

Chapter 6

The Emergence of New National Coalitions of Peasant Movements

Peasant's organizations were prospering in Indonesia from the post revolutionary period until the political turmoil of 1965-1966. Mostly they were affiliating to political parties such as the Indonesian Peasant's Front (BTI, Barisan Tani Indonesia) affiliated to the PKI; the Indonesian Peasant's Movement (GTI, Gerakan Tani Indonesia) affiliated to the Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI, Partai Sosialis Indonesia); the Indonesian Nationalist Peasant's Union (PETANI, Persatuan Tani Nasionalis Indonesia) affiliated to the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI, Partai Nasional Indonesia); Nahdlatul Ulama Peasant's Union (PETANU, Persatuan Tani Nahdlatul Ulama) affiliated to the Nahdlatul Ulama; Indonesian Islamic Peasant's Union (STII, Serikat Tani Islam Indonesia) affiliated to the United Indonesia Islamic Party (PSII, Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia); and others. Along with the political changes which occurred after 1965-1966 came the decline of 'high spirited participation' of these groups, while BTI was even 'killed off' by the New Order regime. The nadir of peasant political power came when the New Order formed the Indonesian Harmonious Farmers Association (HKTI, Himpunan Kerukunan Tani Indonesia) in 1974 in order to control the remaining peasant organizations at that time' After this there were no more rural mass organizations struggling for peasant's interests, which became gradually submerged in the developmentalism of the New Order.¹

¹ See again Chapter II.

At the same time, there were no more peasant organizations fighting for agrarian reform, except to use it as rhetoric in slogans. It's true the HKTI still voiced the need to continue implementation of an interrupted 1960s land reform program, particularly in the late 1960's² but that voice gradually disappeared. It was only heard once a year when the government driven farmer's organization talked about the need for land reform during an annual seminar it conducted to commemorate the passing of the Basic Agrarian Law (BAL) 1960.³

The only 'left over' peasant organization of the Soekarno period which continued in the New Order was the Penunggu People's Struggle Front (BPRP, Badan Perjuangan Rakyat Penunggu) of North Sumatra, formed as we saw in the last chapter, to reclaim 'jaluran land' (*tanah jaluran*).⁴ The formation of the SPJB was the first New Order organization with wider objectives, not only to struggle for land rights, but also to fight against rural poverty, unequal landholding structures, exploitation of the peasants, and freedom to organize in rural society (already explored in Chapter V). SPJB was new kind of mass-peasant organization struggling for broader economic and political rights. Through SPJB and the consolidation of peasant groups, including the revived

² See again Chapter III.

³ HKTI never announced publicly that it was also celebrating National Peasants Day, but only said that it was commemorating the enactment of the BAL. Although both events are related because President Soekarno declared the first National Peasants Day when he announced the promulgation of the BAL on 24 September 1960, politically they have different meanings. National Peasants Day was a celebration of the significant contribution of the peasantry to the lives of Indonesian people, while the commemoration of the enactment of the BAL reminded people of its mandate to enact social justice and prosperity for the people. About HKTI's call to the government to implement land reform, see again Chapter III.

⁴ '*Tanah jaluran*' is a row of land in between two rows of tobacco plants cultivated by tobacco companies in Deli, East Sumatra in which local people were allowed to plant food crops. It was implemented since the middle of the 19th century when the Dutch tobacco companies had rented land from the Sultan for their tobacco plantations with condition to allow local people to use some part of that land for food crops. This local right to use the land for food crops was ignored when the nationalization of foreign plantation estates was implemented in 1958. See again Chapter V, subsection 5.1.2, and particularly note 42; and see section 6.2 below.

BPRPI,⁵ the process of building a national coalition of peasant movement in post-1965 Indonesia had began.

In the previous chapter (Chapter V) we have discussed the formation of a national coalition of various social movement groups struggling for agrarian reform in Indonesia focused around the formation of KPA in 1994. However, some activists recognized that KPA was dominated by NGOs and therefore could not represent peasant interests. Struggle for agrarian reform should be generated by peasant organizations, and could not be dependent on a movement organization dominated by NGOs.

This chapter will explore the formation and political orientation of several new national peasant movement organizations, such as the Indonesian Federation of Peasant's Union (FSPI, Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia), which subsequently changed its structure from a federative organization to a unified organization, the Indonesian Peasant's Union (SPI, Serikat Petani Indonesia); the Alliance of Agrarian Reform Movements (AGRA, Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria) and the National Peasant Union (STN, Serikat Tani Nasional). The first two organizations had historical connections with the '1993 Lembang Meeting' and the formation of the KPA, as already explored in chapter V. While STN has a 'different' history, i.e. it is not in the axis of the 'Lembang group' of NGOs, but was formed by some 1980s student activists in order to build a New Left political party.

On the one hand, the formation of these national coalitions of peasant movements reflected another scale shift in the process of the formation of pro-agrarian reform movements, which was manifested firstly in the formation of KPA as we have seen. On the other hand, these formations also showed the

⁵ In the mid 80s BPRP added 'Indonesia' to its name, becoming BPRPI (Badan Perjuangan Rakyat Penunggu Indonesia), to show it was not only struggling for the indigenous Malay Deli ethnic group, namely the Penunggu people. In fact, many ex-tobacco plantation workers families, who were originally migrants and/or non Malay Deli people, were involved in the cultivation of *jaluran* land. BPRPI's name was supposed to show that it was struggling for all cultivators regardless of their ethnic origin, but it still use word 'Penunggu' in its name for historical reasons (interview with current leader of BPRI, Bandung 14 March 2007 [No.:O-06]).

different often contentious perspectives about how to define the main movement base, how to determine the legal basis of agrarian reform and what strategies were needed to achieve it. This created competition between the movement leadership (Zald and McCarthy 1979, Soule and King 2008), involving ideologically contentious issues relating to autonomy and independence of coalition members, and led to splits and factionalism. Such problems often occur within current peasant-based agrarian movements in Indonesia and have affected the achievement of their main objective, the implementation of agrarian reform.

6.1 One Action, Many Aims: Mass Mobilization of the ‘Koalisi Rakyat Menggugat’ (Coalition for the People’s Demands)

Jakarta, 17 May 2006. Around ten thousand people mostly peasants from various places in West Java have gathered in the heart of Jakarta to declare their demand for agrarian reform or more land will be occupied. Most are peasants from SPP bases in West Java.⁶ As we have noted earlier, SPP is the most dominant local peasant organization in the current agrarian reform movement in Indonesia. The other peasant groups from Sukabumi, Cianjur, Karawang and Indramayu in West Java in Jakarta that day were members of the Indonesian Peasant Alliance (API, Aliansi Petani Indonesia), while peasant groups from Subang (also in West Java) were organized in the Subang Peasants Struggle Front (PPRTS, Persatuan Perjuangan Rakyat Tani Subang) a member of AGRA. All of them had left their home bases the day before and entered Jakarta by bus in the early hours of the 17th of May to gathering inside Indonesia’s biggest mosque, the Istiqlal, near the National Monument (*Tugu Monas*).

