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**The New Sundanese Peasants' Union:  
Peasant Movements, Changes in Land Control, and  
Agrarian Questions in Garut, West Java<sup>\*)</sup>**

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<sup>\*)</sup> This paper was originally written in Bahasa Indonesia and was translated into English by Nancy Peluso.

## Introduction

“Agrarian reform is the offspring of agrarian conflict.”  
(Christodoulou, 1990)<sup>1</sup>

In August and September 2003, the Sundanese Peasants Union or *Serikat Petani Pasundan* (SPP), which is by far the largest farmers’ organization in West Java, Indonesia, was extraordinarily busy. They had to face a joint operation of the West Java regional police, a mobile brigade unit, the Garut police, the police of the State Forest Corporation (SFC, or *Perum Perhutani*), and officials from the Regional Natural Resource Conservation Bureau. Together, these forces were set on evicting the peasants from the protected forests, the production forests, and the conservation areas they had occupied for more than three years. The operation called *Wanalaga Lodaya*<sup>2</sup> or “Fight for the Ancient Sundanese Forest” took place between August 11 and September 23, 2003,<sup>3</sup> and involved 387 officials - 320 regular police and 67 forest police.<sup>4</sup> The operation was centered on the three forest districts of Talagabodas, Papandayan, and Sancang where peasants affiliated with SPP had occupied and cultivated land that had been controlled by the State Forestry Corporation of Java and the Conservation Bureau. This was the biggest official operation that SPP had ever confronted. In Sarimukti village of the Pasirwangi sub-district located in the Papandayan Mountains, the operation brought in “officials armed with rifles, pistols, and local maps” who “by the night of 12 August 2003...had set up their tents in every location.”<sup>5</sup> Not surprisingly, the village of nearly a thousand families was apprehensive, with that many police setting up camp.

The crackdown on cultivators was the first in Garut district since the fall of Suharto’s authoritarian regime in 1998. Even though they knew it was coming, the SPP was powerless to stop it, as the planners and implementers were from outside the circle of the Garut district government.<sup>6</sup> This operation was commanded by the West Java provincial police,<sup>7</sup> and was thus well beyond the influence of SPP’s leadership.

The operation came in the wake of the intense confrontation between the land-hungry peasants who had organized SPP and the largest landholders in Garut district - the SFC, large plantations, and conservation area managers. There had already been direct conflicts with the security forces working for the plantations, forestry, and the conservation area, when SPP and its supporters held demonstrations and staged protests. Some protests took the form of mass actions, others were letter-writing campaigns to either the city-based offices of plantation or forest managers or

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<sup>1</sup> Demetrios Cristodolou, *The Unpromised Land, Agrarian Reform and Conflict Worldwide*, London: Zed Books, 1990, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> *Wana* = forest, *laga* = fight, and *Lodaya* = ancient name for West Java.

<sup>3</sup> Public statement from West Java Police Commander, Insp. Gen., Dadang Garnida. See “Rights Group Probes Garut Arrests”, *Jakarta Post*, 1 September 2003, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/yesterdaydetail.asp?fileid=20030901.D02>

<sup>4</sup> “Aksi Pencurian Kayu Semakin Merajalela”, *Pikiran Rakyat* 29 August 2003, <http://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/kota2.php?id=8410>

<sup>5</sup> Serikat Petani Pasundan, *Kronologis Penangkapan yang dilakukan oleh Aparat Gabungan (Polda Jabar, Brimob, Polres Garus, Polisi Hutan, BKSDA, dll) dalam Operasi Penertiban Kawasan Hutan di Kabupaten Garut*. Internal document of Sundanese Peasant Union, September 2003.

<sup>6</sup> “Wanalaga Lodaya” is part of a larger official operation of the Ministry of Forestry to combat what they define as forest destruction. *Wanalaga* (*Sanskrit*) means fight for the forest. “Wana” means forest and “Laga” means fight.

<sup>7</sup> Statement by Rudai Marfianto, deputy police chief of Garut region, in “Pemuda, Mahasiswa, SPP Protes Operasi Wanalaga”, *Pikiran Rakyat* 20 August 2003, <http://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/daerah2.php?id=8187>

to district, provincial and city government offices. Some letters even made their way to Jakarta. Most of these actions demanded an end to the violence against peasants, and that the government take responsibility for planning and implementing agrarian reform.

In the case mentioned above, SPP members in the town of Garut joined with a student group<sup>8</sup> to demand that the operation forces “free the peasants and agricultural laborers who have been detained.”<sup>9</sup> Moreover, NGOs that supported SPP in Bandung and Jakarta formed a temporary coalition called SAKTI (Solidarity against the Violent Treatment of Peasants)<sup>10</sup> to protest their capture and demand the establishment of a Land Dispute Settlement Board. On August 21, 2003, this coalition went to the office of the National Human Rights Commission (*Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia* or Komnas HAM) in Jakarta to lodge a complaint against the abrogation of human rights that had occurred during Operation Wanalaga Lodaya. They “told us that as a result of that operation, many peasants had been arrested and held by the security forces. In addition, the crops of the peasants had to be abandoned—both those which were just planted and those ready to harvest.” The complainants requested that Komnas HAM visit the site to investigate the accusations of human rights violations and to help resolve the problems between the farmers and the foresters, conservationists, and plantation managers.<sup>11</sup> Based on this report, Komnas HAM visited the sites from August 29-31, 2003 to clarify the terms of the complaint and then to make recommendations based on their findings.<sup>12</sup>

In response to these protests, West Java police chief, Dadang Garnida, stated that “at least 613 farmers had been rounded up during the raids that began on Aug. 14. The suspects were accused of illegally working land belonging to the State Forestry Corporation and the Ministry of Forestry,” he said. Also arrested were at least 27 businessmen charged with providing the farmers with funds to clear land in the forest and grow crops to order. They rounded up people in three Garut Forest Districts – Talagabodas, Papandayan, and Sancang. The farmers and their financiers are charged with violating Law No. 5/1990 on Natural Resource Conservation, which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in jail or a fine of Rp. 200 million (US\$ 23,809).”<sup>13</sup> This example is meant to introduce the reader to one localized expression of conflict over land reform following the fall of the authoritarian New Order regime in Indonesia.<sup>14</sup> These (re)-

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<sup>8</sup> The Committee of Youth and University Students for Peasants (Komite Pemuda dan Mahasiswa untuk Petani, KPMP)

<sup>9</sup> KPMP, *Pernyataan Sikap atas Operasi Wanalaga Lodaya* (Polda Jabar, Perhutani, Polres Garut), 13 August 2003.

<sup>10</sup> SAKTI is a temporary coalition of PA-PSDA NGO Working Group (Pokja Ornop); Labsosio UI (Jakarta); Yappika (Jakarta); Eknas WALHI (Jakarta); KPA/AGRA (Bandung); Skepo (Bandung); IPGI (Bandung); Sawarung (Bandung); Panja SPREAD (Bandung); TPRHR (Bandung); Farmaci (Ciamis); FSBKU (Tangerang); Komite AGRA (Yogyakarta); KARSA (Yogyakarta); Insist (Yogyakarta); Walhi (Yogyakarta); USC Satunama (Yogyakarta); Lappera (Yogyakarta); Perekat Obmara (NTB); Forum Sumberdaya Rakyat (NTB); SPI (Deliserdang); Pusaka Indonesia (Medan); BITRA Indonesia (Medan); AMA Kalbar (Pontianak). See “Hentikan Penangkapan dan Kekerasan terhadap Petani dan Segera Bentuk Badan Penyelesaian Sengketa Tanah,” Press Statement of SAKTI (Solidaritas Anti Kekerasan Terhadap Petani), Jakarta, 21 August 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Komnas HAM, “Laporan Kegiatan: Kegiatan Sub-Komisi Pemantauan bulan Agustus 2003”, [http://www.komnasham.go.id/subkomisi/sk\\_pemantauan\\_LK\\_ag\\_03.htm](http://www.komnasham.go.id/subkomisi/sk_pemantauan_LK_ag_03.htm), downloaded on 22 September 2003.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* See also “Petani Garut Laporkan Kekerasan Polisi ke Komnas HAM”, Tempo Interaktif, <http://www.tempo.co.id/news/2003%5C8%5C21/1,1,14,id.html>, downloaded on 22 September 2003.

