing that the Shari'a would have given these women ‘few rights’.

14 CJN, 13 November 1972 (I:71).
Aceh Besar (Hasbi Amiruddin 2003-2004:I.38) persuaded Teungku Ahmad Hasballah, an ulama who had migrated to Malaya during the war, to return to Indrapuri and take up the task of re-establishing the dayah there.\(^{15}\)

Teungku Hasballah, also known as ‘Abu Indrapuri’, was born in 1888 in Kampung Lam U in Montasik, Aceh Besar (Hasbi Amiruddin 2003-2004:I.37). When the war engulfed Aceh Besar he migrated to Kedah, on the Malay peninsula, together with his parents. He received extensive religious training in Aceh, Malaya, and, for a period of more than ten years, in Mecca. After returning to Aceh he established a school in Lheueh, a village close to the market town of Indrapuri. According to Hasbi Amiruddin, this school was called the Madrasah Hasbiyah, and included a special section for girls, Al-Madrasah lil Ummahat (Ibid:39). Some of Jayawardena’s informants said that, shortly after moving back to Aceh, Hasballah was married to a woman from Lheueh, and, for a certain period, lived there. They also said that the school was established in the 1930s, and that it caused a split between a ‘modern’ (moderen) and ‘conservative’ (kolot) faction:

The conservatives opposed the school which was not to be a dayah along traditional lines but a school modelled on the Dutch pattern. The conservatives condemned it as “kaphe” [kafir] They were reconciled to the Dutch [Volksscholen] and [Inlandsche Scholen] – and even sent their children there. But a religious school could not be based on that model – it had to be a dayah with traditional subjects and methods.\(^{16}\)

Objections were raised, for example, against the practice of teaching boys and girls in the same classroom, and against the use of textbooks with pictures, which were considered haram by the conservative group. Jayawardena also recorded a conspicuous difference in gendered preference:

A part of the kampung refused to have anything to do with the project while the other collected materials and built it. It is said that the males were more divided than the females. The latter were mostly in favour of the school; and instances are cited of women helping to build the school being dragged away by anti-school husbands.\(^{17}\)

Compared to James Siegel’s (1969) thesis that Islamic modernism was primarily a concern for men, this is a remarkable observation. Another source of anti-Hasballah protest was the nearby village of Tanoh Abee, Seulimeum, which up to today is considered as one of the most important centres of traditionalist learning in Aceh. Apparently some of the fiercest adversaries of Teungku Hasballah in Lheueh were related, by blood or by marriage, to the family of Teungku Tanoh Abee.\(^{18}\)

Teungku Hasballah was politically active from the moment he returned to Aceh. Initially he joined the Sarekat Islam. When this movement was banned, he established his own organisation, Jamiah al-Ataqiyah al-Ukhrawiyah (Hasbi Amiruddin 2003-2004:I.39). In 1939 he was one of the founding members of PUSA. Unfortunately, I found few details about his relationship with Panglima Polem. The Jayawardena notes suggest that it was rather close. According to some people in Indrapuri, Teungku Hasballah was the only imam in the Sagi who ‘dealt directly’ with the Panglima, without the mediation of the

\(^{15}\) Ibid.

\(^{16}\) One of Jayawardena’s interlocutors cynically added that, while the ‘conservatives’ were prepared to send their own children off to Dutch schools, they could not live with the idea of an Islamic school based on a ‘modern’ model of instruction. CJN, 17 February 1973 (VI:53-54).

\(^{17}\) CJN, 20 November 1972 (II:8-15).

\(^{18}\) CJN, 20 January 1973 (V:5-12).
latter’s main religious advisor (the kadi in Lam Sih), that the Panglima paid him a monthly salary, and ‘supported him’ in his opposition against non-Islamic beliefs and practices. Local knowledge also had it that Panglima Polem had paid Teungku Hasballah’s debts in Kedah, making it possible for him to leave that place and come to Aceh.\textsuperscript{19} There was certainly a connection between Teungku Hasballah and Panglima Polem’s son, Teuku Muhammad Ali Panglima Polem, who succeeded his father after his death in 1940. Both played a leading role in the outbreak of anti-Dutch violence in Aceh Besar in early 1942, heralding the end of Dutch rule in Aceh.\textsuperscript{20} It is to this episode that I shall now turn.

\textbf{Occupation, Revolution, Rebellion}

On the night of 24 February 1942 the Controleur of Seulimeum was killed by a group of unknown men. More killings followed, as well as extensive sabotage of road-, railway- and telegraph networks. Although the revolt was supported by a variety of ‘malcontent elements’ (Piekaar 1949:77-78), the PUSA played a central role. Anti-Dutch actions were organised by PUSA-affiliated ulama in the Aceh Besar area, the most important of whom were Teungku Abdul Wahab Seulimeum and Teungku Hasballah Indrapuri. When the revolt broke out, the Dutch discovered that these ulama, as well as the 35-year-old Panglima Polem, Teuku Muhammad Ali, had all left their homes, leaving no trace of their whereabouts.\textsuperscript{21} According to Piekaar, Muhammad Ali had been appointed by the Dutch because of convention, even though he was known to be ‘almost explicitly anti-Dutch’ in his political orientation, having mingled with ‘extreme nationalist circles’ in Java (Piekaar 1949:57-81).\textsuperscript{22}

In Piekaar’s reading of events, the participation of the ‘orthodox elderly’ Hasballah was particularly important during the early stages of the revolt. In contrast to figures like Teuku Muhammad Ali, and groups like the Pemuda PUSA, who represented the ‘progressive and militant’ segment of the Acehnese youth, Hasballah was able to mobilize the older, ‘conservative’, and orthodox majority of ordinary villagers. He made the Aceh Besar revolt into a popular one, causing ‘the PUSA-youth and the elderly gampongman’ to struggle ‘side by side’ (Ibid:78-79). Teungku Hasballah was significantly older than his peers in the PUSA leadership. Although an exponent of the reformist movement, he was generally regarded as ‘orthodox’ rather than fiercely modernist. It is certainly not implausible, then, that he was a reconciling factor between older villagers sympathetic to the reformist movement and the more radical segments of the Acehnese youth.

The Japanese invasion in March 1942 put an end to Dutch colonial rule. However, the Dutch system of indirect rule was left largely intact. Initially, the position of the uleebalang class was even strengthened, as the offices of former Dutch officials were re-assigned to members of influential uleebalang families. Japanese administrators publicly stated that the PUSA and the Pemuda PUSA were ‘not allowed to interfere in government

\textsuperscript{19} CJN, 15 March 1973 (VII:62-64); 22 November 1972 (II:26-32).
\textsuperscript{21} Piekaar 1949:57-81; Reid 1979:88; Van ’t Veer 1980:245.
\textsuperscript{22} According to Piekaar (1949:59), Teuku Muhammad Ali sought cooperation with the PUSA because he anticipated the latter’s ‘anti-Dutch evolution’, and did not surmise ‘the extent to which this development was directed, already then, against the authority of the uleebalang’. However, it is questionable whether anyone in Aceh, including the leaders of the more militant segments of the PUSA, would have been able to anticipate the intensity of the Social Revolution and the fate of the uleebalang class.
matters'. However, the Japanese government soon realised that it should be careful not to alienate popular religious leaders, so in the course of the Japanese period PUSA-affiliated ulama were increasingly courted and given an active role in the bureaucracy and government propaganda. In the end, the Japanese went much further than the Dutch in their attempts to create a separate Islamic officialdom. This development took off with the establishment of a religious advisory council, called the Majelis Agama Islam Oentoek Bantoen Kemakmoeran Asia Timoer Raja (Maibkatra). Other important developments took place in the legal sphere. Initially, the musapat system was left unaltered. This changed radically in March 1944, when the government established a system of Mahkmah Agama ('religious courts', J: shukyo-hoin), ending the authority of the uleebalang in matters of religious law by reallocating legal authority to the office of the kali under the direct authority of the Japanese. While Daud Beureueh became the charismatic face of government propaganda, Teungku Hasballah Indrapuri established himself as his intellectual counterpart, functioning as a member of the Maibkatra and head of the Mahkmah Agama in the Indrapuri area (Piekaar 1949:224, 268).

Realising that the war might be lost, in early September 1944 the Japanese initiated a process that was to lead, eventually, to Indonesian independence. In Aceh, as much as elsewhere, this prospect was eagerly anticipated by revolutionaries from different ideological backgrounds, including the leaders of the PUSA. In an article in a special edition of a Japanese outlet (probably a translation of a speech), Daud Beureueh reflected on the coming of 'two celebrations', namely the ending of Ramadan (Hari Raya Idulfitri) and independence (Hari Raya Kemerdekaan), stating that it was 'impossible to say which one was the greatest of the two'. The Japanese finally surrendered to allied forces in August 1945. The Dutch, caught up in revolutionary violence in Java and North Sumatra, never returned to mainland Aceh (only Sabang remained in Dutch hands during the first years of the Revolution). In their absence, paramilitary groups affiliated with the PUSA and individual uleebalang became locked in a bloody struggle for power which has come to be known as the Social Revolution (see Reid 1979). In a brief but furious confrontation, the uleebalang were eliminated as a factor of political relevance. A significant number of uleebalang families escaped to Medan or Jakarta. Others were incarcerated in internment camps as 'enemies of the Republic'. A significant number were killed in the struggle, or 'executed' as traitors to the Acehnese people. A crucial factor in the outbreak of violence was the combined force and mobilising power of the PUSA youth wing (Pemuda PUSA), and the (more loosely affiliated) Islamic scouting movement, Kasjafatoel Islam. Eventually it was the Republican-minded PUSA which emerged as the strongest of the warring parties, and in July 1947 Daud Beureueh was appointed by the

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23 'Speech by His Excellency and Honorable Head of the Department of General Affairs (Padoeka Jangmoelja Toean Somubucho)' [1942, undated]. NL-HaNA, Piekaar, 2.21.283, inv.nr. 11.
25 One of the central episodes of the violence was a sequence of events known as the 'Cumbok War', a killing spree resulting in the elimination of the former ruler of Lam Meulo, Teuksu Mohammed Daud of Cumbok. After the surrender of the Japanese, Mohammed Daud was one of the first uleebalang to contact the Dutch. Fervently pro-Dutch, he became one of the prime targets of the Acehnese branch of the Republican army (the PRI) and PUSA militants. The situation escalated when, in December 1945, a number of villagers were killed in a clash with his retinue. Mohammed Daud and his men were eventually chased into the forest, captured, and killed. For a more detailed discussion of this episode, see Reid 1979:200-04.