⁶ SPP at that time was a member of several national coalitions of peasant movement and agrarian reform namely the FSPI, the Indonesian Peasant Alliance (API, Aliansi Petani Indonesia), KPA and PERGERAKAN (the People-Centered Advocacy Institute). SPP was also involved in the formation of AGRA in 2002.

Before the sun was high in the sky they began to move out of the mosque, gathering up other demonstrators including urban worker's groups in and around the Tugu Monas. Their destination was the Presidential Palace, the formal residence of Indonesia's president, one of the symbols of power in Indonesia. Actually Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) elected President in 2004 does not live in the palace, but the demonstrators chose to go there anyway to protest, because of its convenient location on the southern side of the square. There they delivered their demand to the government, that SBY carry out his promise to implement agrarian reform made during his 2004 campaign for president.⁷

This mass action was organized by a short-term coalition of several movement organizations, the 'Coalition for the People's Demands' (KRM, Koalisi Rakyat Menggugat). It was composed of organizations that we have already met before, such as FSPI, API, KPA, and PPRTS. But there were others as well, including the Self-Reliant Indonesian Peasant and Fisherfolk's Movement (PETANI MANDIRI, Pergerakan Tani dan Nelayan Indonesia Mandiri); the Indonesian Association for Legal Aid and Human Rights (PBHI, Perhimpunan Bantuan Hukum dan Hak Asasi Manusia Indonesia); the Indonesian Youth Struggle Front (FPPI, Front Perjuangan Pemuda Indonesia); Bina Desa (InDHRRA, Indonesian Secretariat for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas); Alliance of Concerned Students for Workers and Peasants (Aliansi Mahasiswa Peduli Buruh-Tani); the Alliance for Worker's Demands (ABM, Aliansi Buruh Menggugat); Indonesian Friends of the Earth (WALHI, Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia) and PERGERAKAN (the People-centered Advocacy Institute). They named this coalition the Coalition for People's Demands (Koalisi Rakyat Menggugat) because their objective was to challenge SBY for breaking his promise to implement agrarian reform. Their other

⁷ About SBY's promise to implement agrarian reform, which he delivered during his campaign for the 2004 presidential election, see Chapter II subsection 2.2.3.

demands included: abolishing Law No. 18/2004 on Plantations,⁸ liquidation of Perhutani (the state-owned forestry company), revoking Presidential Regulation No. 36/2005 concerning land allocation for development of public facilities, rejection of the BAL revisions, resolution of agrarian conflicts, stopping violence against peasants, peasant's food self-sufficiency, and related pro-poor agrarian policies.

The protesters were unable to meet with SBY personally, but four of their 'representatives'⁹ were able to meet two members of SBY's cabinet, the Minister of Agriculture, Anton Apriantono, and the Head of the National Land Agency, Joyo Winoto. In that meeting, the four protesters' representatives said peasant groups would increase collective protest actions to occupy state land if SBY did not fulfill his promise to implement agrarian reform (*Pikiran Rakyat* 18 May 2006). The two SBY ministers said that they would bring the protesters demands to the President. Both said that they agreed with the peasant demand for the implementation of agrarian reform in Indonesia.¹⁰

Although the thousands of people who participated in these actions originally came from different organizations, FSPI activists claimed their organization was the main initiator and organizer of this mass action, saying it was part of their international campaign on agrarian reform (see *Pembaruan Tani* 28, June 2006; and www.viacampesina.org). It's true the majority of protesters originally came from SPP, which was a member of FSPI. FSPI always depended on SPP members to join mass protest actions FSPI conducted in Jakarta. At the time of this demonstration, FSPI was also hosting an

⁸ This is a new law promulgated in 2004 to strengthen the position of plantation concession holders and treats any land occupation within plantation areas as criminal actions.

⁹ These representatives were Agustiana, General Secretary of SPP; Agus Ruly, representative of FSPI; Usep Setiawan, General Secretary of KPA; and Sapei Rusin, Coordinator of PERGERAKAN.

¹⁰ The story of this mass action comes from the following sources: *Kompas* 18 May 2006, *Pikiran Rakyat* 18 May 2006, *Republika* 18 May 2006, *Jawa Pos* 18 May 2006, and Pergerakan 2008; also personal communications with Sapei Rusin (Coordinator of PERGERAKAN) and Agustiana (General Secretary of SPP) on 17 July 2006, and Anwar 'Sastro' Ma'ruf (General Secretary of ABM), 24 May 2010.

international conference on food sovereignty,¹¹ and the participants joined the protest action, using attributes of FSPI and/or Via Campesina (an international peasant organization).¹² So there were thousands of SPP members who had joined the mass protest action, joined by conference participants, carrying FSPI and Via Campesina banners and flags, in the midst of the sea of flags and banners of other movement organizations. This meant that FSPI could claim it was both the generator and the backbone of the 'Koalisi Rakyat Menggugat' action.

Actually FSPI and other peasant unions, NGOs, student groups and workers unions were invited to join the 'Koalisi Rakyat Menggugat' mobilization by the mastermind of this action, namely several activists of PERGERAKAN.¹³ This mobilization was initiated in Bandung, in a discussion with members of PERGERAKAN a coalition of mass-based organizations of

¹¹ Asia-Pacific People's Conference on Rice and Food Sovereignty, Jakarta 14-18 May 2006, organized by FSPI and La Via Campesina. Delegates included the Assembly of the Poor (Thailand), Paragos and UNORKA (the Philippines), VNPU (Vietnam), Hasatil (Timor Leste), ANPA (Nepal), KRRS and BKU (India), MONLAR (Srilangka), NFFC (USA), Korean Peasants League and KWPA (South Korea); while delegates from Indonesia included representatives from FSPI and PETANI MANDIRI. The conference conclusions included the refusal to use genetically modified organisms (GMOs) including rice and other food crops; condemning the green revolution, strengthening sustainability of rice production systems, and encouraging food sovereignty in rural communities (see *Pembaruan Tani* 28, June 2006). This conference wanted to be a counter-discourse against the mainstream discourse on food systems, because at the same time FAO was conducting an 'Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Food Security' in Jakarta.

¹² About La Via Campesina, its formation, dynamics, and political performance, see Borras 2004 and 2008; Desmarais 2002, 2007 and 2008; and Edelman 2003.

¹³ They are Sapei Rusin, Agustiana and Anwar 'Sastro' Ma'ruf. PERGERAKAN was formed in 2004 following a series of activities to assess the Indonesian movement groups' capacity on advocacy since 2000. PERGERAKAN was a membership-based organization that determined its membership only for people-based organizations (or people's organization) and individuals with a proportion of 4:1. This coalition aims to strengthen the capacity of people's organization (POs) on advocacy in order to shift the advocacy work usually based on NGOs to POs. It is composed of various POs including peasant's organizations (SPP, STaB and BPRPI among others); fisherfolk's organizations (SNeB, Serikat Nelayan Bengkulu or Bengkulu Fisherfolk's Union and SNM, Serikat Nelayan Merdeka or Freedom Fisherfolk's Union); women's organizations (Hapsari Women's Union and SPBU, Serikat Perempuan Bengkulu Utara or North Bengkulu Women's Union); worker's unions (FSBKU, Federasi Serikat Buruh Karya Utama or Karya Utama Worker's Union and SBM, Serikat Buruh Makassar or Makassar Worker's Union); and indigenous people's groups (AMA Kalbar, Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Kalimantan Barat or Alliance of Indigenous People of West Kalimantan and PEREKAT OMBARA, Persatuan Masyarakat Adat Lombok Utara or United of Indigenous People of North Lombok). The Ford Foundation has been the main funding source for PERGERAKAN since its formation until now.

marginalized people or 'people's organization' (*organisasi rakyat*)¹⁴, in the beginning of 2006.