<sup>13</sup> “Rights Group Probes Garut Arrests”, Jakarta Post, 1 September 2003, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/yesterdaydetail.asp?fileid=20030901.D02>

<sup>14</sup> For other introductory essays in English, see Anton Lucas and Carol Warren, “Agrarian Reform in the Era of *Reformasi*” in *Indonesia in Transition, Social Aspects of Reformasi and Crisis*, Chris Manning and Peter van

occupations, which are popularly called “reclaiming” –have been carried out on lands that were previously worked by local people but were taken from them by force and used for government or corporate projects such as state forests and plantations. The re-occupations are thus controversial. Those who do not agree with such tactics tend to call them “land seizures,” implying that the land has been taken illegally.

Land occupations have expanded substantially since March 2000, when then-President Abdurrahman Wahid—known for his sympathies for NGO activists—made a statement dear to the hearts of many farmers. He said that it was not appropriate that the people were being accused of seizing land, because, “in fact, the plantations have stolen the land of the people. Taking land is not just talk.” He then said, “Some forty percent of plantation land should be shared with cultivators who need it. Moreover, people could even hold shares in the plantation itself,” and, “if all this time the nation has become rich from controlling and managing land and natural resources, than for the future, the people should enjoy the same benefits,” and even further, “if we are rich, we should be rich together and if we are fated to be poor, we should also be poor together.”<sup>15</sup> These public statements had tremendous impact on the legitimization of the farmers’ reoccupation of plantation lands. The Director General of the Department of Forestry and Plantations estimated that as of September 2000, some 118,830 hectares of national estate land had been seized, along with 48,051 hectares of private estate lands.<sup>16</sup>

The question of agrarian reform in Java after the fall of the New Order does not address only land occupations and other conflicts, but is also about the rapid growth of mass peasant organizations. Promoters of agrarian reform believe that the transition from the New Order was a prerequisite for the push for agrarian reform all over Indonesia. Under the New Order, such a radical agenda had no hope of being realized.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, it was realized that,

Almost all agrarian reform has been carried out under government benevolence, so that as soon as the government’s awareness (of its importance) changes, then all the positive things created by agrarian reform are erased. Indeed, there is one government that has carried out agrarian reform fairly and sincerely for the sake of many people. However, as soon as that government changes, the new power elites can change directions and reverse the situation. This can be true even when reform is born through a revolution, as was the case in Mexico, for example. That political benevolence is what Powelson and Stock have called “*reform by-grace*.” Such reform is not “*sustainable*” because it depends on what Yushiro Hayami calls “the political market.” ...Thus, what is needed is a reform that is based on the labor of the people. Or what Powelson and Stock call, “*land reform*

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Diermen (eds.). London: Zed Books, 2000; Dianto Bachriadi, “Land for Landless, why the democrats in Jakarta are not interested in land reform”, *Inside Indonesia*, No. 64, Oct.-Dec. 2000; Anton Lucas and Carol Warren, “The State, The People and Their Mediators, The Struggle over Agrarian Law Reform in Post New Order Indonesia”, *Indonesia*, No. 76 (October 2003).

<sup>15</sup> Speech of the President of the Republic of Indonesia at the National Conference on Natural Resources (*Konferensi Nasional Sumber Daya Alam*), Jakarta, 23 May 2000. See *Kompas* and *Republika* headlines, 24 May 2003.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted by Imam Kuswahyono in “Mencari Format Hukum dalam Menuju Reforma Agraria dalam Kerangka Otonomi Daerah”, <http://www.otoda.or.id/Artikel/Imam%20Koeswahyono.htm>, downloaded on 4 October 2003.

<sup>17</sup> See “Epilog” in Noer Fauzi, *Petani dan Penguasa, Dinamika Perjalanan Politik Agraria Indonesia*, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, Insist Press and KPA, 1999.

by leverage.” Thus in any “political market” when the peasants/little people are not in a strong bargaining position, the results of previous reform will not be so easy to reverse.<sup>18</sup>

The notion of “land reform by leverage” underlies the argument that the primary mechanism driving land reform must be mass organization of the peasants. The first peasants’ organizations in Indonesia were formed around specific land disputes in the late 1990s, when the fall of Suharto produced a political climate more conducive to their existence. Thus in July 1998, pioneers of the movement formed a United Federation of Indonesian Peasants (FSPI). Today, five years after its formation, this organization has member organizations from all over including peasant organizations based in the provinces of Aceh, Lampung, North Sumatra, South Sumatra, Banten, Jambi, Sunda (two), Central and East Java, and East and West Nusa Tenggara. The FSPI is not only speaking out about the need for agrarian reform, it is also an active member of Via Campesina, an international coalition carrying out the Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform.<sup>19</sup> The coalition is also campaigning against neo-liberalism—the global target of farmers’ groups all over the Third World.

The expansion of agrarian reform since the fall of Suharto has also been fueled by a sharp debate around agrarian law, especially the debate about the People’s Consultative Assembly Decree No. IX/2001 on Agrarian Reform and Natural Resource Management (see Appendix). This decree is a directive from the People’s Consultative Assembly (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* or MPR) of the Indonesian Parliament, which has met annually since the end of the New Order, to the law-making People’s Legislative Council (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* or DPR) and to the President with a legal standing that lies somewhere between a constitutional and national law. Such decrees are produced when introducing any potential law.

The debate centers on whether this decree will be beneficial or dangerous for the agrarian reform movement. The Consortium for Agrarian Reform (*Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria* or KPA),<sup>20</sup> working with a number of NGOs in the NGO Working Group for Agrarian Reform and Natural Resource Management,<sup>21</sup> believes that the decree can be used as a tool to extend the effects of the peasant movement and push the government to implement agrarian reform. At the same time, the Indonesian Federation of Farmers’ Unions and its supporting NGOs view the decree as dangerous, a potential entryway for a neo-liberal agenda, with potentially negative implications in abrogating the Basic Agrarian Law of 1960—which until now has provided the legal basis for the implementation of land reform.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Gunawan Wiradi, “Pembaruan Agraria: Sebuah Tanggapan” in *Reformasi Agraria, Perubahan Politik, Sengketa dan Agenda Pembaruan Agraria di Indonesia*, Dianto Bachriadi et al. (eds.). Jakarta: Lembaga Penerbit FE-UI, KPA, 1997. This argument refers to John P. Powelson and Richard Stock, *The Peasant Betrayed: Agriculture and Land Reform in the Third World*, Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1990; and Yushiro Hayami et al., *Toward an Alternative Land Reform Paradigm: A Philippine Perspective*, Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1990.

<sup>19</sup> See <http://www.viacampesina.org/> downloaded on 4 October 2003.

<sup>20</sup> KPA is a national network advocating an agrarian reform agenda. Since 1999, KPA, along with other NGOs and peasant unions, has promoted a draft People’s Assembly Decree on Agrarian Reform. See <http://www.kpa.or.id/>.

<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.tanahdankekayaanalam.or.id/>.

<sup>22</sup> This debate unfolded in *Kompas*, Indonesia’s largest national newspaper. See Idham Samudera Bey, “Lonceng Kematian UUPA 1960 Berdentang Kembali - Menyoal TAP MPR No IX/MPR/2001,” *Kompas*, 10 January 2002; Dianto Bachriadi, “Lonceng Kematian atau Tembakan Tanda Start? Kontroversi seputar Ketetapan MPR RI No. IX/MPR/2001 - Komentar untuk Idham Samudra Bey,” *Kompas*, 11 January 2002; Idham Samudra Bey, “UUPA 1960 Lebih Baik Dibandingkan RUU Pengelolaan Sumber Daya Alam” *Kompas*, 10 May 2003.

While this debate continues in the non-government sector, central government institutions also have a range of positions on this decree. The Ministry of Forestry and Plantations, as well as the Ministry of Energy and Mining, have not taken any meaningful action, the National Land Agency has plans to revise the Basic Agrarian Law, and the Ministry of the Environment has proposed a draft of the Natural Resource Management Law.