As Henk Schulte Nordholt has recently reminded us, around the turn of the 1950s Indonesia was ‘still in search of a centre’. Although Sukarno ‘came home’ to Jakarta in December 1949, ‘the Outer Islands took a different trajectory’ (Schulte Nordholt 2011b:387-400). Soon after the Japanese surrender, the local press in Aceh featured articles stating that the Revolution was a ‘religious duty’. An organisation called ‘Hizboellah Atjeh’ was founded (with various local branches, and Daud Beureueh as chairman), as well as a ‘Barisan Moedjahiddin’ (under the leadership of a descendent of Teungku Chi’ di Tiro, one of the leaders in the war against the Dutch). After being appointed as Governor, Daud Beureueh continued to give speeches across Aceh, in which he assured his audience that the Indonesian Revolution was a ‘Holy War’ against foreign infidels. At the same time, he repeated his familiar message, warning the people that they should change or abolish those practices and rituals seen by the reformists as conflicting with the provisions of ‘true’ Islam. As part of its goal to create a ‘truly Islamic’ polity, in 1946 the PUSA-led government further developed the system of Islamic courts (renamed Mahkamah Syariah), extending its jurisdiction over matters of family law, and declaring it autonomous from the central government (Morris 1983:162-63). In addition, the network of reformist schools was transformed into a system of state financed religious education. In the late 1940s more than 200 schools were funded by the government (Ibid.:164-65). In the meantime, Teungku Hasballah had become one of the leaders of the Islamic political party Masyumi (Sjamsuddin 1985:7). In February 1950 – two weeks after the establishment of Daud Beureueh as Governor – he founded the Majelis Ifta Daerah Aceh (Religious Advisory Council of Aceh) at a conference in Banda Aceh. In his opening speech, he warned that the ulama in Aceh were dissatisfied with the fact that Indonesia had not been proclaimed an Islamic state (Ibid.:38-39, 185). The arrival of reformist ulama at the forefront of political developments was never uncontested. The class of the uleebalang was defeated, but not ‘eradicated’, and the new, PUSA-led government occasionally had to deal with fierce attacks in the press, mostly originating in Medan or Jakarta. The new leaders were accused of abuse of power, self-enrichment, corruption, and murder, persuading the PUSA and the Pemuda PUSA of the need to spread pamphlets denying these accusations. The struggle between ulama and

27 Mimbar Oemoem, No. 18, 27 November 1945; Mimbar Oemoem, No. 24, 4 December 1945. NL-HaNA, Piekaar, 2.21.283, inv.nr. 14.
28 Sjamsuddin (1985:77, n.10) wrote: ‘Realizing that “the present country of ours remain in a form of state which does not yet meet our aims” and that as “our country has not been based on real Darul Islam” principles, the Majelis Ifta would not function as a Legislative but an Advisory Council. See “Pidato Pembukaan Sidang I Madjelis Ifta Daerah Atjeh” [The Speech at the Opening of the First Session of the Majelis Ifta], delivered by Teungku Hasballah Indrapuri in Kutaraja on 15 February 1950’.
29 The fiercest of these attacks came from Teuku Teungoh Hanafiah, an uleebalang from Idi, and government secretary during the Japanese period. In an article entitled ‘Mengapa Atjeh Minta Daerah Otonoom’ (Indonesia Raya, 11 August 1950), T.T. Hanafiah compared the new leaders with badau, a kind of fish which eats its own young. In his view, the importance attached by the Acehnese government to autonomy should be seen in this context. Copies of the pamphlets can be found in NL-HaNA, Piekaar, 2.21.283, inv.nr. 20 and 23. See also the reaction by Ali Hasjmy, ‘Apa sebab Hanafiah takut Atjeh djadi daerah otonom?’, Indonesia Raya, 23 August 1950. One version had it, that the attack was taken particularly seriously because of the support of Vice President Mohammad Hatta, who regarded the prominent role of the uleebalang in the media as a useful channel for ‘putting right’ the new Acehnese
uleebalang factions was not the only source of division, however. Another important ideological cleavage was that between the PUSA-led government and the main centre of communist activities in Aceh, which was concentrated in Langsa (East Aceh). Other tensions emerged, moreover, both between the central government and the provincial government and among the ranks of the ulama. In rural areas, especially along the West and South coast, traditionalist ulama expressed their discontent with the government’s purist message. Within the government, a number of lay officials and bureaucrats showed less and less affinity with the ideological concerns of reformist ulama. Having affiliated themselves with the PUSA primarily to pursue the goals of the Revolution, they were less prepared to confront the central government on the grounds of religious reform. As a result, the prospect of restructuring Acehnese society on the basis of a scripturalist understanding of Islam gradually evaporated. Acutely aware of this threat, Daud Beureueh stepped up his attempt to implement Shari’a law, stating that people guilty of engaging in sinful practices, such as gambling and adultery, would soon be ‘interned in the interests of “public security”’, while a formal ban was announced on practices connected to saint veneration and intercession rituals (Morris 1983:160-62).

These measures to turn Aceh into an Islamic polity were mitigated – if not nipped in the bud – by the central government, which gradually asserted itself at the provincial level. Acehnese autonomy was curbed, a process culminating in the 1951 decision to incorporate Aceh in the newly formed province of North Sumatra. As a result, the funding for religious schools was cut, and the jurisdiction of the Shari’a courts was compromised. Discontent went beyond the ideological concerns of the reformist establishment, however. In a move designed to weaken the power of the PUSA and its constituents, military units loyal to the organisation were transferred and replaced by non-Acehnese units in the early 1950s (Sulaiman 1997:235-251). At the same time, the provincial government was put under pressure to give back much of the land and businesses confiscated during the Revolution (in particular the possessions of non-Acehnese). Adding to the discontent, in 1952 the lucrative barter trade with Penang and Singapore – flourishing since the surrender of the Japanese – was severely restricted in favour of the economy of nearby Medan, the capital of the new province. Finally, increasing tensions were felt on the ground as Indonesian military (TNI) units clashed with village communities.

In March 1953, during a visit to Aceh which was prompted by a destructive flood, President Sukarno repeated large parts of his landmark speech held on 27 January that year at Amuntai (South Kalimantan), in which he rejected, by and large, the principle of an Islamic state. Less than half a year later, in September 1953, Daud Beureueh and the more radical segment of the PUSA withdrew their support for the Republican government, leaders, without having to openly abandon the central government’s co-revolutionaries in Aceh. See ‘Memorandum’, by A.J. Piekaar to A.H.C. Gieben, 4 September 1950. Ibid.

30 The most important communist leader in Langsa was Abdul Xarim M.S., who in December 1949 was also appointed ‘government coordinator’. Report by J. Van Baal (Vertegenwoordiging Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, Medan), ‘Enkele gegevens over Atjeh’, 31 December 1949. NL-HaNA, Piekaar, 2.21.283, inv.nr. 23.
34 ‘President bezoekt getroffen gebieden in Atjeh’, Aneta, 15 March 1953.
pledging loyalty to the ‘Islamic state of Indonesia’ (NII) declared more than ten years earlier by Kartosowirjo in West Java.\(^{35}\) According to Daud Beureueh, the government in Jakarta was ‘not the Government we fought for in 1945’.\(^{36}\) According to Daud Beureueh, President Sukarno had promised him, in a personal conversation in 1947, that Aceh would be allowed to implement Shari’a law. Thus, when the government abolished Aceh province in 1951, nullifying most of its ‘Islamic’ regulations, this was regarded as betrayal.

The Darul Islam revolt started with a failed attack on Banda Aceh, after which the rebels regrouped at Teungku Hasballah’s basis in Indrapuri. Here Daud Beureueh proclaimed the Negara Islam Indonesia ‘in a big ceremony’ (Sjamsuddin 1985:96-97, 179).\(^{37}\) The rebellion developed into a grinding civil war, lasting more than ten years until the surrender of Daud Beureueh in 1962. In this period Darul Islam combatants gained control over large parts of the countryside, particularly in the Aceh Besar and Pidie districts. It even established an alternative government of some sorts, including a ‘parliament’ (Majelis Syura) and an ‘executive council’ (Dewan Syura). The rebels raised ‘war fees’ (infaq) and administered justice at ad hoc courts on the basis of Shari’a law.\(^{38}\) In areas where the Darul Islam was strong, the distinction between the rebels and the government became blurred. Darul Islam leaders upheld close relationships with local administrators, leading the government to various attempts to purge government offices and civil institutions, such as schools and hospitals, from PUSA supporters.

It is difficult to assess the level of popular support for the Darul Islam. Morris (1983:204-05) stated that ‘[f]or the most part Darul Islam rebels had no difficulty obtaining support from villagers’, and that ‘in the early stages of the rebellion no distinction could be made between the populace and the rebels as tens of thousands of villagers had participated in the first wave of mass attacks on the towns’.\(^{39}\) This is confirmed by some of Jayawardena’s interlocutors, who said that, during the early years of the rebellion, a majority of the people in the Indrapuri area supported the rebels. What seems certain is that popular support steadily declined after 1954. Around this time the rebellion was realigned on the basis of a military structure, and placed under the supreme

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\(^{35}\) For a detailed discussion, see Formichi 2012.

\(^{36}\) Quoted in Aspinall 2006:154

\(^{37}\) Chandra Jayawardena wrote about this: ‘The day before the rebellion broke out, the proclamation was read in Montasik – and shortly afterwards at Indrapuri where a huge crowd was collected by a representative of David Beureueh. An enormous crowd was collected at the pasar [market] which then proceeded to uproot the railway and march on Seulimeum.’ CJN, undated (1964:42). See also CJN, 14 January 1973 (IV:98-100).

\(^{38}\) Infaq was not the rebels’ only source of income. According to Sjamsuddin (1985:209-12), the Darul Islam ‘state’ (Negara Bahagian Aceh, ‘State of Aceh’) ‘imposed its taxes on almost anything taxable: trading companies, buses, plantations, as well as all sorts of trading transactions’. The major source, however, was smuggling. While Acehnese commodities, such as coffee, rubber, patchouli oil, copper and brass were smuggled out (mostly to Penang and Singapore), weapons, ammunition, and consumer goods were smuggled in. According to John Bowen (2003:95), in the Gayo highlands ‘Darul Islam judges heard disputes of all kinds’. One of his interlocutors recalled that ‘[t]he judge would try all cases brought to him, whether about inheritance, divorce, or fights. However, in serious matters, such as someone fooling around with another man’s wife, the rebels would just shoot the suspects as there was no jail’.

\(^{39}\) According to Morris, this mass support may be explained at least partly by the wide-spread ‘belief in the righteousness of the Darul Islam rebellion’, which was regarded as ‘just another chapter of the ongoing Islamic struggle in Aceh. Although the goal of the rebellion was an Islamic state, the idea of struggle (perjuangan) assumed value in its own right just as it had during the revolution. (…) It is only during the perjuangan that the ritualized egalitarian community of believers could be realized. Thus through the struggle the faithful could find both a vision of the future society to be brought about by an Islamic state and a link to the spontaneous revolutionary past’ (Morris 1983:209).
command of Daud Beureueh.\textsuperscript{40} According to Sjamsuddin, the rebels did not bother to ‘appoint’ local level officials for their alternative government. Instead, they put pressure on government functionaries and community leaders to cooperate with the rebellion. Aspinall mentioned regular reports about the use of violence against ‘traitors’, as well as more mundane forms of extortion and anti-government propaganda to align village populations with the goals of the rebellion (Aspinall 2006; see also Sjamsuddin 1985:207-208). Equally important was the resolution of many Acehnese grievances by consultation between the central government and the more pragmatically-inclined segment of the PUSA.

Aceh’s provincial status was restored in 1956. One year later autonomy was re-established in the fields of religion, education, and \textit{adat}. Aceh was now formally recognised as a ‘Special Territory’ (Daerah Istimewa), just like Yogyakarta. For many people, few reasons remained to follow the more radical segment of the PUSA into a violent and uncertain future. In 1962 Daud Beureueh finally decided to ‘come down from the mountains’.