This mass mobilization had three main objectives. Firstly, of course, to push the SBY administration to implement agrarian reform as promised in the 2004 election campaign. Secondly, because the Indonesian peasant movement was fragmented due to leadership tensions, this mobilization was also to 'test the power and consolidation [of the movement]...' as well as to 'reduce existing friction ...'¹⁵ (Koalisi Rakyat Menggugat 2006: 2). The initiators of the 'Koalisi Rakyat Menggugat' action of 23 May 2006 considered that the emergence of several self-proclaimed peasant organizations operating at the national level was fragmenting the peasants' power, and they urgently needed to find a way to consolidate the movement (Koalisi Rakyat Menggugat 2006: 2).

The third objective was to unite workers and peasant movement groups in a joint mass action. Peasant groups got used to showing their solidarity to the worker movement and the reverse, namely worker groups got to show their solidarity to peasant protesters by mass mobilization in each movement's protest actions. In the context of agrarian reform, PERGERAKAN activists wanted to internalize the demand for agrarian reform within the workers

¹⁴ Indonesian social movement activists frequently used the term '*organisasi rakyat*' (people's organization or people-based organization) to refer mass-based organizations, which relates to the following three things: Firstly, it refer to mass-based social movement organizations and/or grassroots or community-based organizations (CBOs), whose participating members are mostly from marginalized groups such as peasants, workers, fisherfolks, indigenous people, urban-poor, and women. Secondly, this term is used to indicate non-profit grassroots social organizations, which are not operated as NGOs. Thirdly, this term is used to emphasize the claim of people's organizations that they have no direct relation with the state regime, or was formed as government-driven mass organizations. The term '*rakyat*' (people) itself is becoming an over showered term in political discourses and actions in Indonesia, especially after the Soeharto resignation in 1998, when the word came to mean a political distance and/or an oppositional position between groups of citizen called '*rakyat*' and the State, the regime and the powerholders. Fisher 1997 and Mercer 2006 provide a condensed exploration about the characteristics, functions and micropolitics of NGOs; while for the exploration of the NGOs roles in the development process and politics in Indonesia, see Eldridge 1989 and 1995, Sinaga 1995, and Hadiwinata 2003. See also David, Biekart and Saxby 1996 for a critical analysis on legitimacy, accountability, purpose and motivation of private foreign aid and its donors. Bebbington, Hickey and Mitlin 2008 explore NGOs capabilities that constitute development alternatives in the face of the current neoliberalism, the aid poverty agenda, the new security agenda, and the simple imperative of organizational survival.

¹⁵ This is friction between some leaders of KPA and FSPI, KPA and AGRA, and FSPI and AGRA.

movement. On other occasions workers' demands can be internalized as part of the peasant movement as well.¹⁶

To implement this idea, the imitators of 'Koalisi Rakyat Menggugat', decided to organize a joint mass action of workers and peasants on either May Day (1st May) or Peasants Day (24th September). They thought it will be better if both peasant and worker movement groups joined together to demand that the government implement pro-poor policies, including implementation of agrarian reform, through a joint mass mobilization held at the same time. The success of worker's protests since 2005 to pressure the government to interrupt Labour Law revision (Law No. 13/2003)¹⁷ inspired pro agrarian reform movement groups such as SPP, now consolidated in PERGERAKAN, to pressure the government for agrarian reform implementation in a similar way.

They thought that May Day 2006 would be the best time to express these demand rather than wait for Peasants Day. Especially as workers' groups were preparing for a big mobilization on May Day as part of the cumulative protest actions against the labour law revisions. But while preparations for the big May Day demonstrations by worker movement groups were already in hand, some peasant movements' organizers thought it would take more time to explain to their members why they should support the worker's demands and conduct a

¹⁶ Based on discussions with Sapei Rusin (Coordinator of PERGERAKAN), Agustiana (General Secretary of SPP and member of the Board of PERGERAKAN) and Anwar 'Sastro' Ma'ruf (Coordinator of ABM and also member of the Board of PERGERAKAN) in February 2006. These three people were among others people in PERGERAKAN who initiated the idea behind the mass mobilization conducted by 'Koalisi Rakyat Menggugat'. While information about planning the day of the actions, and the evaluation is from personal communications with Sapei Rusin and Agustiana 17 July 2006; and Sastro, 24 May 2010.

¹⁷ In fact since 2005 many worker movement groups in Indonesia were protesting the SBY-JK administration initiative to revise the Labour Law (Law No. 13/2003 concerning Manpower). This initiative was challenged by worker movement groups that considered that the revision proposal would reduce worker's rights because of its neo-liberal orientation (such as implementation of outsourcing policy, reduction of worker's rights on benefits and compensation, and unfair wages policy), with no protection of worker's rights by the State all. The wave of big protests that began in 2005, continued until May Day 2006 and succeeded in pressuring the government to stop the process of revision (personal communication with Sastro, leader of a national coalition of worker's movements, 24 May 2010). For examples of workers protests against the revision this labour law, see *Media Indonesia* 8 March 2006, *Suara Pembaruan* 9 March 2006, *Tempo Interaktif* 17 March 2006.

demonstration for agrarian reform on the May Day. They were aware that very few peasants understood what May Day was about.

Finally the 'Koalisi Rakyat Menggugat' initiators agreed to conduct the first joint mass protest action of peasants and workers, using agrarian reform as the main demand in a separate demonstration on 17th May (as described above). Initiators of the demonstration on the worker's side thought it would not be so difficult to mobilize workers to join the agrarian reform protest, because they were already on a wave of protest actions against revisions of the labour law. Then the time selected was close to May Day to keep the militancy of the workers groups and to maintain the continuity of the struggle against the SBY-JK administration, which was condemned as the proponent of neoliberal forces. D-day would be the 17th of May.¹⁸ The initiators did not want to wait until 24 September (Peasant's Day) to conduct this first joins action because it was still four months away.

Because this planned join action was taking agrarian reform as its main issue, the initiators of 'Koalisi Rakyat Menggugat', especially Agustiana, leader of SPP, immediately contacted KPA, the first organization to be asked to join this initiative. Agustiana did not contact the FSPI or API, the two national peasant organizations to which SPP belonged. After KPA agreed to join, other movement organizations including FSPI, API, WALHI and Bina Desa were then contacted to spread the idea of a coalition participation in the protest action. Some preparatory meetings were conducted from March to May 2006 in Bandung and in the Jakarta office of KPA and the secretariat of FSPI. In one meeting, FSPI proposed to conduct the action on the same date as the Asia-Pacific People's Conference on Rice and Food Sovereignty, which, as we have noted, was to be held in Jakarta between 14-18 May 2006, organized by FSPI and La Via Campesina. They argued the actions would get international coverage because conference participants could join the protest and Via

¹⁸ According to Sastro, one of the initiators of the protest, there was no specific reason why they selected 17th of May as the protest D-day, but they thought being close to May Day would get more support from worker groups (personal communication with Sastro, 24 May 2010).