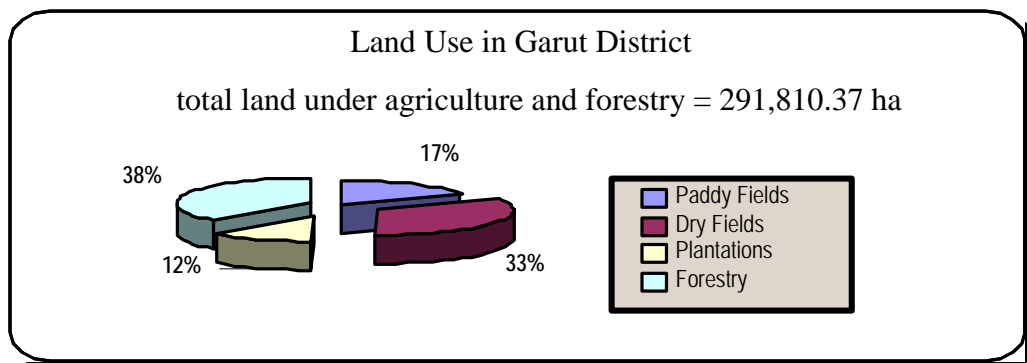
This paper will not enter into the debates raging around these controversial legal agendas. Rather, I will try to provide some background on the biggest farmers’ movement organization in West Java today, the Sundanese Peasants’ Union (SPP). I will also analyze the dynamics leading to changing land control patterns in Garut district, where SPP is currently working. Finally, this paper is an initial attempt to develop and plan an in-depth research program that will both illuminate the dynamics of this new phenomenon, and assist the SPP in defining a reform program that is relevant to the agrarian conditions in its operational region.

### Local Agrarian Conditions

“The Indonesian uplands have been defined, constituted, imagined, managed, controlled, exploited, and developed through a range of discourses and practices”  
 (Tania Murray Li, 1999).<sup>23</sup>

In 2000, Garut district had more of its land under state forest and plantations than any other district in Java, with 50 percent of its 306,519 hectares classified in those categories.<sup>24</sup> Most of the forest land (31 percent) is under the jurisdiction of Garut Forest District, Unit III (West Java) of the State Forestry Corporation of Java. The Natural Resources Conservation Bureau, Sub-Unit Garut, managed some 4 percent of the district’s land, including a nature reserve of 17,000 hectares and a recreation park of about 750 hectares. Large plantations account for nearly 12 percent of this district, about half of which are private (corporate) and the other half state-managed. Most of the agricultural land here (about 32 percent) consists of dry fields (*ladang*), except for some 16 percent of the total that is irrigated or rain fed paddy (*sawah*). While other sectors besides agriculture account for the greatest part of the labor force, employment in agriculture is still significant, accounting for some 40 percent of the productive labor force.

Figure 1:



Source: Compiled from “Garut Statistics, 2000.” Central Bureau of Statistics, Garut, 2000.

<sup>23</sup> Tania Murray Li, “Marginality, Power and Production: Analysing Upland Transformations” in *Transforming the Indonesian Uplands*, Tania Murray Li (ed.), Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publisher, 1999, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> “Garut Dalam Angka 2000”, Badan Pusat Statistik – Garut, 2000.



The villages located closest to the jurisdictions of the SFC and the large plantations are full of landless peasants. I will use the example of one village, Sarimukti, in the sub-district of Pasirwangi, which was one of the villages targeted by Operation Wanalaga Lodaya referred to earlier. Some 75 percent of the village population employed in agriculture is landless,<sup>25</sup> and it is with this class that the SPP has constructed a base. They survive by working the land of others.

Rising some 1,500 meters above sea level, the hilly landscape of these villages is filled with vegetable fields.

Vegetable production in these villages can absorb about 294 laborers per day per hectare, growing 3-month-long rotations of vegetables such as cabbage or potatoes. This figure, which is higher than the labor absorption figure for wet rice, is even higher in places where the topography makes cultivation more difficult, and during dry seasons that produce a demand for watering the crops. Thus, this type of cultivation is both labor intensive and capital intensive, requiring high outlays for fertilizer and pesticides; the marketing and transport of vegetables provides additional employment opportunities, depending on how many vegetables are sold.<sup>26</sup>

Vegetable production is the primary type of agricultural production in Garut District, exceeding paddy and dry field crops such as maize (see Table 1). These vegetables are supplied to wholesale markets in Bandung and Jakarta. In 2001, some 821,911 metric tons of vegetables were produced, compared to only 693,365 metric tons of rice and 717,115 MT of maize and other dry field crops (*polowidjo*).<sup>27</sup> Vegetable production is unique because of the drastic fluctuations in price. For example, when I was conducting fieldwork in the beginning of January 2003, the village price of tomatoes reached Rp. 4,500/kg. Six months later, in July 2003, the price of tomatoes in the same village was only Rp. 200/kg.<sup>28</sup> Villagers generally view such divergent prices as indicative of the games played by untrustworthy market traders.

The landscape of mountainous regions such as this one is quite beautiful, but the mythic fertile, prosperous, and just village is nowhere to be found. In Sarimukti, one wealthy family controls some 50 hectares of land [an unheard of amount for Java], on which 160 agricultural laborers are employed. Even though the land they control looks no different from that of others, they have two other activities that differentiate them. First, the family has 100 head of cattle that produce enough manure to fertilize all of their cultivation activities. Second, they engage in marketing and transporting vegetables to urban wholesale markets.

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with Sarimukti village head, July 2003.

<sup>26</sup> Joan Hardjono, *The Dilemma of Commercial Vegetable Production in West Java*, Working Paper Series. Bandung: Akatiga, 1997.

[http://www.akatiga.or.id/info%20&%20publick/list%20publikasi/working%20paper/b\\_02.htm](http://www.akatiga.or.id/info%20&%20publick/list%20publikasi/working%20paper/b_02.htm), downloaded on 21 September 2003.

<sup>27</sup> Regional Development Planning Board (*Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah*, BAPEDA) Kabupaten Garut, 2002, *Proyeksi Indeks Mutu Hidup Kabupaten Garut tahun 2001-2002 dan Program Pembangunan Kabupaten Garut tahun 2002*.

<sup>28</sup>The dollar value of the rupiah on 15 January 2003 was 1 US \$ = Rp 8,876 rupiah. The dollar value of the rupiah as of 15 July 2003 was \$1= Rp. 8,246. See <http://www.oanda.com>.



Not far away, in the same region, are production and protection forests managed by the SFC, on lands disputed by local people. Villagers from Sarimukti and Mekarjaya have cleared some 314 hectares since 2000. Peasants in SPP-Sarimukti believe that this land was formerly a *cinchona* (quinine bark) plantation, and illegally claimed by the SFC. They believe that the former plantation lands should have reverted to their control, not become the jurisdiction of the SFC to turn into production or protection forest.

According to a local leader, SFC's management of the protection forest is the same as that in the production forest. They have planted pine varieties from which they extract resin, and when the trees no longer produce resin, they cut them for their timber.<sup>29</sup> As in other places, when the pine seedlings were first planted, the SFC allowed the local people to intercrop agricultural crops between the trees (*tumpang sari*).

Still connected to this landscape, we find the Papandayan Mountain Nature Reserve, under the jurisdiction of the Natural Resource Conservation Bureau (*Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam* or BKSDA), which is directly under the Ministry of Forestry and Plantations. Like all mountaintops in Java, this area has been designated a conservation area and protection forest because of the importance of its hydrological and climatological functions, and because it is so steep that it has become the final refuge of several endangered species, such as the Javanese hawk-eagle (*spizaetus bartelsi*), leopard (*panthera pardus*), and surili leaf monkey (*presbytis comata*), which are very sensitive to ecological change.<sup>30</sup> The responsible officers at the reserve believe that the SFC has failed to preserve the region's functions as protected and production forest, which should have served as a kind of buffer zone to prevent the expansion of smallholder cultivation into the reserve.<sup>31</sup> In the reserve area alone, they have documented 74 farmers who have cleared and cultivated 53.1 hectares in 2003.

Finally, in this same landscape we find an extremely modern enterprise, whose operational logic is difficult for the local people to understand. This is a geothermal project in operation since 1984, which harvests the geothermal energy to make electricity. The project is located within the jurisdiction of the nature reserve and the SFC's protection forest. The project's two areas, "Darajat I" and "Darajat II", cover more than 70 hectares of land, over which it has acquired temporary use rights.<sup>32</sup> Currently, the project transfers geothermal energy to two electrical power stations, Darajat I, which is owned and operated by the state electricity company and which generates 55 megawatts of electrical power and Darajat II, built and operated by Amoseas,<sup>33</sup> operational since May 2000, which produces an additional 90 megawatts. Operated directly by Amoseas, Darajat II sells electrical power to the national electricity grid.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with Mang Ade, Sarimukti village council member, July 2003.