In the meantime, other significant political and administrative changes had taken place. In the mid-1950s the government had started to fill the places which had been left empty by local administrators (most of them former PUSA members) after joining the rebellion. Two potentially ‘loyal’ groups immediately presenting themselves were the (descendents of) \textit{uleebalang} and conservative \textit{ulama}. According to Morris (1983:207), the Governor of North Sumatra, S.M. Amin, ‘in effect handed over the pamong praja apparatus to the \textit{uleebalangs}'.\textsuperscript{41} Among the prominent traditionalist \textit{ulama} who publicly aligned themselves with the government’s cause were Teungku Krueng Kale in Aceh Besar, Teungku Habib Muda in West Aceh, and, most notably, Teungku Muda Waly, the revered leader of the Dayah Darussalam in Labuhan Haji (South Aceh), all of whom declared the nature of the rebellion to be against Islam (I will return to these figures in more detail in the next chapter). The first Governor of the new autonomous province of Aceh, however, came from the PUSA camp. Ali Hasjmy, a reformist \textit{ulama}, youth leader, fierce republican, and career administrator originally from Montasik (Aceh Besar), had been affiliated with the PUSA and incarcerated for a few weeks in East Sumatra in 1953 because of his alleged involvement in the preparations of the Darul Islam. He played a mediating role in the conflict and was subsequently ‘groomed to serve as the new governor of Aceh’ while residing in Jakarta (Feener forthcoming).\textsuperscript{42}

Another important development was the crystallisation of existing political and ideological contestations into national party affiliations. The 1950 Constitution had prescribed a parliamentary system, and throughout the 1950s Islamic interest groups had organised themselves in different political parties, arguably forming a third ‘pillar’ – albeit

\textsuperscript{40} See Sjamsuddin 1985:197-212. Apparently, one initiative to prevent excesses was a measure forcing the military commanders of the TII to deliberate with the \textit{ulama} before punishing perceived ‘wrongdoings’.

\textsuperscript{41} S.M. Amin, a Mandailing Batak born in Aceh Besar in 1906, was originally a lawyer practicing in Banda Aceh. In Morris’ (1983:163, n.18) words, ‘during the revolution whatever his position, S. M. Amin was functionally the representative of the Dutch-educated metropolitan elite at the center vis-à-vis PUSA leaders in Aceh.’

\textsuperscript{42} The role of Ali Hasjmy in the modern history of Aceh is significant for a number of reasons, one being his involvement in the founding of a number of modern Islamic state institutions, including the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Ar-Raniry (1960) and the provincial Ulama Council (Majelis Ulama), of which he became the Head in 1982. Michael Feener emphasises in particular his role in tying the project of state Islam to the New Order agenda of economic development. For more details on his life and career, see Feener forthcoming; Morris 1983; Reid 1979:108-09.
a heavily divided one – besides the (nationalist) Indonesian National Party (Partai Nasional Indonesia, PNI) and the Communist Party of Indonesia (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI). Politically active traditionalist ulama were mobilised in the Acehnese branch of the (originally West Sumatran) Pergerakan Tarbibiah Islamijah (Perti), led by Teungku Muda Waly Sulaiman (1985:263-64). Sympathisers of the Darul Islam gathered in the reformist-dominated Masyumi (Partai Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia, founded during the Japanese occupation), while the majority of the lay segment of the PUSA joined the Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia (PSII), the successor of the Sarekat Islam which had split from Masyumi in 1947 (Sjamsuddin 1985:6-7). In 1960 Masyumi was banned during Sukarno’s ‘Guided Democracy’, after allegations of a conspiracy with the PKI against the President (see Ricklefs 2001:324-25). In Aceh Besar, Masyumi members who were not directly involved in the Darul Islam either became active for the Muhammadiyah, or joined with the PSII (Soeyatno 1977:72).

The autonomy formula did not last very long. In 1965 a failed leftist coup in Jakarta was followed by a military coup, ousting President Sukarno and placing General Suharto at the head of a new regime. The ‘New Order’ was backed by the military, and in the course of decades is policies would contribute to the development of a distinct style of Acehnese nationalism, exemplified by the violently separatist GAM. However, during the 1960s and most of the 1970s there was not GAM, and, borrowing the words of Aspinall, instead of a ‘rediscovery of regional identity’, Aceh was an example of profound ‘Indonesianization’. Gradually ‘Indonesia’ turned from an ‘abstract ideal’ into a manifest, ‘increasingly intrusive presence in people’s daily lives’, with state institutions and instruments tuned ‘ever more purposefully’ to the objective of nation building (Aspinall 2009:35). This shift was facilitated by changing orientations within the Acehnese political elite. Various scholars have emphasized the process by which former PUSA supporters were transformed from a loose collection of ambitious activists into an ‘upper class’ of conservative state agents. In the 1970s and 1980s this group, which included many descendents of reformist ulama, became known as the ‘technocrats’. As a collection of administrators, academics (mainly economists), engineers and intellectuals, the technocrats were the embodiment of the New Order’s focus on economic development and political stability (Morris 1983:256-57). At the same time, their role reflected the profound transformation, over many decades, of the self-declared ‘reformist’ elite, down to village level.44

The alliance between the technocrats and the New Order was built, in part, on the formal recognition of a shared enemy. The first year of the New Order was marked by the systematic destruction of the communist PKI and all of its alleged ‘sympathisers’. Killing squads affiliated with Islamic organisations played an important role in these events. In Java, the paramilitary brigade of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the country’s largest Islamic

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44 As Soeyatno (1977:67) nicely put it: ‘From historical developments we learn that the reformist elite (elite reformis) in the nineteenth century consisted of ulama and uleebalang, while in the 1930s [it] consisted of ulama and youth groups (...). By the period between the late 1950s until the 1960s the reformist elite consisted of various social classes, [including] ulama, school teachers, youth [groups] and students, and village intellectuals carrying the status of civil servant’.
45 It has been extremely difficult to come up with plausible estimations of the number of people killed during the massacre. According to Robert Cribb (2002:559), no one may ever be more precise than to put the number somewhere between 200,000 and 1 million.
organisation, was deeply involved. In Aceh, thousands of (alleged) leftists were killed in actions spearheaded by Islamic youth groups sympathetic to the Darul Islam, being ‘openly encouraged’ by the army commander in Aceh. In 1965 the first fatwa issued by the newly formed provincial Ulama Council (chaired by Teungku H. Abdullah Ujong Rimba) ‘banned’ communist sympathies, conflating communism with neo-colonial ideology. The struggle against communism was not the only shared interest, however. In resonance with the developmentalist agenda of the regime, technocratic administrators viewed Acehnese economic backwardness in terms of a cultural deficit, related to the ‘closed mentality of the [Acehnese] population’. What was agreed upon, in other words, was a broadly defined economic and cultural vision of the future.

The rise to power of the military facilitated a significant increase in the grip of the central government on the ‘outer regions’, including Aceh. Most of the district administrators (bupati) were military officers. These were predominantly ethnically Acehnese, even though a number of officers had to be transferred to posts elsewhere in the archipelago because they were regarded to be ‘too close to Islamic and youth leaders’ (Ibid.). For the new regime, the major significant threat remaining after the annihilation of the left was political Islam. The Suharto government was acutely aware of the risk vested in a renewed popularity of Islamic parties (and particularly the potential revival of the Masyumi) as a result of the space created by the effective destruction of the PKI and the gradual submission of the PNI (Ricklefs 2008:256-57). In order to keep this risk under control, in 1968 the Masyumi was allowed to continue in a watered down form in Parmusi (Partai Muslimin Indonesia) (see Ward 1970). In 1973 all Islamic political parties were forced to merge into a single political grouping, the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP).

It is important to emphasize, however, that during the events discussed in the rest of this chapter, the PPP had not been created yet, and electoral competition between Islamic parties was still a factor of importance. In 1971 the regime held its first General Elections, which were staged mainly to provide Golkar – the regime’s tool for managing bureaucratic and political careers – with popular legitimacy. In most studies of Aceh these elections have been presented as a struggle between Golkar and the Islamic ‘bloc’, comprising NU and Perti on the ‘traditionalist’ side, and the PSII and Parmusi on the ‘reformist’ side. Golkar won 49,7 percent, while the combined Islamic parties won 48,9 percent (Parmusi taking the largest share, winning 18,8 per cent). Aceh was one of only three provinces where Golkar was unable to win an absolute majority, revealing, supposedly, the ‘piety’ of the Acehnese (see, e.g., Morris 1983:291). I think it would be a mistake, however, to frame this event exclusively, or even primarily, as a struggle between ‘Islam’ and the secular state. Not only were there considerable differences within the ranks of political Islam, such a reductionist stance also fails to take into account the

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46 For more detailed discussions, see Fealy and MacGregor 2010; Roosa 2006. NU had a history of anti-communist violence, leading back, in particular, to a series of deadly clashes between NU and PKI members in Madium in 1948. See, e.g., Poeze 2007. Chapter 9.
49 Governor Muzakkir Walad, 1970, quoted in Aspinall 2009:53
50 Most sub-district heads (camat) were civilians, as was (after 1968) the Governor (Morris 1983:256).
agencies of those local groups and individuals who, as we shall see, were increasingly, but
never entirely, tied down by Suharto’s political machinery.

Place, ritual, and the confluence of state and village: the Jayawardena notes

In this section I turn to the Jayawardena notes in order to investigate the effect of the
broader dynamics described above on the Indrapuri locality. I will focus on three themes:
the rejection by reformists of ‘un-Islamic’ practices, the development of state Islam, and
village conflict. Before I start, however, let me briefly return to Aceh Besar, and the two
figures that were so important in the outbreak of the anti-Dutch revolt in 1942: Panglima
Polem Teuku Muhammad Ali and PUSA leader and ideologue Teungku Hasballah Indrapuri.

Compared to Pidie and other parts of the North coast, Aceh Besar was relatively
quiet during the Revolution. Ulee Balang families were allowed to keep much of their land.
Nonetheless, by 1947 Teuku Muhammad Ali had been politically marginalised. After the
outbreak of the Darul Islam revolt in 1953, and in the context of the sudden but brief
political revival of the Ulee Balang class, he was appointed, to his own surprise, as the
Bupati of Pidie, only to be ‘honourably dismissed’ again in 1955.51 He moved to Jakarta,
where, in December 1958, he was arrested and incarcerated ‘at the request of the
authorities in Aceh’. In 1959 he was set free, and shortly thereafter appointed as a
representative for Aceh at the temporary parliament (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakjat
Sementara), established on 5 July 1959. It was not until 1968 that he finally returned to
Banda Aceh, and tried to ‘regain his possessions’.52 He died in 1974. When Jayawardena
came to Aceh Besar in the mid-1960s, there were no more descendents of Panglima Polem
living in Lam Sih. They had sold their land, piece by piece, and lived ‘scattered in Banda
Aceh and elsewhere’. In the words of local villagers, they had ‘blended’ into society (sudah
masuk masyarakat) and become ‘ordinary people’ (orang biasa).53

As Teuku Muhammad Ali’s status withered, Teungku Hasballah’s star rose, at least at
the local level. From the initial controversies surrounding his return to Aceh Besar (in the
1920s, or early 1930s at the latest) onwards, Teungku Hasballah’s standing in Indrapuri
had steadily increased, and by the early 1950s he was a figure to be reckoned with,
certainly in the Indrapuri area. Sjamsuddin related how an incident in which Teungku
Hasballah was hit by a military truck ‘shocked the villagers’, and that as a result the
situation in rural Aceh Besar became more tense. ‘Before it was too late, the military
authorities made a special effort to apologize to the ulama and publicly announced that it
was a genuine accident and that the driver of the truck had been punished.’ Of course, it
was already ‘too late’ for a different reason, and when the rebellion broke out, many young
men were prepared to go ‘into the mountains’ with him (lari gunung, A: jau gunung). His
following consisted partly of religious students, and partly of PUSA supporters who were
fearful of being rounded up by the authorities. During the early years of the rebellion,
Teungku Hasballah functioned as the ‘head’ of the DI/TII ‘judiciary’. He did not live,
however, to witness the resolution of the conflict. He died in 1956 of natural causes.