Campesina could use its international network to promote the purpose of the action. FSPI also proposed that the action could be linked with the commemoration of 'international peasant day'.¹⁹

The story about the 'Koalisi Rakyat Menggugat' action reflects two things. Firstly, the effort of the proponents of agrarian reform to maintain their claims while staging mass mobilization actions, in which the role of particular organizations (such as KPA, PERGERAKAN, FSPI, SPP and others) are a vehicle to mobilize both resources and the masses. Beyond the substance of their demands, activists thought that they could use the demonstration to build up their image and to mobilize further resources. Secondly, the relationship between members of the 'Koalisi Rakyat Menggugat' and the national leadership and secretariat is not a binding relationship, which means that initiatives from members must be submitted to the national secretariat for approval. To some extent, member organizations and the national coalition secretariat can be seen as two equal entities, the national secretariat has less power to determine the actions of its members. The relationship between SPP and the national secretariat of FSPI is an example of this.

When Agustiana, the leader of SPP, was involved in initiating the big mass peasant mobilization in Jakarta, he did not first discuss the idea with FSPI. On the contrary, he formulated the idea outside the federation first and then brought the idea to the federation's leaders later on as an 'invitation' to be involved. To some degree, local peasant organizations that became members of federations or coalitions at the 'upper' level were still relatively independent from the umbrella organization. The degree of autonomy in the relationship between members and the coalition leaders, like SPP and FSPI leaders, was

¹⁹ Via Campesina declared 17 April as International Peasants Day to remember the struggle and sacrifice of the martyrs of the Brazilian peasant movement, the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST or Movement of Landless Rural Workers) during the land occupation action in Eldorado dos Carajás, Para, on the 17th of April 1996. 19 MST member died and more than 69 were injured in this incident. At the 2nd International Peasant Conference of La Via Campesina in Tlaxcala, Mexico in 1996, as a powerful member of Via Campesina, MST proposed the day of the Para incident as International Peasant Day. For the story of this case see Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra 1999; on MST see Branford and Rocha 2002, Wright and Wolford 2003, and Harnecker 2003.

determined by how strong the political friendship and comradely relationship was among activists and leaders of both entities.

Agustiana, although a charismatic leader, never got involved too deeply in the political circle of activists who generated the FSPI. This can be traced to the beginnings of FSPI; neither Agustiana nor other activists in his circle were asked to be involved when FSPI was formed in 1998-1999.²⁰ He was more involved in a political circle of activists behind the formation of KPA, API and PERGERAKAN. Especially in KPA and PERGERAKAN he always held important positions.²¹ That's why KPA was the first organization he contacted when planning the mass action under the banner of the Koalisi Rakyat Menggugat to ask SBY to fulfill his promise for agrarian reform.

For FSPI and other national peasant coalitions, this kind of autonomy for members, and an equal relationship between members and the national leaders was considered as a constraint on the coalition's consolidation. The national leaders and organizers of the national secretariat cannot control members who are autonomous local peasant organizations, and who can be members of more than one national coalition and/or federation, even though top leaders of the coalitions were not happy about dual memberships. This was (and still is) a big concern which still has to be resolved by leaders of national coalition organizations, including FSPI, API, AGRA, and KPA. We will explore this issue below (except for KPA's experiences that have already been discussed in Chapter V).

²⁰ Agustiana was in prison when FSPI was formed in 1998-1999. He was sentenced to eight and a half years in jail in the aftermath of the Tasikmalaya riot in 1997 (see Chapter V, subsection 5.2.2; LBH Nusantara and Forum Pemuda Pelajar dan Mahasiswa Garut 1997, and Hadad *et al.* 1998 about this case). Even though some activists in his groups remained free, they were not invited to attend the first gathering of the activists and peasants to form the FSPI in 1998.

²¹ Agustiana is member and coordinator of the legislative body of KPA since 1998 until now. He is also Coordinator of the Board of PERGERAKAN since 2005 until now.

6.2 Formation of the Indonesian Federation of Peasant's Union (FSPI)

FSPI's formation was announced on 8th of July 1998 in a meeting of Sumatran activists and peasants held in Desa Lobu Rappa, Asahan District, North Sumatra, hosted by the North Sumatra Peasant's Union (SPSU, Serikat Petani Sumatera Utara). Of around one hundred participants, only 35 were 'representatives' of peasants from other parts of Sumatra, the rest were members of SPSU. Not all 'representatives of peasant groups' were 'peasants', most were ex-student activists and NGO activists, while only a few were peasant leaders of several agrarian conflict cases in Sumatra.²² Less than 10 out of the 35 'representatives of the peasants' originally represented an existing local peasant organizations in Sumatra at that time;²³ it is not clear how the local process was conducted in each region to choose participants who declared that they were 'representative of the peasants' of their region. Although all those who attended the three day meeting which declared the formation of a new national body, the FSPI, were coming from some region of Sumatra. They also formed an organizing committee for the first time led by Henry Saragih (from the SPSU delegation) as Chairperson and Riduan A. Munthe ('representative' of Aceh peasants)²⁴ as General Secretary, while the FSPI

²² They were the 'delegations and representatives' of peasants from eight provinces in Sumatra at that time, i.e. Aceh, North Sumatra, West Sumatra, Riau, Jambi, Bengkulu, South Sumatra and Lampung.

²³ These organizations were the North Sumatra Peasant's Union (SPSU, Serikat Petani Sumatera Utara), Struggle Front of Penunggu People of Indonesia (BPRPI, Badan Perjuangan Rakyat Penunggu Indonesia), and Lampung Peasant's Union (PTIL, Persatuan Insan Tani Lampung). As well as BPRPI, two others organizations (SPSU and PTIL) were founded during the peasant consolidation in North Sumatra and Lampung after the '1993 Lembang Meeting'. See again Chapter V, subsection 5.1.2 for details of the 1993 Lembang Meeting and its organizers, the 'Kisaran-Lampung-Bandung-Yogya axis'.

²⁴ The late Riduan Munthe was actually a North Sumatra-based activist who tried to organize peasants in the Aceh province. He was the mastermind behind the formation of the Acehese Peasant Association (PERMATA, Perhimpunan Masyarakat Tani Aceh), also a member of FSPI. Besides being a PERMATA leader, he was also active in two other NGOs in Aceh, namely Flower Aceh and the Biduk Alam foundation. In 2002-2004 he moved back to North Sumatra and was active in the North Sumatra Peasant Union (SPSU).