<sup>30</sup> See chapter III, "Perlindungan Hutan dan Pelestarian Alam", *Buku Pintar Penyuluhan Kehutanan dan Perkebunan*, Departemen Kehutanan dan Perkebunan, Pusat Bina Penyuluhan Kehutanan dan Perkebunan, 2000, pp. 153 – 203.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Ardi Adono, head of Papandayan Natural Reserve Unit of BKSDA II, West Java, July 2003.

<sup>32</sup> PT Amoseas Indonesia must replace forest area that it uses with comparable forested area somewhere else. Interview with Ujang Amas, head of Garut land office, July 2003.

<sup>33</sup> This "dry steam" plant is owned by ChevronTexaco (95 percent) and its local partner, PT Darajat Geothermal Indonesia (5 percent). See "ChevronTexaco – Indonesia Fact Sheet", <http://www.chevrontexaco.com/operations/docs/indonesia.pdf>, downloaded on 4 October 2003.

<sup>34</sup> See the Amoseas Indonesia website, <http://www.amoseas-indonesia.com> and <http://www.api.or.id/amoseas.htm>.

In 1982, several local people initiated measures to find out how they could secure ownership rights over a former cinchona plantation, NV Kina Cultuur Mji Cinchona, also known as Darajat I. One man, Somadin, met with local prosecutor Supriatna at the Garut Prosecutor's Office, as well as with Sopian Rauf who was head of the Garut Agrarian Affairs Office at that time. From these two men, Somadin learned that Darajat I, which consisted of the lands of a former Dutch plantation, could be turned over to the people, as long as it had been cultivated for at least two years in succession. In February 1982, Somadin, along with Mustofa, Lili, Jumali and Odang, documented the farmers that had been working the land, and submitted a request for the redistribution of Darajat I's land to the West Java Agrarian Affairs Directorate in Bandung.

This request encapsulated a great opportunity for the farmers, as it followed also on previous statements made by government officials about the land's status. In his 19 August 1980 reply (Letter No. A.788/Dir/PHT/1980) to Perhutani letter No. 044.5/III/80 dated 24 March 1980 and 21 May 1980, Koesrin, the head of the Agrarian Affairs Directorate at the time, stated that, as a former Dutch plantation, Darajat I was now state land, based on Decree No. GB.156/B.A./54, issued by West Java's Governor on 14 October 1954, which asserted that the plantation's "Erfpacht" (leasehold) rights had ceased as of 29 August 1953. This fact, according to Koesrin, meant that it was possible "to process the transfer of ownership rights to the cultivators as per Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 6 of 1972 and Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 5 of 1973."

On 15 July 1982, Kamal Hayat, the new head of Agrarian Affairs Directorate, sent a letter (No. 430/DA/LR/4/1982) to the regent of Garut KDT II and head of Garut's Agrarian Affairs Office, in which he explained again the contents of Koesrin's letter to Perhutani (No. A.788/Dit/PHT/1980) about the status of the Darajat I land. In this letter, Kamal asked the regent to investigate and "if the land has been cultivated by the local people then it is urged that it be the object of land reform [landreform] as was intended in Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Affairs Decree No. 30/KA/1962, with redistribution to be carried out as set forth in Government Regulation No. 224 of 1961."

Unfortunately, only one month later, Kamal wrote this same office again completely retracting his previous letter. In this letter, No. 478/DA/LR/4/1982, signed on 3 August 1982, Kamal said that based on Government Bulletin No. 90 dated 21 August 1925 and a map attachment dated 28 October 1925 showing the forest boundaries, the leasehold area of the former Dutch plantation referred to by the West Java Agrarian Affairs Directorate was actually to the north. Consequently, the cultivation of the other shown was not acceptable, and the regent was urged to ensure that all cultivation here was stopped.

The climax of the matter came when the provincial governor, Aang Kuncieff, in his letter no. 181.1/5971/Asda I dated 30 October 1982, ordered the regent of Garut to "control" the cultivation of Darajat I lands. With this clear order from his superior, the regent issued Instruction No. 13/HK.021.1-Pm/1983 on 28 January 1983 directed to the district head of Cisurupan as well as to the village heads of Sukajadi and Sukajaya in which the regent ordered the people to vacate the Darajat I land and to stop all cultivation there, as of 1 April 1983.

The struggle over the Darajat I lands began again with the fall of the authoritarian Suharto regime in 1998. This time, the people united under the banner of the Sundanese Peasants' Union (SPP), an organization they declared in 2000. The farmers, particularly those from Sarimukti village, began again their efforts to secure the redistribution of the Darajat I lands. Unlike the efforts before, the work this time was conducted by organizing the people. Documentation of the farmers who were also SPP members was done. In April 2001, SPP met with President Abdurrahman Wahid. At this meeting, the president stated that he would issue a decree to resolve the land case. In this same year, the Indonesian national legislature also issued a formal letter to the Garut authorities urging them to discuss a resolution of the Darajat I case.

*Source: Yayasan Restitusi Hak atas Rakyat, "Gambaran Umum Lokasi Konflik Kehutanan di Kabupaten Garut – Jawa Barat," 2002, unpublished manuscript, pp. 5-6.*

## The Sundanese Peasants Union and Changes in Land Control

“The political mobilization and organization of the rural landless and near landless is a necessary condition for land reform; but it is not a sufficient one.”  
(Solon L. Barraclough, 1998).<sup>35</sup>

Since 2000, the Sundanese Peasants Union (SPP) has been one of a number of peasant organizations that have demanded the government carry out land reform on large plantations and state forests. According to preliminary estimates made at the end of 2002, in Garut district some 5,000 families have occupied nearly 4,000 hectares of land in 22 locations that all have units of SPP (see table 2).<sup>36</sup> Even though this is not a large percentage of the extensive territory of Garut district, the occupation and cultivation of this land has been significant for the plantation and forest managers.

At a meeting of top district officials in the Garut district offices, held specifically to deal with the situation in the plantations and national forests, it was noted that:<sup>37</sup>

1. Of 12 (active) plantations, 6 have experienced land seizures—2 [of these are] government estates and four private corporations. This has caused Dayeuhmanggung Plantation (PTPN VIII) to experience losses of some Rp. 4.7 billion.
2. As a result of the illegal logging in the forest districts around Gunung Papandayan, a disaster in the form of a mudslide has covered the sub-district of Cisurupan. The unprecedented event has produced a layer of mud that is knee-deep, and seems to have produced ecological damage of incalculable cost.
3. The reason for these seizures has generally been the loss of “idealism,” an outcome of the lengthy economic crisis and the difficulty of making a living, ... These depressing conditions have been taken advantage of by “provocateurs” who promise to struggle for justice and truth for the little people; they have given rise to an uncontrolled and emotional mass movement which has *a priori* refused every solution suggested by the government.
4. All legal-formal government efforts to handle these security problems appear to be unable to motivate the people living around the plantations and the state forest lands, and so we support/will assist in the operations to capture the provocateurs.

In every area with a local chapter of SPP, a local leadership group was formed, called a Local Farmers Organization. Each group had a head, a secretary, a treasurer, public relations, and a

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<sup>35</sup> Solon L. Barraclough, “Land Reform in Developing Countries: The Role of the State and Other Actors”, paper presented at the Agrarian Conference held by KPA and Pusat Penelitian dan Pembangunan Pedesaan dan Kawasan (P3PK), Gadjah Mada University, 3-5 December 1998, p. 33.

<sup>36</sup> The total number of SPP members is higher. Only some of the SPP members already control land that they cultivate.

<sup>37</sup> This meeting was held at the Praenger Hotel in Bandung on 28 March 2001. The minute was signed by Lt. Gen. (ret.) DR. (Hc) H. Mashudi and H. Aboeng Koesman acting as Garut elders; Drs. H. Dede Satibi as Garut District head; Drs. H. Iyos Somantri, as head of Garut’s regional assembly; Drs. H. Dede Suganda Adiwinata, as chairman of the Association of West Java Plantations; and Ir. H. Sugiat, as director of State Plantation Companies VIII.

security guard. Many of these local SPP leaders, almost all of whom are men, have had experience working and living in the city, some as salesmen in wholesale markets in Bandung and Jakarta. Their urban connections are not far in the past, but are very recent and seem to have reduced their feelings of respect and shame in the presence of land controllers who increase their power through social relations. More than that, in the city, especially in the markets, competition and bargaining are parts of everyday life. They are very aware of their influence and have experience facing down official power-holders (such as bureaucrats in the market and the police) and unofficial power-holders (such as thugs or *preman*). They have developed their abilities to deal with these various powerful figures.