The limits of purist reform

People in Indrapuri supported the Darul Islam rebellion in different ways. Some acted as
‘rebels’ at night, and as ordinary citizens during the day. Others stayed for long periods in

51 Memoires van Teuku Muhammad Ali Panglima Polem, p. 47.
52 Ibid., p. 48-51.
53 CJN, 18 September 1972 (I:21).
the mountains, returning to the village for a few months during harvest time, where they
were sheltered from the authorities and the military. Other villagers offered their
assistance not by joining the struggle, but by stocking mountain camps with food and
necessities. One informant told Jayawardena that there had been arbitrary killing on both
sides, and that people who did not support the rebellion had been forced to take refuge in
Banda Aceh. After the rebellion, most of them were able to return home. When
Jayawardena asked him why he did not support the rebellion, he answered that, ‘the first
duty of an individual is to the state’ and that ‘religion is a personal business’.54

Former combatants said that, in the mountains, they had formed a ‘society of their
own’. In the barracks (asrama) they lived isolated existences, engaging in the preparation
of armed confrontations, but also in communal prayer and religious discussion. Life was
‘pure’ (suci), they said.55 Most of the rebels came down from the mountains after the
declaration of a ceasefire in 1957. One of Jayawardena’s informants, a former TII Captain,
told him that the rebels camped on the coast or on the roadside, ‘uniforms and all’. Most
did not return to the mountains. He did, however, for he ‘agreed with Daud Beureueh that
the Sjariat Islam must be enforced throughout Atjeh’, and therefore he decided to continue
the struggle.56 In the late 1950s the situation for the rebels in Aceh Besar became
increasingly difficult. The number of combatants declined, and popular support decreased.
Even before the surrender of Daud Beureueh many were persuaded, under the promise of
amnesty, to give up. Jayawardena’s informant returned to his former job as a TNI officer,
even though he was not required to report for duty anymore. By the early 1970s he was
spending most of his time in the village.

While it is important to consider the effects of the violence and disruption caused
by the Darul Islam period, the impact of the reformist movement should not be reduced to
an analysis of the armed conflict alone. Teungku Hasballah and Daud Beureueh were
charismatic leaders, who inspired people, collected followers, and succeeded in making
the Darul Islam hold sway, at least for some years, over a large part of the Acehnese
countryside. But how can we assess the impact of their call to ‘purify’ society, and their
attempts to bring Acehnese society in accordance with the laws of God?

One of the reformists’ main targets was the veneration of sacred graves and the
practice of kenduri kematian, the communal meals commemorating the death of both
loved ones and important spiritual leaders and saints. The argument was that such
practices falsely suggested the possibility of intercession by the deceased between God
and human beings. In the aftermath of the Revolution, the PUSA-dominated government
officially banned the practice of saint veneration. In result, people were at least
temporarily denied access to the tomb of Syiah Kuala – generally considered to be one of
the most important graves in Aceh today (Morris 1983:161-62). This was close to Banda
Aceh. In the countryside this measure must have been rather difficult, if not impossible, to
enforce. Jayawardena noted that in the mid-1960s several graves in the Indrapuri area
were considered keramat (holy sites). The most important of these were the graves of
Teungku Chik di Tiro (one of the leaders in the Aceh War), Teungku Chik Eumpetrieng
(the ulama who facilitated the arrival of Teungku Hasballah), and Teungku Lam Djamee.
These were frequently visited, both by locals and by people who came from further away.
At these places kenduri were frequently held.

54 CJN, undated (1964:56-59).
55 It is not clear from the notes whether this is a reflection of one informant, or whether this is
56 CJN, undated (1964:3-7).
The practice of visiting graves served different goals. One of these was to help securing one's livelihood:

When cattle and buffalo are sick the animals are brought thither. *Doa* [prayer] are offered at the grave; and a bit of earth, mixed in water, is daubed over the head and face of the animal. Or recently born calves are brought there. Some come there after the harvest with the animals who had worked the season. Especially brought there are young buffaloes who, in their calfhood, shed their fur once or twice. The animals suffer greatly from the heat during this time, and more often than at other times, die. The *teungku meunasah* [of] Lheueh, whose *sawah* are near the tomb say that people still come. (…) Hasby, [a] tailor from Meusale says that people come often.57

The practice of *ziarah* was not limited to rural areas, however. Jayawardena did not mention the grave of Syiah Kuala, but he did write about a grave in Tanjong, just outside the city of Banda Aceh. The grave of Nek Rabi belonged to a woman who, according to local traditions, had been killed for committing adultery (*zina*). The power to ‘close the womb’ of pregnant women was ascribed to the spirit of Nek Rabi, thus making the delivery of the child difficult and dangerous.58 It was said that, at this site, blessings could be ‘transferred’ to the visitor’s body by washing the face using water mixed with soil from the grave, preferably taken from its ‘centre’, ‘the location of the navel of the corps’, or by ‘rub[bing] the headstone with one’s hands and then to rub one’s face’.59 Thus, pregnant women regularly visited this tomb, to make offerings and appease Nek Rabi’s spirit. In fact, it was not even necessary to visit to the grave in person:

In some parts, old women (perhaps men too) announce that they have been appointed ‘duta’ [emissary] for that area by Nek Rabi – so that people could intercede with Nek Rabi through them, without going all the way to the tomb.60

The grave of Nek Rabi was managed by local descendents, who still lived there. Alms given during the visits were collected by a *teungku* living some kilometres away, who shared them with the *kampung* residents.

If *ziarah* remained important, this does not mean that the reformist movement had no impact. Rather, the impact was contingent on time and circumstances. Take, for example, Jayawardena’s observations regarding a tomb known as *djirat adjar* (‘tomb of the hermit’), located close to the village of Lheueh. For as long as people remembered, this place was *keramat*; and a favourite location for organising *kenduri blang* (communal

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58 Siegel (1969:157-60) wrote that Nek Rabi was regarded as a particularly powerful and dangerous spirit, which on occasion took possession of midwives, particularly during difficult deliveries, and had to be appeased. At his fieldwork site in Pidie a different story about the origin of Nek Rabi was dominant, however. ‘Nek Rabi is the spirit of a woman who lived in Kotaradja, the capital of Atjeh. One night as she was returning home from reading the Koran, someone mistook her for a thief and cut off her head. The murderer took her head to a place in Atjeh proper called Indrapuri and buried it. Her body was buried in Kotaradja. Because Nek Rabi died before her appointed time, she goes about asking for things from women while they are giving birth. She only appears, however, if something improper has been done in the ceremonies before birth, especially during the chandoeri of the seventh month. She possesses the midwife, who then speaks with the spirit’s voice and who cannot continue to deliver the baby’ (Ibid.:157-59).
60 Jayawardena added to this: ‘The notion that spirits stop up the womb is widespread – and this is done not only by Nek Rabi. When K[euchik] Budiman’s wife had a difficult childbirth, some said that his deceased wife was stopping up the womb.’ CJN, 22 November 1972 (II:33-35).
meals related to the harvest), or rituals performed in the wake of disaster, such as the outbreak of disease. By the 1970s most people had stopped visiting this grave. According to the keuchik of Lheueh, this was a direct result of the influence in the past of Panglima Polem and Teungku Hasballah. When Jayawardena lived in Lheueh, djiirat adjar was visited mostly by descendants of the people buried in the compound (the newest grave was six months old). Still, this seems to be an exceptional example. In fact, Jayawardena wrote, with the reformist influence ‘greatly lightened’ toward the end of the 1960s, there were signs of a ‘resurgence’ of ziarah practices. When he visited the grave of Nek Rabi in late 1972, he was told that, just two days earlier, a party of 30 people had come all the way from Sigli (Pidie). Another case was the grave of Teungku Tjik Eumpetrieng, where the famous ulama’s son, Teungku Sufi, confiscated offerings, and forbade people to come to the grave and engage in practices such as taking earth, burning lamps and hanging flags. ‘People were annoyed’, Jayawardena wrote, ‘but most dissuaded. However, a few continue to worship it’. A more sensitive issue was the role of local healers/diviners, and their dealings with supernatural beings. The people of Indrapuri were mindful of a wide variety of supernatural phenomena, including jin (spirits), or hantu (ghosts). These beings were believed to inhabit trees or other objects, and occasionally revealed themselves in front of human beings in the form of an ‘incandescent glow’. They were usually seen as malevolent in nature, able and willing to attack careless people at night. He was also told that, up until the 1950s, it was quite common for villagers to make offerings to hantu. Spirits possessing a human being would cause the latter to ‘become stiff’, or ‘get the shakes’. It would then demand ‘specific kinds of food and drink’ and depart when offered this. In contrast to the practice of ziarah, appeasing hantu by making offerings was ‘dying out fast’. If occurring at all, it happened in secret. According to Jayawardena, this change was a direct result of the campaign against heretical practices. Many people who engaged in such practices in the past had stopped doing so, and were angered or embarrassed by the suggestion alone.

The reformist challenge was not the only factor. Jayawardena observed that the concept of hantu was connected in an intimate way to concerns of health and disease, and that improvements in healthcare caused a certain measure of disenchantment. Another factor was the Japanese occupation: ‘It is also said that the Japs caused a change because they hacked down trees which were invisible, built roads and trenches over graves etcetera, and people saw that no harm came to these people’. Of course, it is possible that these factors reinforced each other. Most importantly, it appears to have been a change of a more lasting nature. Although people in Aceh today take into account the presence in the world of a wide variety of spirit forms, it would be very unusual for people to openly engage in, or even speak about, the practice of making offerings to hantu.

Healer/diviners were designated by Jayawardena with the term pawang. His notes contain a few interesting descriptions of healing practices and magic. For example:

61 Ismail Yakub (1980:343) recalled that Teungku Hasballah used to warn in his speeches (tabligh) that kenduri were forbidden (haram). The Jayawardena notes state that, during the colonial period, Teungku Hasballah ‘destroyed the kramat tomb of Teungku Padai [Pade?]’ (verification later) [sic], and that Panglima Polem ‘supported him’, but do not give more details. CJN, 17 December 1972 (III:35-45).
62 CJN, 1 January 1973 (IV:33).
63 CJN, 26 November 1972 (II:63).
64 CJN, undated (1964:8-11).
65 Ibid.
66 The Indonesian word pawang may be translated as ‘expert’ (often used in the context of knowledge of magical powers), ‘guide’ or ‘steersman’. Snouck Hurgronje also noted the use of the term in Aceh, but only in reference to the owners of fishing boats, not in relation to healers or diviners (Snouck Hurgronje...
The illnesses [caused by hantu] are cured by the ‘pawang’ whose usual method of treatment is blowing on water. The pawang is a ‘white’ magician while there are sorcerers too (…), who practice ‘ilmu’. They obtain this power after many ordeals, and are said to possess special qualities – such as being invulnerable – and to be under special taboos – water may not touch their bodies. They also may not read the Quran – in contrast to the pawang who are said to be in accord with the Quran, and who may also – probably – invoke it in their practices.67

Healing practices by pawang were targeted by reformers, who thought that they were based on non-Islamic beliefs. Thus, ‘Teungku Hasballah used to dramatically hack at tabooed and sacred trees to prove that it can do no harm and [that] the belief [is] superstition’.68 Villagers, in apparent defense of their, or their community’s religious integrity, told Jayawardena that there were more pawang in ‘remote’ districts, such as West Aceh and Central Aceh, as compared to Aceh Besar and the North coast.