Peasant Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Petani FSPI) was composed of 9 people led by M. Yunus Nasution (from the SPSU delegation).²⁵

The main idea behind this gathering was to form a national mass-based peasant organization as the political vehicle for activists to work on the transition to democracy after the fall of Soeharto. The other aim was to form a struggle organization for peasants to fight for their rights (interview with a delegate of Bengkulu, 8 January 2008 [No.: E-03.]).²⁶ Activists of the Sintesa Foundation and SPSU activists, such as Henry Saragih, M. Haris Putra²⁷ and M. Yunus Nasution among others, including charismatic leader Abah Afnawi Noeh of BPRPI, were core organizers of this gathering. This 'Lobu Rappa gathering' actually asserted that it was the continuation of the '1993 Lembang Meeting', but the organizers never acknowledged this, but rather promoted – or self-proclaimed - the 'Lobu Rappa gathering' as the first effort to build a national coalition of peasant movements.

Henry Saragih of Sintesa Foundation was the prominent person behind the formation of both SPSU and FSPI. He is an ex-student activist of North Sumatra University (USU, Universitas Sumatra Utara) who, with several other student activists, founded the Sintesa foundation in 1987.²⁸ SPSU itself was

²⁵ Of these 9 people, 2 were originally leaders of SPSU and BPRPI representing peasants of the province of North Sumatra; 1 person from PITL represented peasants from Lampung province, the rest (6 people) were 'representatives' of the peasants of five other provinces (Jambi, Riau, Sumatra Barat, Bengkulu dan Sumatra Selatan).

²⁶ Muspani is a prominent politician and NGO activist from Bengkulu who, from 2004-2009, was one of the four DPD (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah) members in the national parliament from Bengkulu province. See chapter VIII for his activities and relations with the peasant movement in Bengkulu.

²⁷ M. Harris Putra is an ex-student activist of North Sumatera University (USU, Universitas Sumatra Utara) Medan who was involved in community organizing in land conflict protests in North Sumatra in the end of 80s and early 90s. Together with Henry Saragih and other student activists he formed Sintesa Foundation. About Sintesa Foundation see note 28 below.

²⁸ Henry Saragih and several student activists in North Sumatra such as Irwansyah and M. Haris Putra among others transformed their 1985 'Sintesa Study Forum' into the Sintesa Foundation in 1987 so their group was eligible to get funding for projects in rural areas. The activities of this foundation initially focused on the implementation of water supplies and electricity infrastructural projects through the use of appropriate technology. It also began to organize local people in land conflict cases in 1992. The Netherlands humanitarian development agency HIVOS began to support this organization financially in 1989. At the end of the 1990s, following the increasing demand to support SPSU members' agricultural production activities, Sintesa Foundation and SPSU activists formed the Alam Tani Foundation, the Kesejahteraan Tani Foundation, the Berkat Tani Foundation, the

founded in 1994²⁹ following the formation of SPJB in West Java in 1991 and agreement reached at the 1993 Lembang Meeting to develop local peasant organizations as the first step in building a national peasant organization (see the 'Declaration of the Indonesian Peasant Organization 1993').³⁰ Actually Saragih also had an important role in the formation of KPA in the early 90s; he always represented the Sintesa Foundation during the first years of KPA's formation.³¹

Through the formation of KPA, Henry and SPSU had expected that several of the 1993 Lembang Meeting agreements would be continued through this new coalition. According to Saragih, KPA, 'is a step closer toward the formation of a national peasant organization'; but 'KPA leaders [who were involved in the 1993 Lembang Meeting] were not consistent' (personal communication with Henry Saragih, 7 December 2004). By that he meant that KPA at that time did nothing to contribute toward the formation a peasant organization at the national level. This made Saragih disappointed, so he resolved to continue

Labuhan Batu Foundation, the Amanat Tani Indonesia Foundation, and the 'Delapan' People's Communication Institute (Lembaga Komunikasi Rakyat 'Delapan'), which together with the Sintesa Foundation are attached to the Consortium to Support Peasant Movement Organizations (KONPORT, Konsorsium Pendukung Gerakan Organisasi Tani). The main objective of KONPORT is to support the development of SPSU as a strong peasant organization. See www.hivos.nl/english/community/partner/10005933; www.sintesa.or.id; also Topatimasang, Fakhri dan Rahardjo 2000: 153-158.

²⁹ SPSU is a North Sumatra based local peasant organization founded on 3 June 1994 and funded by activists of the Sintesa Foundation. Its main bases are peasants groups involved in land conflict cases or rural communities where Sintesa conducted its rural development projects. The formation of SPSU was part of a commitment by activists during the 1993 Lembang meeting to form local peasant organizations in parts of Indonesia, as the way to build a national peasant organization (see again Chapter V, subsection 5.1.2). Ten years after its formation, SPSU had organized around 2,220 farmer households consolidated into 83 local chapters in 10 districts of North Sumatra (Langkat, Deli Serdang, Asahan and Batubara, Labuhan Batu, Tapanuli Selatan, Padang Lawas, Tapanuli Tengah, Samosir, Simalungun, and Karo). Since its formation, SPSU was not only involved in organizing peasants over land conflicts, it also organized peasants for sustainable agriculture activities and the development of rural cooperatives. These groups of peasants also had support from the Netherlands-based humanitarian organization HIVOS since 1989 through the Sintesa Foundation; since 2004 HIVOS began to directly support these peasant groups through SPSU. See www.hivos.nl/english/community/partner/10005933 and <http://kaum-tani.blogspot.com/>

³⁰ 'Deklarasi Organisasi Petani Indonesia 1993'. See again Chapter V, subsection 5.1.2 about this declaration and the '1993 Lembang Meeting'.

³¹ About the formation of KPA see again Chapter V.

efforts to build a national peasant organization with or without involvement of KPA activists.

His commitment became stronger when several Indonesian pro-agrarian reform activists attended the 2nd International Peasant Conference in Mexico in 1996, with its objective of the formation of the international peasant organization namely La Via Campesina. At this conference Indonesian delegate was 'challenged' by other delegates, especially representatives of peasant movements from the Philippines and Latin American countries, to form a national peasant organization as soon as possible. They recognized that the Indonesian contribution to the struggle against colonialism and imperialism in the past had been significant, and they believed a consolidated Indonesian peasant movement could contribute to the similar struggle in the present time.³²

From 1997 to 1999, and especially after the foundation of FSPI in 1998, with support mainly from HIVOS, activists of Sintesa Foundation and SPSU encouraged other rural social movement activists to intensify consolidation meetings of the peasants in both Sumatra and Java.³³ Their approach was to consolidate activists and peasant groups by forming local peasant organizations in provinces and/or districts, especially those not part of the core network of the Lembang group. Using this approach Sintesa activists' want to balance the contribution of core activists of the Lembang group to increase peasant organizing and consolidation in Indonesia. Beside this aim, it also reflected the desire of Sintesa and SPSU activists to move away from the shadow of the Lembang Meeting and the determination of new activists who led KPA at that time to lead the national movement coalition for agrarian reform.

³² I was one of the Indonesian delegates to this 2nd Congress of International Peasants, Mexico (18-21 April 1996). I represented KPA and Henry Saragih represented SPSU, while other delegates were Darsono (SPJB), Abah Afnawi Noeh (BPRPI) and Eduardus Sareng of the Sanres Foundation based in Maumere, Flores Island. See also La Via Campesina 1996.