With SPP, they use these abilities to develop their new leadership abilities, taking care of their membership, mobilizing and leading them in demonstrations, and developing arguments to dispute control over land. In addition, some of the local leaders of SPP have expanded their leadership roles by getting elected to village councils, chosen directly by the villagers. There are even some who have become village heads. Local leaders of SPP who hold such positions face a great challenge in trying to change the village government's role from being a tool of the state, as under the New Order regime, to control and mobilize people (for the state) to being a tool of the community, one which can promote the interests of the peasants in the village.<sup>38</sup> Even though the 1979 law for village government was amended by Law No. 22 of 1999 on regional governance,<sup>39</sup> it has not been easy to change these village forms.

In West Java, during the 20 years between 1979 and 1999, social processes within the village were co-opted by bureaucratic processes.<sup>40</sup> The overwhelming bureaucratization of village administration in West Java has caused most village leaders to submit and become direct arms of the "government."<sup>41</sup> In lowland areas where the primary production areas are paddy rice, the centralization of village power was a key element of the Green Revolution, an effort to raise rice productivity through a program that promoted hybrid seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation and improved post-harvest technologies. The Green Revolution resulted in a much greater concentration of lands in the hands of a small class of wealthy people who were clients of

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<sup>38</sup> In order to improve the capacity of SPP local leaders to implement land reform and village democratization, the Institute for Community Development (*Yayasan Pengembangan Masyarakat*) is developing a specific program named KARSA (*Lingkar Pembaruan Desa dan Agraria*). See Noer Fauzi and R. Yando Zakaria, "Democratizing Decentralization: Local Initiatives from Indonesia", paper submitted for the International Association for the Study of Common Property 9<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference, Zimbabwe, 2002. <http://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/documents/dir0/00/00/08/18/dlc-00000818-01/fauzin170502.pdf> .

<sup>39</sup> One of the most important aspects of the previous system of government was the extension of government control to the village level embodied in Law No. 5 of 1979 on Village Government. Under Law No. 22 of 1999 on Regional Government, villages now have the right to remove themselves from the state structure to become autonomous units. Two fundamental changes that were introduced into the language of the new law were (1) that the village or *desa* is an autonomous entity, not structurally linked to the state government hierarchy; and (2) the formation of a village-level parliamentary body.

<sup>40</sup> Hans Antlov introduces "State in the Village" as a specific term for this phenomena, see chapter 4 of his book, *Exemplary Center, Administrative Periphery. Rural Leadership and the New Order in Java*. Surrey: Curzon Press, 1995. pp. 46 – 73.

<sup>41</sup> In the Indonesian language, the core word of "*pemerintah*," which means "government," is "*perintah*," which means "command" or "order." It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the perception of government-society relations that pertains in Indonesia tends to consider the public as political "outsiders," and "objects" of governance, to be guided by laws, policies and regulations which they themselves have no part in creating.

the state on the one hand and increased the number of landless peasants on the other.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, in the uplands, the centralization of power gave security to the State Forestry Corporation and to large plantations to continue their existence in village environments where some of the population was landless.

In general, while the New Order was still strong, the continuing rural class polarization did not result in open protest or in occupations of the land of the wealthy classes. This was because of the strict control Suharto's government kept on the villages,<sup>43</sup> the fact that the trauma of the struggles of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in 1965-66 was still lodged in farmers' minds,<sup>44</sup> and local people's ability to seek a living through circular migration and contract work in the informal sector in the cities.<sup>45</sup> Even still, whether in the lowlands or the uplands, life was always colored by what has been called "everyday peasant resistance."<sup>46</sup>

The history of the emergence of SPP can be traced from the end of the 1980s. This was the time that a coalition formed between peasant leaders whose communities were in conflict with the SFC and the large estates, educated activists in Garut town who formed the Youth and Student Forum of Garut, student activists from Bandung (the provincial capital of West Java) who formed the Student Defense Committee for the People of Indonesia, and NGO activists from the Legal Aid Institute in Bandung. Two prominent cases in Sagara and Badega brought these groups together.

Briefly, the Sagara land dispute involved the SFC and 776 families in Sagara who claimed the rights to some 1,100 hectares of land and the teak trees growing there. The dispute was also about the capture and detention of some village leaders and the leaders of the Youth and Student Forum, which led to the area being used for mobile brigade (part of the national security force) training. This case ended with the SFC losing, when the decree of the National Agrarian Ministry and the Head of the National Land Bureau (No. 35-VI/1997) determined that the state land in question could be subjected to land reform. This amounted to nearly 580 hectares in the villages of Sagara and Karya Mukti.<sup>47</sup> This victory encouraged activists in the Youth and Student Forum to expand their organizing activities to other cases in Garut district.

In the same general time period, student activists in Bandung, together with the Legal Aid Society of Bandung, were taking care of other land dispute cases in Garut, such as the one at Badega. Briefly, the Badega case was a dispute between the company PT Surya Andaka

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<sup>42</sup> See Gillian Hart, *Power, Labor, and Livelihood: Processes of Change in Rural Java*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986; Gillian Hart et al. (eds.), *Agrarian Transformation: Local Processes and the State in Southeast Asia*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989; Jonathan Pincus, *Class, Power, and Agrarian Change: Land and Labour in Rural West Java*, New York: St. Martins Press, 1986

<sup>43</sup> See Antlov.

<sup>44</sup> For background on this tragic period, see Robert Cribb, *The Indonesian Killings of 1965-1966: Studies from Java and Bali*, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990.

<sup>45</sup> For a historical account on the non-agricultural sector in rural Java, see Benjamin White et al., *In the Shadow of Agriculture: Economic Diversification and Agrarian Change in Java, 1900-1990*, The Hague, Netherlands: Institute of Social Studies, 1991.

<sup>46</sup> For this concept, see James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1985.

<sup>47</sup> See Ibang Lukmanudin, "Mari Bung Rebut Kembali, Rakyat Segera Menuntut Hak atas Tanah", in *Mengubah Ketakutan Menjadi Kekuatan, Kumpulan Kasus-kasus Advokasi*, Yogyakarta: Insist Press, 2001.

Mustika and 312 peasant cultivators on Mount Badega in Garut who had a claim to some 400 hectares of land that had formerly been leased to PT Sintrin.<sup>48</sup> As in the case at Sagara, this case also involved the jailing of various village leaders and the subsequent transformation of this area into a combat training facility for the military. Unlike Sagara, the Badega case became a central concern of many student and NGO activists, who campaigned broadly on it in the 1980s.

These two land dispute cases then became examples/models of the efforts of educated activists in urban Garut and Bandung to organize farmers in the West Java Peasants Union (*Serikat Petani Jawa Barat* or SPJB—different from SPP). The West Java Peasants Union organized peasants and those amongst their leaders who had been involved in the land conflict cases handled by the Bandung Legal Aid Society since the end of the 1980s. The SPJB was itself established in 1991 when it became involved with cases in Cimerak (Ciamis district), Sagara and Badega (Garut district), Jatiwangi (Majalengka district), Gunung Batu (Sukabumi district) and Cikalong Kulon (Purwakarta district). Even though for a decade SPJB did not succeed in mobilizing peasant issues at the provincial level, primarily because the (macro) political situation was not yet conducive to such action, they did succeed in using these land dispute cases to develop educational activities for urban activists.

Student and professional activists in Garut began to break away from SPJB in 1998, after the authoritarian political situation changed with the fall of Suharto. After he was released from prison in 1997, the leader and primary force behind SPP – Agustiana – wanted to go out on his own.<sup>49</sup> Subsequently, in February 2000, several of the urban activists from Garut joined with rural peasant leaders from each of the districts with land disputes and announced the formation of SPP.