Yet even the practice of offering to spirits could not be ‘eradicated’, as becomes clear from a meeting Jayawardena had with ‘Sulaiman’, a pawang who was born in South Aceh, but who had lived in Indrapuri for many years. Suleiman told Jayawardena that he had learned his skills from different teachers (guru) in Bakongan (just south of Tapaktuan). Diseases, Sulaiman explained, could be caused by natural cause, requiring medicines (obat) based on ‘herbs, leaves, ground wood, the skins of tigers, monkeys etcetera’, or by other, less tangible agents, such as burong, jinn, hantu, or ancestral or personal ‘wickedness’. A pawang was able to learn the cause by looking at the behaviour of the patient, or by speaking to the burong or jinn which had taken possession of the victim. Sulaiman told Jayawardena about the method of relieving a patient from a possessing agent:

When an individual is affected by a burong the general cure is to ask the burong what it wants. The burong replies – meat, or fish or whatever. This is offered, and then the burong is exhorted to leave the patient. Each pawang also seeks to obtain the services of a burong. He does this by laying naked on the grave of a man who died by homicide or a woman in childbirth. He does this for seven nights, repeating doa. On the seventh, out of the navel of the corpse comes a burong, which he traps. The burong is a small being, about the size of the tip of one’s finger, and it shines like a light. It is trapped in a bottle which is kept at home. It can be sent on errands to inflict people, and then it comes back.69

Jayawardena was acquainted with an older couple who were treated regularly by Sulaiman. The woman’s illness had been diagnosed by doctors in Medan as an form of cancer against which ‘no amount of Western medicine helps’. Her husband was blind, and wished to regain his eyesight. They had a couple of daughters, who, according to

1893-95:1.302-07). I have never came across this term during my own fieldwork. Both in Blang Daruet and in Juroung people spoke of orang berobat or dukun. Of these two terms, orang berobat was generally seen as the safest choice, while dukun could be used in derogatory ways, evoking associations with superstition (khurafat), deceit (tipu-menipu), magic (ilmu gaib) or witchcraft (sisir).
67 CJN, undated (1964:64-65).
68 Ibid.
69 CJN, 18 December 1972 (III:55-61). According to Snouck Hurgronje, what the Acehnese called the burong was similar to the Sundanese kunti or kuntianak, or the Javanese sundel bolong, all referring to female ghosts, or the spirit of women who led an ‘adulterous life’, creatures, in other words, like Nek Rabi. The burong that was most feared, according to Snouck Hurgronje (1893-95:417), was ‘Srabi’, or ‘Sirabi’, the spirit of an adulterous woman, a daughter of a religious scholar originally named ‘Rabiah’, who was killed by her lover and buried in Tanjong, close to Banda Aceh.
Jayawardena, did not seem to object against Suleiman’s procedures, even though their ‘orthodox’ husbands clearly did. ‘The interesting thing’, Jayawardena noted, ‘is that the Muslim husbands [sic] have not [forbidden] the services of the pawang. They, as it were, turn away with a condescending tolerance and make it clear that it is a woman’s matter they have nothing to do with’.

*The village and the New Order*

In this section and the next, I move away from doctrinal issues and contestations about ‘correct’ interpretations of Islam, to look more closely at the effect of the intruding state and normative Islam as a political currency at the local level. I focus on a conflict in the village of Lheueh, described by Jayawardena in multiple notebook entries in the period between November 1972 and March 1973, and designated by him as the ‘Lheueh dispute’.

In first instance, Jayawardena thought that he was dealing with a relatively minor controversy about the division of fitrah, the religious tithes collected every year on the evening before Hari Raya Idulfitri, the celebration at the end of Ramadan. However, he gradually discovered that the real origins of the conflict lay in a combination of contestations about local power, religious authority, and the definition of what constituted ‘Lheueh’ as a social and political entity. The Lheueh dispute contains information about the intrusion of the state into the ‘religious landscape’ of Indrapuri through the officialisation of institutions like the village head (keuchik), the district head (Camat), and the Office of Religious Affairs. Before I move on to a more detailed discussion, then, it is important to pay some attention to the constitution of the ‘village’ and the institutionalization of Islam during the early New Order.

The early decades of the postcolonial period in Indonesia were characterised by an ongoing process of administrative integration. In part, this process built on colonial changes, such as the creation of a professional civil service (the pangreh praja) (Sutherland 1979). In part, it was a new process driven by the need to balance the interests of the central government and the outer provinces (see, e.g., MacAndrews 1986b). The New Order is known for its thorough restructuring and standardisation of administrative structures, both at the central and at the local level. Some of the most important of these reforms were implemented in the 1970s and 1980s, including Law No. 5 (1974) on the structure of the government and the Village Law of 1979. The ‘early’ New Order years – the period in which Jayawardena lived in Aceh – were a kind of intermediate phase between the centralisation policies of Sukarno’s Guided Democracy and the culmination of New Order centralising power. Central to this period was a gradual reform of the bureaucracy, directed primarily at a further professionalization of the civil service (see Djunaedi Hadismarto 1974). It is worth emphasizing that, around of the turn of the 1970s, the New Order was ‘far from being a strong government’, and that it still needed to ‘establish control and to impose [its] authority (...) on the whole country’ (MacAndrews 1986a:11). This was particularly true in rural areas, where its modernisation policies regularly led to ‘critical contest and dispute between peasant and administrator’ (Hansen 1971:63).

By the late 1960s, the ‘Province of the Special Region Aceh’ (Propinsi Daerah Istimewa Atjeh) was headed by a Governor, and divided administratively in seven districts (kebupaten, each led by a district head, bupati) and two municipalities (kotamadya, each led by a mayor, walikota).70 Districts were subdivided in sub-districts (kecamatan, led by a

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70 The districts were Atjeh Besar, Pidie, North Aceh, East Aceh, Central Aceh, West Aceh, and South Aceh. The municipalities were Banda Aceh and Sabang. ‘Laporan Umum Pemerintah Daerah Propinsi Daerah
district head, *camat*). The lowest administrative unit was the village (*desa*, led by a village head, *keuchik*). The four *mukim*, each a collection of villages (*gampong*) headed by a *kepala mukim*, were recognised as an *adat* institution, but did not formally make part of the hierarchical government structure. The Kecamatan Indrapuri was one of the 12 sub-districts comprising the district of Aceh Besar. In 1965, Indrapuri was headed by an Assisten Wedana (later *Camat*), called Muhamad Jahja Amin, who, in the government hierarchy, stood directly under the Bupati of Aceh Besar, Lieutenant Colonel Ibrahim Saidy. Indrapuri counted 70 villages and 11,970 inhabitants, 85 percent of whom lived by agriculture and small trade. The administrative centre was the market of Indrapuri, which included the office of the Bupati, the office of the Camat, a police station, a military compound, and a local branch of the Office of Religious Affairs (Kantor Urusan Agama, or KUA). The *kecamatan* counted a total of eleven mosques, including the famous mosque of Indrapuri.

I will now concentrate on four aspects of the relationship between state and Islam in this period, namely the idea that state institutions and village officials were responsible for 'socializing' (*sosialisasi*, that is spreading throughout society) religious norms, the regulation of religious tithes, the position of the village head (*keuchik*), and the significance of the 1971 General Elections at village level.

In 1967 Bupati Ibrahim Saidy circulated an 'appeal' (*seruan*) aimed at socialising religious norms in village society. It addressed 'all Muslims' in Aceh Besar, and spoke of enlivening (*meramaikan*) the mosques, *meunasah* and *musallah* by engaging in communal prayer every time, [or] at the very least at the Maghrib, Isyah and Subuh prayer-times. The document was drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the Republic of Indonesia regarding 'religion, education and culture'; the proclamation (*pernyataan*) by the Aceh Special Territory provincial parliament about the 'effectuation of Shari'a regulations' (*unsur-unsur Syariat Islam di Atjeh*); the 1965 instruction of the Bupati of Aceh Besar about the 'obligation to follow religious study for all inhabitants of the Aceh Besar district'; the 1967 decision of the district parliament about 'mental development' (*pembangunan mental*); the idea that religion formed 'an essential ingredient in the order of 'nation and character building [English in the original]'; and the idea that communal prayer instilled into the minds of the people a 'sense of Islamic brotherhood' (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*), and a unity that was 'solid and lasting' (*kohok dan abadi*). The document concluded by stating that community leaders (*Kepala Mukim – Imam Mesjid – Ketjihik*)

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71 Ibrahim Saidy fought in the Revolution on the side of the PUSA. Afterwards, he became a high ranking military officer. Hasan Saleh (1992), the highest TNI officer to defect to the Darul Islam, was in the same brigade as Ibrahim Saidy and mentions him a number of times in his account of the Acehnese struggle, though without providing many details.

72 'Lapuran tahunan daerah Ketj. Inderapuri untuk tahun 1965 dan rentjana kendja tahun 1966', signed M. Jahja Amin, Assisten Wedana Ketj. Indrapuri, 17 February 1966. Badan Arsip dan Perpustakaan Provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, Daftar Pertelaan Arsip Kecamatan Indrapuri Kebupaten Daerah Tingkat II Aceh Besar Periode Tahun 1966-1983 (henceforth Arsip NAD, DPA Indrapuri), no. inv. 38/8. N.B.: Jayawardena noted some interesting continuities with regard to the people who held offices at these institutions. For example, the Head (ketua) of the Kantor Urusan Agama, Teungku Hasan, was a son of Teungku H. Abdul Mutalib, who was the last person to hold the office of *kadi* (judge) of the 22 Mukims under Panglima Polem. CJN, 22 November 1972 (II:26-32).

I linger on these admonitions – and their formulaic aspect – with reason. Regulations of this kind reflected a general discourse of state Islam emerging in the early years of the New Order regime, emphasizing the groundedness of Acehnese society in Islam. At the same time, documents drafted by the local government reveal that this was not a simple top-down process. In order to implement the above mentioned policies, the provincial and district governments regularly handed down instructions about religious ‘rules’ (aturan) and ‘duties’ (kewajiban) to the KUA. In order to be effective, the staff of the KUA needed to work together with community leaders, including village heads (keuchik), imam meunasah, mosque personnel, kepala mukim, and ulama. One of the ways in which the regulations were ‘socialised’ among these community leaders was by holding meetings, in which a range of matters was discussed.

Take, for example, a meeting (rapat musjawarah) held in the Mukim Gle Jeueng on 17 April 1966. The meeting was led by the Camat of Indrapuri, and discussed regulations put under the headings ‘village discipline’, ‘agriculture and cattle breeding’, ‘marriage’, ‘education and worship’, and ‘health’. These regulations translated idealized social norms into the idiom of public order and state security. Under ‘village discipline’ it was stated that ‘the village head has the right to know about guests staying overnight in a village, [so] the person receiving the guest is obliged to report [this] to him’. Also, ‘there should be no people roaming the village after ten at night’. Villagers were expected to conform to prosaic communal responsibilities, such as keeping their houses clean, contributing to communal labour (gotong royong), and ensuring that the cattle in their possession would not endanger people or houses. A more general note stated that ‘all members of the village should equally respect each other and there may not be envy (hasud) or slander (fitnah)’. Under the heading ‘education and worship’, it was established that ‘there should be communal prayer in every meunasah’, and that both children and adults should engage in religious study. Keuchik and teungku (meunasah) were obliged to visit the mosque every Friday for religious study.76

The management of religious tithes made part of this body of state religious norms from the start of the New Order. Ali Hasjmy, the first governor of the ‘special region’ province Aceh in 1957, had been removed from office in 1964, for reasons that have

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74 ‘Seruan meramaikan Mesjid-Menasa dan Musalla2’, signed Ibrahim Saidy, 15 August 1967. Arsip NAD, DPA Indrapuri, no. inv. 45/8. N.B.: Such ‘seruan’ were circulated to government functionaries in the kebupaten, the Governor of Aceh, other Bupati’s, and relevant ministries in Jakarta.
remained somewhat unclear. However, it is worth mentioning one of his decisions here. In November 1962, he announced the formation of an ‘Islamic Treasury’ (‘Badan Harta Agama Islam Daerah Istimewah Atjeh’), the function of which was partly to advise, and partly to register, order, collect, and take care of ‘all forms of Islamic wealth and property’ (segala djenis harta benda Agama Islam). Another task was to investigate ‘how to enhance the sources of Islamic wealth’, and to distribute (a part of the) incoming means among the mustahaq: those people entitled to it on basis of the provisions of Islamic law. In April 1964 a local branch of this government agency was established by the Bupati of Aceh Besar (who appointed himself as the Chairman, the Djaksa Madya and Head of the KUA Aceh Besar as his deputies, and a mix of other officials and ulama as ordinary members). Collection of zakat was one of the most important functions of the new Treasury. The office distributed forms, on which kampung leaders could fill out the names of the people contributing, and the amounts given. In turn, the Treasury assisted in its distribution, reporting to the government about the total of tithes collected.