³³ At that time the consolidation of peasant movements into local peasant organizations (or embryos of peasant organizations) was occurring in limited areas such as West Java through SJPB, North Sumatra through SPSU, Lampung through PITL, and Central Java through SPMJT. See Chapter V, subsections 5.1.2.

The tendency of Sumatra's activists to build the movement network centered in Sumatra, which was free from the domination of Java's activists is also reflected, for instance, in the formation of the 'Persyarikatan Rakyat'³⁴ and the Indonesian People's Organization (ORI, Organisasi Rakyat Indonesia)³⁵ in 2002 and 2003.³⁶ Besides the existence of regional sentiment between Sumatra- and Java-based activists, the formation of these Sumatra-based 'national movement coalitions' also reflected leadership competition amongst the Sumatran activists themselves, to be in and dominate the 'national movement coalition'. For instance, ORI was formed as part of the split within the 'Persyarikatan Rakyat', and no single peasant's organizations involved in ORI joined FSPI.

However FSPI is the first Sumatra-based peasant organization to successfully spread their influence and dominate the national coalition of rural social movements. One result of the FSPI consolidation process conducted during 1997-1999, was the formation of new local peasant organizations at provincial, district or inter-district levels, such as the Acehese Peasant's Association (Permata, Perhimpunan Masyarakat Tani Aceh); West Sumatra Peasant's Union (SPSB, Serikat Petani Sumatra Barat); South Sumatra Peasant's Union (SPSS, Serikat Petani Sumatera Selatan); the Jambi Peasant's Union (Pertajam, Persatuan Petani Jambi); Bengkulu Peasant Union (STaB, Serikat Tani Bengkulu); Lampung Peasant's Union (SPL, Serikat Petani Lampung); Central Java Peasant's Union (SP-Jateng, Serikat Petani Jawa Tengah) and the East Java Peasant's Union (SPJT, Serikat Petani Jawa Timur). These organizations together with BPRPI, SPSU and SPJB (which already existed) then

³⁴ Persyarikatan Rakyat was a network of Sumatra-based people's organizations (*organisasi rakyat*) created by activists of the Indonesian Foundation for Legal Aid and Education (YPBHI, Yayasan Pendidikan Bantuan Hukum Indonesia) network. I will explore this network more in Chapter VIII because of its relationship with Bengkulu-based movement organizations.

³⁵ ORI was a new creation of the network of Sumatra-based people's organizations after the 'political disappointment' of some Persyarikatan Rakyat activists, especially those from North Sumatra and Bengkulu, only a year after the creation of this network. I will explore more about ORI in Chapter VIII also because of its relations with Bengkulu-based movement organizations.

³⁶ See also Perhimpunan Penggerak Advokasi Kerakyatan untuk Keadilan Sosial 2004.

became the first members of FSPI recorded at the 1st FSPI Congress in Medan from 22-25 February 1999.

It seems that Henry Saragih's circle of activists felt great disappointment towards KPA's leaders and Java based activists who founded the 1993 Lembang Meeting. Efforts to 'be free' from the shadow of the 1993 Lembang Meeting is also reflected on various documents on the formation of the FSPI. Neither the 1998 FSPI Declaration nor the FSPI Statute produced by three national congresses (1999, 2003 and 2007) acknowledges the results of the 1993 Lembang Meeting, or mentions that the formation of FSPI is a continuation of the agreement among the activists and peasant movement groups who gathered together at that 1993 meeting (see *Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia* 1998, 1999, 2004; Panitia Kongres I FSPI 1999; also www.spi.or.id).

At the 1st Congress of FSPI in 1999, which recorded 11 local peasant organizations as members, the position of Saragih, SPSU leaders and other Sumatra-based activists were strengthened in the FSPI leadership. This was done through a revision in the FSPI Statute.³⁷ Saragih's determination to maintain his leadership of the FSPI was increased when the 4th Congress of La Via Campesina (held in Sao Paolo, Brazil in 2005) decided to move its international secretariat from Honduras to Indonesia. Saragih, as the leader of FSPI, and the only Indonesian organization member of La Via Campesina, was then appointed as International Coordinator of this peasant movement organization.³⁸ Along with his new position, the FSPI secretariat, originally based in Medan, moved to Jakarta.

³⁷ One SPP (Serikat Petani Pasundan) delegate in this congress thought that the revision of the FSPI Statute was part of efforts to strengthen Henry's position in the FSPI leadership (personal communication with Jack, Deputy General Secretary of SPP, 15 March 2003).

³⁸ FSPI was registered as a Via Campesina member just after its formation in 1998. Before that SPSU was Saragih's organization that registered as member of Via Campesina since 1996, after he attended the 2nd International Peasant Conference of Via Campesina in Mexico. Formation of FSPI led to the replacement of SPSU as a registered member of Via Campesina.

Three new FSPI members including the SPP (Serikat Petani Pasundan) were recorded at the 2nd Congress of FSPI in 2003.³⁹ SPP's membership of this federation actually made it easier for FSPI to claim every big mass peasant mobilization conducted by SPP was also a mobilization of FSPI peasants. As already explored above, on the one hand SPP became an organization in which FSPI could depend on to mobilize thousands peasants in any mobilization actions conducted in Jakarta. On the other hand, when SPP was involved in a joint mass mobilization or conducted its own mass protests either in Jakarta or other part of West Java, FSPI could easily raise its own flag and claim the mobilization as an FSPI mass protest action.⁴⁰ This kind of relationship between SPP and FSPI was also helpful to the national secretariat of FSPI in its campaign at the international level.

At the 2nd Congress, new preconditions for membership were also decided. FSPI no longer accepted membership of local peasant organizations that only operated in one or even several local communities. Now local peasant organizations that wished to become members of FSPI had to be operating at the provincial or inter-districts level and have a minimum of 25 local peasants groups at the village level. This was the requirement for FSPI 'regular membership', while 'full membership' of this national federation required a minimum of 50 local organizations or peasant groups at village level (article 3 and 4 'Anggaran Rumah Tangga FSPI', Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 2004: 19-20). FSPI and its activists encouraged local peasant organizations that could not fulfill this requirement, to join with other organizations in their region or province that have already become member of FSPI.⁴¹ Using these regulations, key activists of the FSPI began to steer the federation towards becoming a well-structured organization operating from village to national level, away from the

³⁹ These three organizations are the Federation of East Java Peasant Unions (FSPJT, Federasi Serikat Petani Jawa Timur), Pasundan Peasant Union (SPP) and Banten Peasant Union (SP-Banten, Serikat Petani Banten).

⁴⁰ See *Pembaruan Tani* 28, June 2006, and 32, October 2006.

⁴¹ See *Pembaruan Tani* 17, July-Agustus 2005; 26, April 2006; 29, July 2006; 36, February 2007; and www.spi.or.id/?p=1918.

'loose-coalition' structure of some local peasant organizations operating at national level only.