Now, SPP had become a test case—a real-life example of all the theories that had been discussed since the mid-1980s in KPA fora concerned with land reform in Indonesia. KPA is a national network of NGOs that was formed in 1995. It was started by 65 member organizations, several well-known academics and prominent senior NGO activists.<sup>50</sup> The KPA systematically (re)-placed the issue of agrarian reform on the “stage” of national social movements. Since the New Order was still in power at that time, KPA worked to develop comparative analyses of agrarian conflict and changing agrarian structures in various regions, as well as critiquing the agrarian politics/policies that had created problems.<sup>51</sup> They also promoted agrarian reform by conducting seminars, workshops, training programs, research, and publishing on the topic.<sup>52</sup>

When it was established, the founders of KPA, including the author, believed that:

Without agrarian reform, the national economic foundation will collapse and the economy will experience [such severe and] permanent contradictions that enforcing

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<sup>48</sup> See Dianto Bachriadi, “Warisan Kolonial yang Tidak Diselesaikan: Konflik dan Pendudukan Tanah di Tapos dan Badega, Jawa Barat”, in *Berebut Tanah: Beberapa Kajian Berperspektif Kampus dan Kampung*, Anu Lounella and R. Yando Zakaria (eds.), Yogyakarta: Insist Press: KARSA, 2002.

<sup>49</sup> This split needs to be researched further. Why did it happen?

<sup>50</sup> See <http://www.kpa.or.id>. In its first national meeting in December 1995, KPA declared that its role was “to empower peasants, fishermen, customary communities, and other marginalized peoples” and serve as a “pressure group over unfair agrarian policy and systems”. See KPA’s 1995 Constitution.

<sup>51</sup> Bachriadi et al. (eds.), *Reformasi Agraria..*

<sup>52</sup> See <http://www.kpa.or.id>.

underdevelopment. Whether or not agrarian reform is carried out will affect things in the following ways. *First*, agrarian reform will create markets and purchasing power. Without land redistribution, there will be no purchasing power and the markets will be weak. Without strong markets, production will not develop. Agrarian reform is a means to create a domestic market, a prerequisite for every national economy. *Second*, peasants without land assets are the same as poor peasants who cannot invest. Yet, every government needs agricultural investment in order to have capital to develop agriculture or other sectors. *Third*, unless farmer incomes are improved, the agricultural tax base will remain low. *Fourth*, without agrarian reform, there will not be a broad enough differentiation in the village labor force generated from the needs of the villagers themselves. Labor force differentiation without land reform is limited, vague, and exploitative. *Fifth*, without agrarian reform there will be no investment in agriculture by farmers themselves. In fact, what will happen is disinvestment, because after awhile, many farmers will lose their land and poverty will spread. This will weaken the small industry sector, home industry, trade, services, and money circulation in general, and people will have to depend on cash inputs from the cities. The terrible result of this will be that the rural areas will be subjected to the demands and interests of the cities. Rural areas will then subsidize urban economies, while villages will get more and more backward. And *sixth*, land will be the [widespread] object of speculation, because farmers won't be able to use it productively, and it will be seized by the urban classes for speculation and non-productive investment. Land will be commoditized and will be the basis for first-stage primitive accumulation through land grabbing. The land will then be resold or put on the market. All these circumstances have already come into existence in Indonesia, because the New Order has refused to carry out land reform.<sup>53</sup>

More than serving as a test case, one which emerged out of many years of conversations about agrarian reform, the leadership of SPP (all educated activists) are now in an excellent position to influence the entire spectrum of Indonesian NGOs who are looking for ways to support and promote land reform.<sup>54</sup> While many NGOs in Indonesia have been trying to learn about policy advocacy,<sup>55</sup> SPP has already provided an example of how to be involved in advocacy processes and to reap the fruits thereof.

Very cleverly, SPP mobilized some 10,000 peasants, from Garut, Tasikmalaya, and Ciamis Districts, to demonstrate at the ad hoc committee meeting of the National Peoples' Consultative Assembly Working Group which was holding a national-level workshop at a Bandung hotel to discuss the draft People's Consultative Assembly Decree on Agrarian Reform on September 15, 2001. They were blocked by a police line at Cicalengka, a small city some 30 km from Bandung and Garut. Negotiations then took place at two locations, on the road to Cicalengka—between the leaders of SPP with the police; and in Bandung between NGO activists who were participants and resource people in the workshop, and the legislators participating there. Subsequently, it

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<sup>53</sup> On this argument, see Bonnie Setiawan, "Pembauran Agraria, Suatu Tinjauan Konseptual", in Bachriadi et al. (eds.), *Reformasi Agraria*.

<sup>54</sup> In 2002, when KPA conducted its third national meeting, Agustiana, the General Secretary of SPP, was elected to serve as chairperson of KPA's Board.

<sup>55</sup> See Roem Topatimasang et al., *Merubah Kebijakan Publik, Panduan Latihan Advokasi*, Yogyakarta: Insist Press, 2000



was decided that the leaders of the ad hoc committee would go out to where the peasants were in Cicalengka, rather than having a group of farmers go into Bandung. When he got to Cicalengka, the committee chair, Rambe Kamaruzzaman, promised to resign if the decree was not passed.

SPP's active influence on the People's Consultative Assembly Decree No. IX/2001 did not stop there. When the People's Consultative Assembly had its annual meeting on November 7, 2001, a group from SPP mobilized about 1,000 people to demonstrate in Jakarta and to give voice to the need for the MPR to pass the decree on agrarian reform.<sup>56</sup> Through these actions, SPP showed itself to be in support of the decree.

The issuance of MPR Decree No. IX/2001 had strategic meaning for SPP. Land reform was returned to the official stage.<sup>57</sup> Everywhere that there were land dispute cases, local SPP leaders used the decree to justify their land occupations. In addition to its success as a tool at the local level, SPP also monitored, promoted, and benefited from it as a bargaining chip with the government, including regional governments, pushing them to fulfill their obligations.

## Research Agendas

“..a better understanding of the specific ways in which history, memory, and the practices of people, states, and the forces of capitalism often come together violently might provide for an optimism of both the intellect and the will.”  
(Nancy Peluso and Michael Watts, 2001)<sup>58</sup>

This paper is meant to introduce the emergent mass peasant movement in Garut district, a movement that has been a focus of ten years of agrarian reform discussions by NGOs in Indonesia. This story has stimulated some students of history of rural Java to make comparisons with similar phenomena in the period of President Sukarno (1949 – 1965) following Indonesia's independence, as Edward Aspinall has done in a recent paper.<sup>59</sup> But, for scholar activists such as the author, the knowledge production embodied in this paper and future efforts will be processed into education and advocacy efforts.<sup>60</sup>

I will close this introductory paper by describing some possible future research agendas.

### 1. Rural-Urban Linkages

The rise and development of the peasant movement in Garut district has been influenced by the characters of two kinds of SPP leaders -- district level SPP leaders living in urban areas

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<sup>56</sup> See <http://www.tempo.co.id/harian/fokus/76/2,1,15.id.html>.

<sup>57</sup> According to the Basic Agrarian Law No. 5/1965 and other government regulations derived from it, land reform was the legal obligation of the Indonesian government, but the New Order regime froze this agenda from 1967 onwards. See Noer Fauzi, *Petani dan Penguasa, Dinamika Perjalanan Politik Agraria Indonesia*, Yogyakarta: Insist Press; KPA, 1999.

<sup>58</sup> Nancy Peluso and Michael Watts, “Violent Environments” in *Violent Environments*, Nancy Peluso and Michael Watts (eds.), Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001. p. 38.

<sup>59</sup> Edward Aspinall, *Civil Society and Democratization: From Aliran Struggle to Civil Society in the Countryside of Indonesia*, presented at the East West Center Workshop on Civil Society and Political Change in Asia (Round II), Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 24-28 October 2002.

<sup>60</sup> Some specific abilities are needed, of course, to transform the academic result into educational media for the supporting actors of the movement, and into arguments for advocacy. See Topatimasang.

and local SPP leaders that were born in villages, lived in urban areas, and returned to their rural origins.<sup>61</sup> Some local SPP leaders also have had urban experiences, mainly as traders bridging between agricultural commodity producers in the villages and urban markets. Living in urban areas as informal sector traders has helped them develop the ability to deal with agents of the repressive state apparatus and/or unofficial repressive forces (*preman*—gangsters, thugs, etc). They have survived evictions, physical violence, discrimination, and extortion. It would be useful to know more about the dynamics of rural-urban linkages in the peasant movement, especially how coalitions form, and the connections between the class backgrounds of SPP leaders, their specific experiences, as well as their relative influence on the movement's agendas.