Lheueh was not the only place where the collections of religious tithes became a source of conflict. It is interesting to note that, while the government thus interfered in the basic religious duties of villagers, ordinary villagers and village leaders made use, at the same time, of the government infrastructure to complaint and point out ‘abuses’. Consider, for example, a letter sent to the local police office by the keuchik of the village Lambeutong. The village head complained that the zakat-fitrah collection in 1972 had been ‘sabotaged’ (penyabotan) by a group of four villagers. One of them, he claimed, had told the inhabitants not to bring their fitrah to the meunasah. Instead, they were told to bring their tithes to another place, where the other three culprits were waiting to collect it. As a result, almost half of the villages had been ‘cheated’ (ditipu), and a large part of the fitrah was now ‘lost’ (hilang tiada). It does not become clear from the content of the letter whether the village head accused the four of theft, or whether there were differences of opinion about the way the fitrah should be collected. The latter seems to be the most probable option, taking into account two other documents about this case. In a brief response to an (unknown) request of the village council of elders (tuha peut), the Camat writes: ‘What you have done is in firm contradiction with Government rules (...) on the basis of which the keuchik/village head is appointed as the Leader of Projects in his Kampung (Komandan Projek Gampungnya). Because of this we cannot take responsibility for your actions’. The other document is a list of the ‘missing’ fitrah, signed, somewhat oddly, by the ‘ex-Teuha Peut [kampung] Lembeuteung’ (meaning, apparently, the former members of the teuha peut, the village ‘council of elders’). What these scattered documents seem to reflect, then, is a conflict in which the keuchik and the imam meunasah were firmly pitted against the teuha peut (with the latter coming of worst).

77 While Morris (1983:246) mentions ‘left-wing pressures at the center’, Jayawardena – who was in Aceh when it happened – heard rumours that it was due to uleebalang residing in Jakarta including (Panglima Polen) Teuku Muhamed Ali, petitioning the government for his removal. CJN, undated (1964:60-63). 78 The same document also announces other sources through which the agency should be financed, namely ‘a) all forms of Islamic property (harta Agama); b) government subsidies (subsidi dari pemerintah); c) income from taxes (hasil pengutipan-pungutan) collected by the government and delivered to this Body; d) other sources that are legitimate and permitted (sah dan halal). ‘Keputusan No. 171/1963, signed A. Hasjmy, 23 November 1973. Arsip NAD, DPA Indrapuri, no. inv. 44/8. 79 ‘Keputusan’ No. 6/II/KIH/1964, signed Zaini Bakri, 15 april 1964. Arsip NAD, DPA Indrapuri, no. inv. 44/8. 80 Letter concerning ‘Zakat Fitrah’, signed by Camat Kepala Pemerintahan Kecamatan Indrapuri, M. Yahya Amin, 13 November 1972. Arsip NAD, DPA Indrapuri, no. inv. 55/9.
Let me move on by discussing the third point, the position of village head (keuchik), which in the early New Order years seemed to be fraught with problems. Traditionally, the institution of village head in Aceh is vested with great authority, perhaps more so than in other parts of Indonesia. In 1962 Governor Ali Hasjmy stipulated that village heads should be elected (or re-elected) every five years. In subsequent years, and in the context of ongoing expansion of the state, this function was accompanied with increasing responsibilities, expectations, and disappointments on the side of ordinary villagers. Both these factors, of traditional authority and lurking disappointment, were recognized and put to use at a very early stage by the agents of the regime. A 1965 report from the Indrapuri sub-district office states:

[O]ften, frictions arise between the population and village heads, so that in the end there are among [the village heads] those who quit just like that (...). Generally speaking, this is because of the psychological pressure experienced by the village heads, in comparison to their wage, which no longer corresponds to their hard work and loyal service (upah djerihna tak sesuai lagi dengan baktinja), thus leading to a situation in which village matters receive less attention [than they should].

In response to this problem, the Assisten Wedana suggested that a regulation was needed to accelerate the procedure of replacing village heads, to raise their salaries, and to elevate their status by providing them with 'a new official uniform (pakaian dinas) once every year'. The Jayawardena notes suggest that village heads were often charged with misconduct or corruption. In a village called Lam Bentong, a 'crisis' had arisen from accusations of the keuchik 'fiddling' with zakat, 'selling the paddy when prices were high and replacing it when the prices were low'. In the village of Manggra a very similar problem emerged.

Jayawardena noted considerable unrest with regard to the increasing power of the keuchik though the process of 'Golkarisation'. In the run-up to the 1971 elections all government officials, including the keuchik, were forced to choose between joining Golkar or be dismissed. From 1970 onwards the keuchik was given an annual fund of 45.000 rupiah (and a bicycle) for 'village development', and told that (a part of) this money may be used for the campaign in the elections. Evidently, these strategies did not make the function of keuchik much easier. Some of his informants suspected a strategy to 'militarise' the village. Others said that the concentration of power in the hands of the keuchik would lead to intolerable oppression because it struck at the root of what was regarded as the 'traditional organisation of the kampung (...)' seen as a balance of powers which resolves itself through musjawarah (consultation) between the keuchik, the teungku meunasah, and the village council (teuha peut). As one of them put it: 'in some situations the keuchik is in front and the teungku at the back (keuchik muka, teungku belakang)', while in other situations it should be the other way around. As we shall see, the position of the keuchik – and the theme of village leadership more generally – was was a crucial factor in the conflict in Lheeueh.

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81 Kell (1995), G. Robinson (1998) and Aspinall (2009) all pointed at the perilous situation in which village heads found themselves during the GAM conflict, as they became torn between the Indonesian government and the separatist movement.
84 CJN, 4 February 1973 (V:94).
85 CJN, 22 November 1972 (II:37).
Finally, let me briefly pay some attention to the 1971 elections. In Aceh Besar, Golkar won the largest share of votes, beating Parmusi by a slight margin, but trailing far behind the 'Islamic' vote taken together. According to Jayawardena, the elections caused 'much bitterness' in the Indrapuri area. The police granted Golkar much more time and space to campaign than the other parties. In addition, various tactics of intimidation were employed by the government, including the Camat putting pressure on local leaders and the army going door to door telling people to vote for Golkar. However, as I have noted already in the previous section, a stringent focus on the struggle between Golkar and the Islamic parties would risk missing some of the other dynamics at work. Firstly, one might be tempted to overlook the tensions between Islamic parties. Particularly interesting, in this respect, is the way in which the Perti was able to strengthen its social base. Perti was founded as a social and educational organisation in West Sumatra in 1930, with a network of Naqshbandiyah syaikhs at its core. In subsequent decades it evolved into a strong advocate of traditionalist practices and ideas. The organisation was transformed into a political party in 1946 (Van Bruinessen and Howell 2007:99-100). According to Soeyatno (1977), in his analysis of evolving local leadership in the nearby kecamatan of Sibreh, the Perti was able to profile itself locally through the elections, and this was part, moreover, of a more elongated process, in which the social and political organisation of 'traditionalist' Islam comprised a highly dynamic, local, and activist alternative to the radicalism of the Darul Islam. Secondly, Jayawardena noted that, because many local officials were forced to join Golkar (while in reality many of them probably favoured PSII), in practice there was considerable space for negotiation and cooperation, probably more so than if they had made this choice out of their own wish.

The Lheueh dispute

One of Jayawardena's first notebook entries mentioning the village of Lheueh stated:

As far as can be verified (...) there are no cases of kampongs becoming overcrowded and new ones being founded. To the question as to whether people take up land farther on and then settle in [a] new kampong – the answer is again no. (...) If more than one kampong share one name – such as Rheukieh Keupula and Rheukieh Daya, and the several Lam Ili and Limo – this is not, it is said, because there was one Rheukieh, one Lam Ili and one Limo which later fragmented into separate kampong each under its own keuchik, but retaining the original name. It is said that their kampong all existed from long ago, and one is not derived from another. On the other hand, there is an area called 'Darang' which is regarded sometimes as

86 In sequence of the total number of votes: Golkar (28.467), Parmusi (26.870), Perti (18.637), PSII (11.422), and NU (6.564). Soeyatno 1977:74, Table 2.
87 CJN, 22 November 1972 (II:37).
88 Soeyatno (1977:73, Table 1) showed the voting pattern in villages surrounding (traditionalist) dayah in the Sibreh area. With one exception, in which Parmusi was slightly bigger, Perti won these villages by significant margins.
89 Jayawardena wrote: 'This expressed itself in behaviour when those in authority were somewhat restrained in their use of power to restrict PSII activities – that is the local authorities. This mood continues still. The motto is "djangan keras" [don’t be harsh]. That is, don’t provoke the [government] to such a point where it must act to save face. Whatever your opposition, there are some things that you can cooperate in – such as education, economic development, other projects that will help the locality – in these cooperation is possible. In return they may help with some money in political activities, even attend a general discussion.’ CJN, 22 November 1972 (II:37).
belonging to [Kampung] Lheueh; but is also sometimes referred to separately as 'Darang' because it has its own masjid [mosque].

Apparently, there was something particular about the village of Lheueh, and the status of the Darang 'mosque'. In late 1972, local contestations about these names and places would culminate into a disruptive village conflict. For the reason of clarity, the events will be told chronologically here. Jayawardena did not hear the story as such. Instead, he was confronted, unexpectedly, with the emergence of a venomous local controversy about the payment of fitrah in a part of Lheueh called Darang. As the drama unfolded, he gradually uncovered some of its major intricacies.

Formally, Lheueh was one village (desa), which consisted of three 'sections': Lheueh Jeumpa, Meunasah Baro, and Meunasah Darang. The story about the administrative status of Lheueh and these sections begins with the disruptions caused by the Aceh War. As a result of Dutch violence, the region of Indrapuri became so depopulated, that villages were merged together in order to keep functioning as communities. Lheueh was the result of one such merger. While local people generally agreed about this history, and about the fact that Lheueh was first formalized as an administrative entity by the Dutch, different opinions circulated about the order in which events had taken place, and the question of what village had 'absorbed' the other. As we shall see, rather than of local antiquarian interest, such contestations were of significant symbolic and political concern.

A watershed event in the history of Lheueh was the arrival, in the 1920s or early 1930s, of Teungku Hasballah. As we have seen, his initiative to found a reformist school in Lheueh caused a split. Jayawardena was told by his older interlocutors that, during the controversy, conservatives strongly outnumbered Hasballah supporters, and that the main leader of the protest against the school was not an ulama, but the keuchik of Lheueh, Adam, who became Hasballah's greatest opponent. Local knowledge stipulated that the anti-Hasballah faction counted 70 men, while Hasballah's supporters in the village counted only 12. Keuchik Adam lasted through the Japanese occupation, and was eventually succeeded (it is unclear when exactly) by Keuchik Arab. The latter 'occupied this office for several ways, but [was] said to have been not successful because of his lack of leadership and harsh ways'. Eventually, he was accused of abuse of office by a large part of the village population, who consequently petitioned the Bupati to have him removed. Eventually, the Camat persuaded him to resign, 'saying that he was now too old, that new processes of administration required literacy, adding that many in the kampung were opposed to him'. Elections were held at the Lheueh school building, in which the villagers chose a man called Ibrahim as the new keuchik (again, the notes are unclear about when this was exactly, but from the context one may guess that it was around the turn of the 1960s).