Besides the new regulation made only three new local organizations eligible for membership, two existing members that were actually involved since the beginning of FSPI, resigned from this federation before the 2nd Congress was held in 2003.⁴² These two organizations were the Bengkulu Peasants Union (STaB, Serikat Tani Bengkulu), which voluntarily resigned in 2000, and the Struggle Front of Penunggu People of Indonesia (BPRPI), which was forced to resign just a couple months before the 2nd Congress of FSPI.

STaB's leaders had always said that their organization and the Bengkulu Legal Aid Office (KBH-B, Kantor Bantuan Hukum Bengkulu)⁴³ had similar struggle objectives with the FSPI (Serikat Tani Bengkulu 2000). The main reason for resigning from FSPI was that Bengkulu activists 'felt offended' when the latter's activists including Henry Saragih, visited a STaB base in Talang Empat sub-district (Rejang Lebong district) of Bengkulu to discuss educational actions plans without coordinating the meeting with the STaB leadership first, except the STaB General Secretary, Zainan Sagiman, who was actually Head of the FSPI Peasant's Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Petani).

In a political consensus built among KBH-Bengkulu core activists and their partner people's organization, all matters related to political education, as well as organizing and consolidation of the movement, should be discussed beforehand by the 'Komite Pendidikan' (education committee). So Saragih's visit to a STaB base although facilitated by Zainan, was not following this local 'rule'. As the consequence, Bengkulu activists considered FSPI was trying to intervene in their movement consolidation and cadre building by redirecting

⁴² That's why only 12 local peasant organizations were registered as FSPI members at the 2nd Congress held in 2003.

⁴³ The relationship between KBH-B and STaB, including several other people's organizations in Bengkulu, will be explored more in Chapter VIII.

the STaB advocacy work (interview with an ex General Secretary of STaB, Palembang 17 March 2008 [No.: S-11]).⁴⁴

In a second dispute over membership of FSPI, BPRPI was forced to resign from FSPI by FSPI's top leaders in 2002. They accused BPRPI of violating the federation's organizational rules (Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 2002).⁴⁵ They accused BPRPI of becoming a member of another people's movement national coalition, namely the Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN, Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara) (interview with General Secretary of BPRPI, Bandung 14 March 2007 [No.: O-06]).⁴⁶ BPRPI did not defend itself against this accusation at the FSPI Peasant Council meeting, which they could have done according to FSPI's internal procedures. BPRPI did not think a formal complaint against its forced resignation was important, because BPRPI's main aim was to gain power to regain control over the *jaluran* land. Being involved with both FSPI and AMAN was part of this strategy, but without losing their autonomy or independence. 'The forced resignation that was

⁴⁴ STaB's political orientation, cadre building, advocacy and program will be explored in Chapter VIII.

⁴⁵ A letter sent to BPRPI by the FSPI national secretariat stated that the four reasons for BPRPI's forced resignation were: (1) BPRPI had become a member of another national organization (2) BPRPI had not been active in FSPI for a long period (3) there had been no communication between BPRPI and FSPI for a long period, and (4) FSPI was not invited to be involved in BPRPI's activities for a long period. BPRPI was expelled by the national committee of FSPI, in doing so the latter referred to article 5 and 6 of FSPI's membership regulations ('Anggaran Rumah Tangga FSPI').

⁴⁶ AMAN or Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (the Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago, see AMAN 2009), was formed by the Network of Defenders of Indigenous People's Rights (JAPHAMA, Jaringan Pembela Hak-hak Masyarakat Adat), a group of activists and NGOs which had been working on the defense of indigenous peoples' rights in Indonesia since the beginning of the 90s. One of JAPHAMA's efforts to articulate land rights of indigenous people was to put this issue on the KPA struggle agenda at the 1st KPA National Meeting in 1995 (see Chapter VI). KPA was one of the 12 organizations that founded AMAN, established on 17 March 2009 by a decision of the 1st National Congress of Indigenous People of Nusantara held in Jakarta 1999 (about this congress see Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara 1999). In its website it is stated that AMAN is a collective struggling for indigenous people's sovereignty, economic independence and cultural dignity. Nowadays AMAN membership covers around 1,163 indigenous communities across Indonesia. According to AMAN, 'indigenous communities' mean a group of people living their lives based on original cultural heritages in particular geographical areas, according to specific social and cultural values systems, with sovereignty over their land and natural resources, while managing sustainable livelihoods through adat law and institutions (see 'Mengenal AMAN', www.aman.or.id). For further information about demands of indigenous people underpinning AMAN's struggle, see ICRAF, AMAN and FPP 2003a and 2003b. For an analysis of ideas behind movements to revive the rights of indigenous people and how they are articulated in Indonesian politics, see for instance Li 2000 and Davidson and Henley 2007.

pushed through by the FSPI's national committee showed that their intention was to control a movement organization for their own interests (interview with General Secretary of BPRPI, Bandung 14 March 2007 [No.: 0-06]).

In fact, the decision to expel BPRPI from FSPI membership was not consistent with the FSPI's own Statute formulated at the 1st Congress of FSPI in 1999. This 1999 Statute ('Pandangan dan Sikap Dasar' FSPI 1999) stated that 'FSPI is a coalition of peasant mass organizations and indigenous people's organization ...' (article D.1, Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 1999: 7), '... FSPI will endeavour to implement the rights of indigenous people and will pioneer actions for the recognition of these rights ...' (article E.5.a, Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 1999: 11). While in the FSPI Statute approved by the 2nd FSPI Congress 2003 it was stated that one of FSPI's struggle objectives was to '... fight for the recovery and rebuilding of culture and customs of the people ...' (article 10:6, Federasi Petani Seluruh Indonesia 2004: 9).

In this context, one of the reasons why BPRPI joined AMAN was because they want to build their movement network in order to reclaim back some of the *jaluran* land. BPRPI argued the *jaluran* land for which they fought was part of the customary land of the Penunggu Deli Malay communities, which originally came from forestland cleared by the Penunggu people many years before Dutch planters came to eastern Sumatra to build tobacco plantations. The Penunggu indigenous communities lost their land because historically the sultans of Sumatra's East Coast region took advantage of their political position vis-à-vis the Dutch by leasing thousands of hectares of the Penunggu people's lands to the foreign planters who, as we have seen, had then leased strips lying fallow during tobacco crop rotations (*jaluran*) back to local farmers to grow food crops (Nuh 1998 [1993]: 135-137).⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Socio-anthropological and legal-scientific overviews that supported the BPRPI's cultural claim on 'jaluran land' were provided in a seminar held in Medan on 21-22 October 1968. According to several anthropological, agrarian and customary law experts, such as A.P. Parlindungan and Maryam Darus among others, '*jaluran* land' is customary land regulated by living local customs. According to the BAL the Penunggu are the community who have right on that land. For a resume of this seminar

Furthermore FSPI's treatment of BPRPI was unfair because they did not act consistently towards other FSPI members that had joined national organizations. Both SPSU and SPJB are FSPI members and were also members of KPA;⁴⁸ while SPP (another member of FSPI), was a member of both KPA and the Indonesian Peasants Alliance (API, Aliansi Petani Indonesia), and was involved in the formation of the Alliance of Agrarian Reform Movements (AGRA, Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria). According to a BPRPI leader, the real reason FSPI expelled BPRPI was because of internal leadership problems.⁴⁹