## 2. Agrarian environment context of SPP's movement

Studies of peasant movements, as shown by many scholars,<sup>62</sup> almost always start with analyses of the changing contexts of peasant lives, especially changes in their agrarian environments.<sup>63</sup> It would be interesting to know how SPP as a social movement organization has helped produce different responses in different types of agrarian environments. SPP has initiated confrontational actions against the State Forestry Corporation and plantations. Their standings have been different from their actions toward the nature reserve. In Sarimukti, SPP did not confront the big landholder controlling 50 hectares and more than 150 agricultural workers. Moreover, SPP has not confronted the geothermal project, which is 95 percent owned by the multinational, ChevronTexaco. This corporation controls 70 hectares to exploit what they call as “the world's fourth-largest dry steam geothermal”<sup>64</sup> with “highly efficient gas-fired co-generation and geothermal steam to produce enough power to supply more than 3 million Indonesians.”<sup>65</sup> How do different management regimes that produce different kinds of land control, different resources, and different types of social relations with local people affect the nature—especially the tactics--of the movement?

## 3. Structure of political opportunity in the transition period.

SPP's peasant movement has been growing during the transition period that started in 1998. The changing political opportunities has been used by SPP's leaders to mobilize landless (and near-landless people) to reoccupy lands controlled by the plantation and/or the State Forestry Corporation, and also for changing local political configurations. In 2004, SPP is going to deal with a new general election, where Indonesian citizens will directly elect candidates of national, provincial and district parliaments.<sup>66</sup> It is interesting to know what

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<sup>61</sup> Eric R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*, New York: Harper & Row, 1969. Wolf found that the class background of revolutionary peasant movement leaders was usually uprooted middle class with urban linkages.

<sup>62</sup> See James Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976; Samuel Popkin, *The Rational Peasant*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979; and Jeffrey Paige, *Agrarian Revolution: Social Movements and Export Agriculture in the Underdeveloped World*, The Free Press, 1978.

<sup>63</sup> For the concept of the agrarian environment, see Arun Agrawal and K. Sivaramakrishnan, “Introduction: Agrarian Environments” in *Agrarian Environments: Resources, Representations, and Rule in India*. Arun Agrawal and K. Sivaramakrishnan (eds.), Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000, pp. 1–22.

<sup>64</sup> See <http://www.api.or.id/darajat.htm>, downloaded 10 October 2003.

<sup>65</sup> See “ChevronTexaco – Indonesia Fact Sheet”.

<sup>66</sup> In terms of land reform advocacy, it is worthwhile to remember Tai's conclusion that “(i) the need for legitimacy prompts the political elite to initiate reform; (ii) the relationship between the elite and the landed class determines the manner and content of the program adopted; and (iii) the extent of program implementation varies with the degree of political commitment.” See Hung-Chao Tai, *Land Reform and Politics, A Comparative Analysis*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.

kinds of political opportunity have been created by these political processes. How will SPP deal with the political processes that are the main arenas of political parties? How has SPP strategized to achieve their objectives under these conditions? Are there any political parties that SPP refer to? What kind of coalitions will SPP try to form?

**4. History of agrarian environment and politics of land in upland West Java.**

The West Java uplands “have been constituted, imagined, managed, controlled, exploited and ‘developed’ through a range of discourses and practices.”<sup>67</sup> The State Forest Corporation has a long history of forest extraction since the eighteenth century. Some types of commodity productions, like coffee and *cinchona* plantations, have left artifacts in the landscape as well as in people’s memories. Another type of commodity production like palm oil has recently developed. Exploring the history of agrarian environments and the politics of land will lead us to the classic topic of peasant studies, namely what is happening in agrarian transitions, to new forms of capitalism in the post-colonial era. It would be useful to know more about this agrarian transition, especially to understand relation between politics of land, types of commodity production, and land-based peasant movements.<sup>68</sup>

**5. Types of land reform programs that are relevant to local agrarian conditions.**

Although land reform has returned to the national stage, the National Land Agency and Ministry of Forestry have not yet developed adequate programs to implement it. The land occupation actions organized by the SPP have seemed to be an the effective way to fulfill [short-term] practical needs of landless peasants and to push government agencies to develop land reform programs. The SPP has already played a role articulating the peasants’ need for land reform. But, in the context of policy making, SPP still has to argue with policy makers and develop broader arguments for land reform. This research will produce knowledge on types of land reform programs that are relevant to local agrarian conditions and might be promoted by SPP and their supporters.

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<sup>67</sup> See Li, p. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Two useful articles on this topic are Thommy Svensson, “Peasant and Politics in Early Twentieth Century West Java”, in *Indonesia and Malaysia, Scandinavian Studies in Contemporary Society*. Thommy Svensson and Per Sorensen (eds.). London: Curzon Press, 1983 and Thommy Svensson, “Bureaucracies and Agrarian Change, A Southeast Asia Case”, in *Agrarian Society in History, Essay in Honour of Magnus Morner*. Mats Lundahl and Thommy Svensson (eds.). London: Routledge, 1990.

**Table 1 - Land dispute cases organized by SPP in Garut District – West Java**

No.	Name of Settlement	Name of Village/ Sub-district	Disputed Lands (hectares)	Households	Starting year of organizing	“Opponent”
1	Sagara, Ciniti, Tarisi	Sagara/ Cibalong	1,100	776	1989	Perhutani
2	Balegod, Kurumuy	Karyamuikti/ Cibalong	580	452	1999	Perhutani
3	Cijeruk, Cibajing	Sancang/ Cibalong	100	131	1999	BKSDA
4	Pasir Leube	Mekarjaya/ Sukaresmi	32	12	1999	BKSDA
5	Legok Salim, Belengur, Goyobod,	Mekarjaya/ Sukaresmi	150	230	1999	Perhutani
6	Legok Jeuro, Wahi, Gn. Aul, Daruki, Jogjogan	Sarimukti/ Pasirwangi	200	220	1999	Perhutani
7	Lutung, Barokaso	Pangauban/ Cisurupan	150	210	1997	Perhutani
8	Lutung	Cipaganti/ Cisurupan	100	115	1997	Perhutani
9	Stamplat	Karamat Wangi/ Cisurupan	200	540	1997	Perhutani
10	Sukamulya	Sukamulya/ Pakenjeng	300	500	1997	Perhutani
11	Ciledug, Kiaralawang, Cileutik, Ciajag, Congeang, Balong, Baro	Sukamukti/ Cilawu	23.5	209	1999	PTPN VII Dayeuh Manggung
12	Batu Sirep, Ciledug, Congeang	Mekarmukti/ Cilawu	13	101	1999	PTPN VII Dayeuh Manggung
13	Legok Haji, Nabak, Cibitung	Dangiang/ Cilawu	28.410	118	1999	PTPN VII Dayeuh Manggung
14	Cipicung, Cidahu, Burujul	Neglasari/ Cisompet	78	211	1999	PTPN VII Bunisari Lendra
15	Benjang, Cikeuyeup, Kubang	Neglasari/ Cisompet	27	50	1999	PTPN VII Bunisari Lendra
16	Cineungah	Jatisari/ Cisompet	12	30	2002	PTPN VII Bunisari Lendra
17	Batu Beureum, Batu Bero, Leuwi Panjang, Dayueh Manggung	Karyasari/ Cibalong	75	138	1999	PTPN VII Bunisari Lendra
18	Sancang	Sagara/ Cibalong	125	131	1999	PTPN VII Miramare
19	Koreak, Cigorowek, Batu Beulang	Tegallega/ Bungbulang	100	100	1999	PBS Condong
20	Cikoromong, Pamoyanan, Cigorowek.	Karangwangi/ Mekarmukti	100	200	1999	PBS Condong
21	Gn. Masigi, Gn. Kembar	Sinarjaya/ Bungbulang	150	150	1999	PBS Condong
22	Kiara Pugur, Leuweung Buntu, Kiara Jangot, Lawang	Jangkurang/ Leles Rancasalak/ Kadungora Mandalasari/ Kadungora Hegarsari/ Kadungora	200	300	1994	Village head, Bureaucrats, Garut regency lands
			<b>3,792</b>	<b>4,924</b>		

Source: adapted from Yayasan Pengembangan Masyarakat, 2002.