Ibrahim's election, most of Jayawardena's informants agreed, was a significant event. While there were different contenders, he was chosen with 68 votes to 16. 'This, magically, was seen as the reversal of the old 12 versus 70'. However, in the run-up to the

90 CJN, 19 September 1972 (I:22).
91 CJN, 17 February 1973 (VI:53-54). These numbers referred explicitly to men: the main reason, some explained, why a reformist-oriented school could be established in Lheueh at all despite the presence of a strong oppositional force, was that 'women supported the school and helped build it, despite the protest of their menfolk'.
92 CJN, 27 December 1972 (IV:6-7).
1971 elections, Keuchik Ibrahim was suddenly replaced by the Camat, 'by authority and with no consultation', apparently because he had refused to join Golkar. The new keuchik was Budiman, who had switched from the PSII to Golkar, and who had sought to increase his support among people descending from anti-Hasballah families. Politically, this group had become scattered in the post Darul Islam period over the NU, Perti, and Golkar. Keuchik Budiman would become the central figure in the Lheueh dispute.

Budiman's new position as keuchik was doomed from the start. When Ibrahim was still in office, Budiman has sent letters to the Kantor Urusan Agama, in which he had accused Ibrahim of 'irregularities' in the distribution of zakat. Infuriated, Ibrahim had demanded that Budiman would either come up with proof or withdraw his accusation. Budiman had done neither, upon which he had left the village for a while. He was only able to return after the Camat (who investigated the matter and cleared Ibrahim of all accusations) straightened the conflict in a 'peaceful manner' (tjara damai). Once in office, Keuchik Budiman's style of leadership caused irritation, particularly among the people of Darang. It was Budiman who bureaucratically divided the village in three 'sections', appointing a 'deputy' (wakil) for each. After this, his adversaries said, he ignored the teuha peut (village council).

The preparations for the 1971 elections were marked by tensions. Although no party branches were allowed at levels lower than the Kebupaten, party politics affected the village in more informal ways. Shortly before the elections a meeting was held in the village by local members of the PSII. At the meeting, a scene was created by Anwar, who was the teacher of the Lheueh primary school, village secretary, a close ally of Keuchik Budiman, and known moreover as strongly anti-Darul Islam. According to most villagers, Anwar had a large influence on his father-in-law, the village imam, Teungku Seuot. At the meeting, a list of members was read, which included the name of Teungku Seuot. Anwar protested against this, and demanded that the name was deleted from the list. In reaction, one of the participants, Teungku Muhammad, told Anwar to leave the meeting, threatening to give him a beating if he did not. The incident created bad blood. Shortly afterwards, Anwar's father refused to preside over the marriage of Teungku Muhammad's daughter, giving them only six hours notice. After the elections, relations further festered, to the extent that the Kepala Mukim, Teungku Jahja, called a meeting in the village, at which he warned the people of Lheueh that there were 'too many factions' (kompani), and that these internal conflicts were affecting village 'principles' (rukun).

According to Jayawardena, local conflicts like the Lheueh dispute were 'either bred or sharpened by the general elections, especially [by the struggle] between Golkar and the Muslims [i.e. the Muslim parties]'. Although his notes are not explicit about the size of

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94 Jayawardena wrote: 'When the dismissal of K. Ibrahim was on the cards, the kepala mukim called a secret meeting of those now in the keuchik faction, plus a few others including Djuned [kepala pemuda]. This meeting discussed the plans to supplant K. Ibrahim & were choosing the tuha peut & wakil. Djuned objected to the secrecy of the meeting and insisted that it be all discussed in public. When K. Ibrahim was deposed the tjamat called a public meeting in the school to announce the change. Djuned & Tgk. Ahmad attempted to question the grounds of the dismissal but were informed that the decision was already taken and the matter was not open to discussion.' CJN, 10 February 1973 (VI:28-30). Keuchik Ibrahim was no exception: Jayawardena mentions (by name) other village heads in the area who were also removed from office because they refused to join office. CJN, 24 January 1973 (V:38-45).
96 CJN, 4 February 1973 (V:99).
97 CJN, 3 January 1973 (IV:45); 20 January 1973 (V:5-12). N.B.: Incidentally or not, the groom was a son from the marriage of Teungku Muhamed's sister and Hasballah Indrapuri's son.
98 CJN, 12 November 1972 (I:61-64).
these factions, government reports tell us that, at least in terms of membership, by the end of the 1960s the PSII was by far the strongest party in Indrapuri.99 Another relevant observation is that, at least according to Jayawardena, the majority of Lheueh villagers – but the people of Darang in particular – remained sympathetic to Budiman’s predecessor, Keuchik Ibrahim, ‘who was deposed because he declined to masuk [enter] Golkar, while the present [i.e. Budiman] compromised with his past to do so’.100 Keuchik Budiman, in other words, had been able to become village head by joining Golkar, even though the majority of villagers probably supported other parties in the elections. However, as we shall see, the Lheueh dispute reflects a struggle over religious rituals and places that was partly – but never exclusively – prompted by clearly articulated ideological divides.

Keuchik Budiman’s most important institutional basis in the village was the mosque. Building a mosque in Lheueh was originally an initiative of his predecessor, Ibrahim. To collect sufficient funds, Ibrahim had drawn on different resources, including zakat and fitrah raised in the village. Since this was not sufficient, he had persuaded a number of villagers to lend out their land for limited periods of time. Others were asked to offer their services in the form of voluntary communal labour (gotong royong) to work this land. The produce was sold, and invested in the mosque fund. Teungku Budiman tried to continue on the same footing, but he was much less successful. ‘it was said’, wrote Jayawardena, ‘that when Keuchik Ibrahim was supplanted by K. Budiman, people withdrew their sawalti’.101 Budiman tried to compensate for this by selling village wakaf, which resulted in discontent among certain villagers, who called it improper use of religious endowments. More bad feeling followed when Budiman tried to channel the share of zakat belonging to the amil – the individuals entrusted with the collection of religious tithes, usually the teungku meunasah – directly to the mosque fund.102 When Budiman finally succeeded in finishing the mosque, forming a congregation proved to be difficult. His main allies, the Kepala Mukim and the Imam, came with the creative suggestion of drawing women to the mosque by announcing that it was ‘almost obligatory’ (hampir wajib) for women to attend the Friday prayer, but to no avail.103 The new mosque was avoided, wrote Jayawardena, because it was seen as the ‘locus of the pro-keuchik faction’.104 Most villagers decided to stick to the old mosque of Indrapuri.

In January 1972 some villagers from Darang publicly announced that they would hold a religious chanting ritual (rateb meusifeut), without asking the keuchik for permission.105 This prompted Budiman to write letters both to the Camat, and to the

99 Namely 2810 members (including 310 women), against 1000 PII members, and only 186 Perti members. ‘Lapuran tahunan (...) 1968’, Arsip NAD, DPA Indrapuri, no. inv. 38/8.
100 CJN, 12 November 1972 (I:61-64).
101 CJN, 20 January 1973 (V:5-12).
102 CJN, 10 February 1973 (VI:28-30).
103 CJN, 20 January 1973 (V:5-12). They even suggested that ‘males and females formed single rows and not, as is [the] “orthodox” [practice], females behind the males.’ This, unsurprisingly, went against the grain for some of the village’s alim, one of whom explained to Jayawardena that ‘females cannot stand before males in prayers, females can never be imam, and (...) that the manner of ibadah is quite rigidly and unambiguously precisely laid down and cannot be deviated from’.
104 CJN, 27 December 1972 (IV:6-7).
105 Rateb are a religious practice which include Sufi-inspired chanting (zikr), poetry, body movements and dance, often in the form of a competition between two or more group. Rateb have an edifying component, educating ordinary people in basic religious knowledge though a form of popular entertainment (Snouck Hurgronje 1893-95:II.220-65). The form of rateb meusifeut, although not performed by opposing ‘teams’, is similar to the more familiar rateb seudati, in that it follows a pattern of alternating question and answers in fields of Islamic knowledge, like fiqh or tauhid, for an actively participating audience.
meusifeut company invited to participate. Because of bad weather the event had to be cancelled. The villagers, most of them pemuda (youth), held a private chanting session instead. In response, Keuchik Budiman told Jayawardena that ‘the people of Darang carry on as if he were not the keuchik’ and that ‘at the same time, they have to come to him (...) for certain matters’, mainly official letters, which he now refused to provide for them. Some Darang men then went to the Camat, ‘but the [Camat] stated that he did not wish to interfere directly into matters in the purview of the keuchik and advised the people to make their peace with the keuchik. The men of Darang refused to do this, because this would mean giving in to the keuchik.’

A few months later, on 7 May 1972, the people of Darang sent a petition to the Bupati, requesting the restoration of ‘Lheueh Darang Mesjid’ (‘Lheueh Darang Mosque’) to its ‘formal status’ as an autonomous village. To support their request, the undersigned – close to a hundred in total – stated that, while Darang had been formally merged with Lheueh Djumpa and Lheueh Meunasah Baro, each of the three settlements had kept its own meunasah (communal hall and place of worship). Since their meunasah had never ceased to exist, it was legitimate for them to choose their own keuchik. Unsurprisingly, Keuchik Budiman saw this move – designated in the Jayawardena notes as the ‘self-identification’ of Darang as a village community – as a personal attack. As far as he was concerned, there was no such thing as an ‘independent’ Darang meunasah. Another six months later, during the fasting month in November 1972, he ordered the villagers of Darang to bring their fitrah (in the form of beras; peeled, uncooked rice) to the Lheueh mosque, thereby effectively denying the existence of the Darang meunasah. It was this moment that the Lheueh dispute escalated, and that Jayawardena started his investigation.

The people of Darang, who were used to collecting fitrah in their own meunasah, were angered and insulted by Budiman’s command to bring their fitrah to the Lheueh mosque. Adding to their frustration was the fact that the other two village ‘sections’ – Lheueh Djumpa and Meunasah Baro – had not been ordered around in the same way. In response, they ignored Budiman’s request. What followed was a public show of indignation. First, Budiman went to the meunasah of Lheueh Djumpa and Meunasah Baro to formally inspect the fitrah collection, and preside over its distribution. After this, he went to the Lheueh mosque to ‘wait’ for the tithes from Darang, perfectly aware that this would be useless. At the same moment, the villagers of Darang waited, equally in vain, for the village head to come and help to ceremoniously divide the tithes at their meunasah. After a while, when it became clear that Budiman would not show up, the Darang amil, Teungku Arsjad, ‘collected his share of the fitrah, and (...) proceeded to distribute [the rest] in accordance with the fitrah rules’. A few days later, Budiman came to Teungku Arsjad to request the government share of the Darang fitrah. Teungku Arsjad told him that the tithes were a voluntary contribution based on Islamic law (hukum) rather than government law, and that there was no such thing as a government ‘share’.110

106 CJN, 20 January 1973 (V:5-12).
108 ‘The inhabitants of Lheueh Darang Mesjid who currently number 250 in total, have a strong desire and hope that [the Bupati], as holding the authority over this matter, will allow Lheueh Darang Mesjid, with immediate effect, to act as one kampung which is administratively fully separate from Lheueh Meunasah Baro.’ Ibid.
110 CJN, 12 November 1972 (I:61-64); 20 November 1972 (II:8-15).
In the following months the conflict between the people of Darang and the village leadership deteriorated further. Darang inhabitants again provoked Budiman by holding religious chanting rituals (rateb) in their meunasah, inviting participants from outside the village without notifying Budiman in advance. Jayawardena intriguingly speaks of ‘upgrading ceremonies’, implying that the very act of staging these events suggested a raising of the status of the Darang meunasah:

[I]t was insisted that all was a quite regular affair and activity of the meunasah, one in which the teungku was dimuka [in front] and the keuchik belakang [in the back]. The question is, who was the teungku meunasah – Basja, as Budiman seemed to prefer, or Teungku Arsjad as the people of Darang seemed to prefer. 111

Budiman maintained that the function of the Darang meunasah had been taken over by the Lheueh mosque. The people of Darang disagreed and the staging of these rituals was their way of showing this. Their strategy put the keuchik in an impossible position. To Jayawardena, Budiman confided that ‘the whole matter was a flouting of the authority of himself and the camat. Thus, he saw no alternative but to break up the spectacle, an act by which he would certainly embarrass the participants, and thereby, indirectly, also himself.