**Table 2. Private Owned and State Owned Plantation in Garut District – West Java**

No	Plantation name	Name of company/ Type of commodity produced	Concession (hectares)	Total
<b>I. Private Owned Plantation</b>				
1	Condong	PT Condong Garut / Palm oil and Rubber	8,021.4000	
2	Pamegatan	PT. Mandala Giri Utama / Tea	1,690.5900	
3	Selekta	PT. Harjasari / Tea	107.0572	
4	Gunung Badega	PT. Chakra / Tea	422.3000	
5	Megawati	PT. Surya Andaka Mustika / Tea	413.4500	
6	Neglasari/ Gn Gajah	PT. Tatar Anyar Indonesia / Tea and Rubber	1,340.2969	
7	Baru Ulis	PT Bumi Prada / Tea	34.2210	
<b>Sub-total</b>				<b>12,029.3151</b>
<b>II State Owned Plantation</b>				
1	Bunisari Lendra	PTPN VIII / Rubber	4,082.8750	
2	Dayeuh Manggung	PTPN VIII / Rubber and Tea	1,205.4025	
3	Papandayan	PTPN VIII / Tea	1,991.4768	
4	Mira Mare	PTPN VIII / Tea	4,267.4000	
5	Cisaruni	PTPN VIII / Tea	1,723.5360	
<b>Sub-total</b>				<b>13,270.6903</b>
<b>Total</b>				<b>25,300.0054</b>

Source: Dinas Perkebunan Pemda I Jawa Barat tahun 1998, Rangkuman Data-Data Klasifikasi Perkebunan Besar tahun 1997/1998.

Appendix

THE PEOPLE'S CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

DECREE OF THE PEOPLE'S CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA  
NO. IX/MPR/2001

ON AGRARIAN REFORM AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

BY GRACE OF GOD, THE ALMIGHTY

THE PEOPLE'S CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA,

Considering:

- a. That agrarian resources and natural resources as blessings from God to the Indonesian people are national riches to be thankful for. Therefore, these resources must be optimally managed and used for present and future generations to create a fair and prosperous society;
- b. That the People's Consultative Assembly of Republic of Indonesia has a constitutional duty to determine the direction and basis for national development that can solve problems of poverty, socio-economic imbalances and injustice as well as natural resource destruction;
- c. That management of agrarian/natural resources to date has caused a decrease in environmental quality and a lack of balance in the structure of control, ownership, use and exploitation of those resources and has given rise to conflict;
- d. That regulations relating to the management of agrarian/natural resources overlap and contradict each other;
- e. That the fair, sustainable and environmentally friendly management of agrarian/natural resources must be carried out in a coordinated and integrated manner that accommodates the dynamism, aspirations and participation of the people, and so that conflicts are resolved;
- f. That to realize the long-standing wishes of the Indonesian people as stated in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution, a serious political commitment is required to give a basis and direction to agrarian reform and management of natural resources in order for it to be a fair, ongoing and environmentally friendly process;
- g. That in relation to considerations in letters a, b, c, d, e and f, a Decree of the People's Consultative Assembly on Agrarian Reform and Natural Resources Management is required.

Referring to:

1. Article 1 clause (2), Article 2, Article 3, Article 18, Article 18A, Article 18B, Article 25E, Article 28A, Article 28C clause (1), Article 28D clause (1), Article 28G, Article 28H, Article 28I, Article 28J, Article 33 clause (3) of the 1945 Constitution;
2. Decree of the People's Consultative Assembly No. XV/MPR/1998 on Regional Autonomy; Fair Management, Distribution and Use of National Resources; and

- Equalization of Central and Regional Financial in the Framework of Unity of the Republic of Indonesia;
3. Decree of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia No. II/MPR/1999 on the Establishment of the Rules and Regulations of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia as amended with the Decree of People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia No. V/MPR/2001;
  4. Decree of the People's Consultative Assembly No. IV/MPR/2000 on Recommendations of Policy for Regional Autonomy;

Noticing:

1. Decision of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia No. 5/MPR/2001 on the Agenda for the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia 2001 Annual Meeting;
2. Discussion in the People's Consultative Assembly 2001 Annual Meeting from November 1 to November 9, 2001 about the Draft Plan of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia on Agrarian Reform and Natural Resources Management, prepared by the Executing Board of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia;
3. Decision of the 7<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting on November 9, 2001 in the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia Annual Meeting.

DECIDING

To determine:

A DECREE OF THE PEOPLE'S CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA ON AGRARIAN REFORM AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Article 1

The Decree of the People's Consultative Assembly on Agrarian Reform and Natural Resource Management is the basis for laws and regulations on agrarian reform and natural resource management.

Article 2

Agrarian reform refers to an interconnected process relating to the reorganization of power, ownership, use and exploitation of agrarian resources that is carried out in order to achieve certainty and protection of the law as well as justice and prosperity for all Indonesian people.

Article 3

Management of natural resources on land, in the ocean and in the air is carried out optimally, sustainably, and in a way that is environmentally friendly.

Article 4

The state determines management of agrarian and natural resources that is for the benefit of the people to the fullest extent.



## Article 5

Agrarian reform and natural resource management must be carried out according to the following principles:

- a. maintain and protect the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia;
- b. respect and protect human rights;
- c. respect the supremacy of the law by accommodating diversity in legal unification;
- d. promote peoples' prosperity, particularly through improving the quality of human resources;
- e. develop democracy, rule of law, transparency and optimalization of the people's participation;
- f. create justice in the control, ownership, use and maintenance of agrarian/natural resources;
- g. nurture sustainability that can provide optimal benefit, for the current generation and for future generations, by heeding environmental capacity and support;
- h. conduct social, conservation, and ecological functions according to local culture;
- i. increase integration and coordination between development sectors and between regions in management of agrarian reform and natural resources;
- j. acknowledge and respect the rights of indigenous peoples and cultural diversity regarding agrarian/natural resources;
- k. strive for a balance in the rights and responsibilities of the state, government (central, provincial, district/subdistrict, and village or the same level), communities and individuals;
- l. implement decentralization by distributing authority at the national, provincial, district/subdistrict, and village or the same level, in conjunction with the allocation and management of agrarian/natural resources.

## Article 5

(1) Directions for agrarian reform policy are:

- a. Conduct research on legislation relating to agrarian policy to synchronize inter-sector policy and bring about legislation that is based on principles as referred to Article 5 of this Decree.
- b. Rearrange control, ownership, use and exploitation of land (land reform) that is equitable by noting land ownership by the people, both in rural and urban areas.
- c. Conduct data collection on land through inventory and registration of land control, ownership, use and exploitation in a comprehensive and systematic process in the framework of land reform implementation.
- d. Settle conflicts relating to agrarian resources arising to this time while at the same time anticipating potential conflict in the future, thus guaranteeing the upholding of law based on the principles referred to in Article 5.
- e. Strengthen institutions and their authority to conduct agrarian reform and to settle disputes relating to agrarian resources.
- f. Ensure the availability of funding for programs of agrarian reform and for the resolution of conflicts relating to agrarian resources.

(2) Directions for policy on natural resource management are:

- a. Review regulations relating to management of natural resources to synchronize the inter-sector policy based on principles referred to in Article 5 of this Decree.
- b. Optimize natural resource use through the identification and inventory of quality and quantity and potential for national development.
- c. Expand access of information to society about natural resource potential in their regions and encourage the establishment of social responsibility to use environmental friendly technology including traditional technology.
- d. Pay attention to the types and characteristics of various natural resources and implement efforts to add value to these natural resources.
- e. Settle conflicts on natural resource use and anticipate potential conflict in the future, thus guaranteeing the upholding of law as per the principles referred to Article 5 of this Decree.
- f. Develop a strategy to use natural resources based on optimal use by paying attention to regional and national interests and conditions.

#### Article 6

Assign the People's Representative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia together with the President to work promptly to regulate the implementation of the agrarian reform program and the management of natural resources and to withdraw, amend and/or substitute all laws and regulations that are in contradiction to this Decree.

#### Article 7

Assign the President of the Republic of Indonesia to implement immediately the Decree of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia on Agrarian Reform and Natural Resources Management and to report its implementation to the Annual Meeting of People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia.

#### Article 8

This Decree shall come into force on the date of its ratification.

Decreed in Jakarta  
on November 9, 2001

Chairman, Prof. Dr. H.M. Amien Rais  
Vice Chairman, Prof. Dr. Ir. Ginandjar Kartasasmita  
Vice Chairman, Ir. Sutjipto  
Vice Chairman, Letjen. TNI Agus Widjojo  
Vice Chairman, Drs. H. A. Nazri Adlani  
Vice Chairman, Drs. H. M. Husnie Thamrin  
Vice Chairman, Prof. Dr. Jusuf Amir Feisal, S. Pd.