In February 1973 Jayawardena saw how Keuchik Budiman and his allies disturbed one of these ceremonies, entering the meunasah and telling the participants to stop. The person who led the ritual, a farmer called Abdul Djalil Ibrahim, refused. The next day, Djalil was arrested by the police, apparently on order of the Camat of Indrapuri, and escorted to the central police station of the Aceh Besar district in Seulimeum. He was sent back again, however, after an angry police chief declared that ‘this was a matter for kesenian dan kebudayaan [arts and culture] and [had] nothing whatever to do with regulations’. Embarrassed, the Camat ordered Djalil to be locked up in his own office on the Indrapuri market. This aroused a crowd of Darang villagers to gather in front of the office and demand his release. Their presence was sufficiently intimidating for Djalil to be released. A few days later, Keuchik Budiman personally delivered the Friday sermon (khotbah) in the Lheueh mosque, in which he ‘stressed the Islamic rule about not entering a home without permission’. Villagers told Jayawardena that this was as a direct reference to the Darang villagers failing to respect his authority.112

After this incident, the status of Budiman further crumbled. One week after the release of Djalil, local newspapers reported on the incident in a way that favoured the people of Darang. ‘The Darang faction are jubilant’, Jayawardena wrote in his notes, ‘while an angry keuchik faction were preparing to reply’.113 The situation was further aggravated as villagers – especially the Darang youth – subjected Budiman to teasing and veiled insults. Anticipating trouble, the Indrapuri police chief warned the Darang villagers, including Djalil, not to ‘throw hints’ at the keuchik.114 In the meantime, Budiman’s deputy

111 CJN, 3 February 1973 (V:87-91).
112 Ibid.
113 CJN, 17 February 1973 (VI:53-54). Teungku Rani referred to a variety of minor subversions, of which Jayawardena mentioned a few: ‘Last week the people of Darang cleared and pollarded their village path – before the keuchik could order them to do so, which all keuchiks order shortly after the harvest’, CJN, 10 February 1973 (VI:28-30); and: ‘The young men of Darang [are] quite delightfully truculent. Some of them walk about conspicuously armed with swords – though this is a common practice at night. They feel that the keuchik fears them. They declared that being locked up like the tjamat [sic] was a treat because one was fed gratis and could spend the night in a “stone house” i.e. brick – “rumoh bata”. They would feel all their needs catered as if they were “American tourists”. CJN, 4 February 1973 (V:99).
for the Darang 'section' stated that the people of Darang should prepare themselves for a 'war of the pen' (perang pena). However, before Keuchik Budiman's reply could be published in the newspaper it had to pass the Bupati's office. The Bupati and the Camat, who favoured a peaceful settlement over further escalation, decided that his reply should remain unpublished. Instead, Djalil was urged by the Camat to sign a statement in which he declared that the conflict was settled. Djalil had to promise that he would no longer invite people to Lheueh without asking permission from the authorities, if necessary directly from the Camat. Djalil agreed, and signed a statement in which he promised to be obedient to the government, as well as to the 'village head appointed by the government', and to stay disengaged from any activities disturbing 'community peace' (ketenteraman masjarakat). Jayawardena commented: 'Since Djalil seems to be illiterate, it is likely that he does not know the contents of the letter. When questioned about it he only knew that it was a letter which would 'selesai [put an end to] it all.' With this comment – somewhat of an anti-climax perhaps – the notes about the Lheueh dispute come to an end.

Obviously – and Jayawardena was quick to recognise this – there were different complicating dimensions besides the position of Budiman and the administrative status of Darang. One of these factors was the distinction made by villagers between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. Keuchik Budiman, Anwar, Anwar's father (the village Imam), and Teungku Jahja (the Kepala Mukim) were seen by most of the villagers as 'newcomers' (pendatang). (Budiman and the Teungku Jahja were from Montasik. Anwar and his father were originally from Malaya.) Of course, this was true for most men in Lheueh. Yet, many of them had some kind of (family) link with the Lheueh community before marrying. While it is unclear from the notes how important the insider-outsider dimension really was, it definitely functioned as a meaningful signifier once relations had started to deteriorate. Anwar was denigrated in village gossip, as people took issue with his quick temper and rude behaviour. According to one much repeated story, he had once attempted to throttle his mother-in-law on the day his wife gave birth. It was said that he had to be dragged away by onlookers who watched him leap at her throat for no apparent reason. In many respects, then, Anwar was seen as the evil genius of the story, known to exert a detrimental influence on Keuchik Budiman, as well as his own father, the Imam.

The Lheueh dispute complicates some of the ideological distinctions emphasized in much of the literature about post-independence Aceh. Although – or perhaps because (cf. Soeyatno 1977) – Indrapuri is known as a PUSA and Darul Islam 'hotspot', many ulama in the Indrapuri area joined Perti in the period after the Social Revolution, and tensions between reformist- and traditionalist-minded occasionally flared up. In one incident mentioned by Jayawardena, Teungku Jahja (the Kepala Mukim) and Teungku Salah (the imam meunasah of Lheueh Djeumpa) brought down 'two motors [trucks?] full of Perti ulama's and followers from Lam Baroh' to make the funeral of his mother-in-law a 'full Perti display, with tahlil and dikr by the graveside'. Local reformists objected to this practice, arguing that it was the Imam of the Lheueh mosque who should be seen as responsible for funeral rites in the village, and implying that religious officials or specialists from 'outside' should not be allowed to officiate at a burial:

[The reformists] conceded that according to the Quran, it is proper and recommended that a son of the deceased should act as the imam in prayer, and so welcomed Jaffar (Umar) to be the imam in the mesdjid prayer which he did. (...) But, this being done, the body taken out of the


116 Ibid.
mesjid, it becomes the affair of the kampung, and its imam, either the imam mesjid or tgk. Meunasah, or any other chosen. The point is that all the khurafat ['non-Islamic'] developments occur in this phase. So the Perti were foiled'.

Teungku Jahja was one Budiman’s most important allies, at least where it concerned the Darang controversy. However, he was also involved in the construction of a balai (shelter) in Lheueh Djeumpa, which had ‘all the appearances of a meunasah, and thus of a ‘third focus of power’ in Lheueh apart from the mosque and the Darang meunasah. Teungku Jahja’s father in law had been one of the strongest opponents of Teungku Hashallah’s school in the 1930s. However, Jahja’s balai was built on the site of the former dayah of Teungku Tji di Lheueh, an ancestor of the wife of Teungku Jahja, and of Perti propagandist and Djeumpa imam, Teungku Saleh. Gravitating at this new balai was ‘the rump of Perti followers in Lheueh’, of which Teungku Saleh was the leader.

One factor making the Lheueh dispute difficult to ‘unravel’ for Jayawardena was its reference to different temporal dimensions. On the one hand, the controversy about fitrah was an episode in a long struggle over the administrative status of Lheueh. On the other hand, the conflict reflected recent political tensions, as revealed in particular by the 1971 General Elections. In his notes, Jayawardena wrote that the Lheueh dispute constituted an example of a growing rift between the state and the people (rakyat). While the faction around Budiman presented itself as ‘nominees’ of the government, who saw ‘no need for the keuchiks and their assistants to be chosen by the rakjat’, their opponents maintained that they were not cows (lembu) or buffaloes (kerbau) who could be ‘dictated to a single point of view without musjawarah [consultation]’. This may be true, but his notes also demonstrate that this negotiation was extremely complex in nature. In the mid-twentieth century, village leaders like Keuchik Budiman became ‘agents of the state’. Yet they also remained villagers, who belonged to different – sometimes opposing – groups or ‘factions’ of villagers that shared particular aims, goals, and ideas. At the same time, groups of ordinary villagers like the people of Darang recognised in the ‘intruding’ state an arena for contestation, and a wide variety of means and instruments to use government power. This was not just a contestation over power. Religious authority, and the struggle for particular religious places, institutions, and rituals, formed a moral resource with the capacity of both strengthening and weakening state power. Regardless of the universalising pressure of the reformist movement, local networks and knowledge remained essential repertoires for gaining access to this resource.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have looked at the local dynamics of government, religious practice, and village life in Aceh Besar, from the final decades of colonial rule until the early years of the New Order. I have argued that, in order to assess the impact of ‘purist pressures’ associated with the Islamic modernist movement and the Darul Islam rebellion, it is necessary to take into account both the changing position of reform-minded ulama in the political system, and the ways in which reformist influences were embedded, negotiated and adapted by ordinary villagers.
The reformist project of remaking Acehnese society on the basis of scripturalist Islamic norms was initiated by the PUSA, and advanced by a wide variety of state and non-state affiliated groups and individuals. As I have tried to show, this process was significant, but also ambiguous and uneven. I have made use of the field notes of Chandra Jayawardena, who lived in the Indrapuri area in the mid-1960s and early 1970s, to draw conclusions about the impact of those purist pressures that are commonly associated with the PUSA and the Darul Islam rebellion. A mixed picture emerges from this material. The reformist movement was strong in Indrapuri, resulting, for an important part, from the presence of PUSA leader Teungku Hasballah Indrapuri, and the role played earlier by his patron Panglima Polem, the powerful head of the Sagi of the 22 Mukim. Some practices that used to be widespread, such as offerings made to spirit-forms, disappeared from public sight. The practice of *ziarah*, however, including the controversial intercession rituals such as the *kenduri kematian*, was marked by a kind of revival in the early 1970s. A more lasting impact was formed by the gradual intrusion of the state, and the progressive bureaucratisation of religious authority. I have focused on the workings of the state, and the nature of the religious bureaucracy, as a contested sphere, influenced simultaneously by state ideology, the religious standardisation championed by reformists, and hyper-local factors such as local kinship relations, property structures, and individual interests and temperaments.

In the early 1970s public contestations about religious norms were an inherent part of social life in rural Indrapuri. The role of the state in this process was dual. On the one hand, the state mediated between individual villagers and local representatives of organised religion. On the other hand, the state functioned as a normative force in itself, which could be shaped in order to advance particular interests. State practice continually disrupted and complicated the ideological clashes produced by religious activism. The state, in other words, reinforced normative pressure and provided space for individual and localised interpretation at the same time. The fact that ordinary people interacted with, and were personally involved in, local state institutions gave them considerable agency to negotiate officialised norms. Organised religion and the state were powerful yet flexible domains of moral practice. The meaning of these concepts, and the importance attached to its expressions, were subject to constant adjustment and adaptation, contingent on highly localised, shifting concerns.

As the 'state' was intruding into the village, the 'people' discovered a vast range of new instruments, useful for advancing personal interests and protecting personal space for action. In the next chapter, I will continue on this account by investigating the relationship between ordinary villagers and the influential, well-connected leaders of the Dayah Hidayat in the village of Jouroung.