In 2002, BPRPI conducted a mass gathering in the Medan town square attended by thousands of members and sympathizers. Some local high-ranking district and provincial level government officers were also invited, including the national leader of AMAN. At this gathering, Abdon Nababan (national leader of AMAN) was given symbolic status as a traditional leader of the Penunggu Malay community. BPRPI want to show local government officials that they had a wide political network in Indonesia, by representing themselves as a member of AMAN, a nation-wide indigenous people movement organization. N

However this event made FSPI leaders unhappy. They felt that BPRPI's involvement as a member of AMAN and the symbolic position of Nababan as a traditional Malay community leader would strengthen AMAN's position and especially Abdon Nababan's political position in North Sumatra. Neither FSPI organizationally nor its leaders were being given similar treatment from BPRPI. FSPI's leaders were also unhappy because BPRPI had mobilized thousands of its members without prior coordination with them (interview with General Secretary of BPRPI, Bandung 14 March 2007 [No.: O-06]).

see Nuh (1998 [1993] 148-150); for more detail about *jaluran* land, BPRPI and its struggle, see Nuh 1998 [1993], Agustono, Tanjung and Suhartono 1997; and Pelzer 1982: 54-57.

⁴⁸ About KPA see Chapter V.

⁴⁹ BPRPI did not support key activists in FSPI who wanted to replace BPRPI's top leader Abah Afnawi Nuh with a younger cadre. Another reason was the rivalry between two top leaders, namely Henry Saragih of FSPI, and Abdon Nababan of AMAN, to win political influence in North Sumatra social movements (interview with the General Secretary of BPRPI, Bandung 14 March 2007 [No.: O-06]).

There was another reason behind the strong FSPI stand against the existence of AMAN. FSPI was not happy with the Indonesian indigenous people's movement criticism of the BAL. In general, indigenous people movements in Indonesia demanded a revision of the BAL because this law has been used to deny customary lands and claims to State Land.⁵⁰ AMAN also criticized 'BAL's conditional recognition of the existence of indigenous people' (article 3).⁵¹ Indigenous people's criticism of the BAL was strong during the 1st KPA National Meeting in 1995⁵² and the 1st Congress of Indigenous People of Nusantara 1999 that resulted the formation of AMAN (see Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara 1999: 4 and 10).⁵³ Therefore we can assume that FPSI regarded BPRPI's involvement in AMAN as a 'violation' of the FSPI position on the BAL. FSPI's position was also reflected in the their demand that the government revitalize the BAL in order to implement genuine agrarian reform (see for instance Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 1999: 1 and Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 2005; *Suara Pembaruan* 24 September 2004; and Saragih 2006).

The BAL is the bottom line for FSPI; there is no compromise about the continuing existence of this law. Agrarian reform implementation in Indonesia

⁵⁰ See chapter V for the views of defenders of indigenous people's rights and their criticism of the BAL.

⁵¹ This article states that '... the implementation of "Hak Ulayat" (the propriety rights to communal property of an Adat Community) and rights similar to that of Adat Communities, in so far as they still exist, shall be adjusted to meet the public interest of both state and nation, based on the unity of the Nation and shall not be in conflict with higher level acts and regulations' ["... *pelaksanaan hak ulayat dan hak-hak yang serupa itu dari masyarakat-masyarakat hukum adat, sepanjang menurut kenyataannya masih ada, harus sedemikian rupa sehingga sesuai dengan kepentingan nasional dan Negara, yang berdasarkan atas persatuan bangsa serta tidak boleh bertentangan dengan undang-undang dan peraturan-peraturan lain yang lebih tinggi*"] (article 3, BAL). English version as in Republic of Indonesia 1960.

⁵² About this National Meeting of KPA see Chapter V.

⁵³ The conference report says 'almost all spokespersons mentioned the destruction of adat institutions all over Nusantara ... Other problems were the plundering of people's rights on natural resources through implementation of the concept of State Land (BAL) and State Forest (Basic Forestry Law (BFL) No. 5/1967)' (Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara 1999: 4). AMAN's strong position on the BAL was later revised by Abdon Nababan, who said that 'the spirit of the 1945 Constitution to restore the original autonomy of indigenous peoples under special status and to provide legal protection for the communal rights for indigenous peoples as stated in the Agrarian Law 1960 was violated. The New Order Regime revived the spirit of colonialism as contained in the Agrarian Law of 1870. Colonial legal concepts can be found in sectoral laws such as those relating to Forestry, Mining, Fisheries, Transmigration and other sectors' (Nababan 2003b: vi).

should be based on this law. If the government wants to implement agrarian reform, FSPI wants the BAL to be revitalized, not revised or replaced, (Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 1999: 1; Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 2005 and 2006; Serikat Petani Indonesia 2007a: 6-7; Serikat Petani Indonesia 2008b: 14; *Suara Pembaruan* 24 September 2004; *Pembaruan Tani* 32, October 2006, p. 13 and 15; and Saragih 2006). The government should re-implement the BAL's mandates as they are. Thus FSPI has challenged all efforts to amend the BAL (Serikat Petani Indonesia 2007a: 7; Husin 2006), either initiated by the government or by non-government organizations (Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 2006; Serikat Petani Indonesia 2007a: 7; personal communication with Henry Saragih, 7 December 2004).⁵⁴

FSPI has also criticized the promulgation of Tap MPR IX/2001 (People's Representative Assembly Decree No. IX/2001 concerning Agrarian Reform and Natural Resources Management, discussed in chapter II). They believed that Tap MPR gave legal support for revision and/or promulgation of new (in their view neoliberal) laws relating to the exploitation of agrarian and natural resources, including revision of the BAL (Saragih 2002; Ya'kub 2005; Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 2006).⁵⁵

In opposition to FSPI were the views of other agrarian reform proponents who saw the promulgation of Tap MPR IX as an effort of social movements to push the implementation of agrarian reform in Indonesia (see for instance KPA 2001, Fauzi 2001, Bachriadi 2001d and 2002a). Neither does FSPI standpoint against the Tap MPR IX/2001 reflect a united perspective of all members. While the FSPI national secretariat strongly rejected the existence of the Tap MPR, its members had mixed views. For example SPJB had a similar perspective to the FSPI national secretariat in refusing accept the Tap MPR IX/2001

⁵⁴ AGRA also has a strong position against government initiatives which they see as the interests of the capitalists to revise the BAL. But AGRA accepts efforts to improve the BAL that involve rural social movement groups. See Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria 2004b: 4 and 2006: 15-16.

⁵⁵ See also Lucas and Warren 2003: 104-122; and Pelusso, Afiff and Rachman 2008: 393-396 that analyse different pro and contra perspectives to the Tap MPR XI/2001 and its relationship to the BAL.

(Serikat Petani Jawa Barat 2002), while SPP clearly stated that promulgation of the Tap MPR IX/2001 was a good outcome for the agrarian reform movements that were fighting for land rights. A leader of SPP (a member of FSPI at that time), in an SPP annual reflection in 2002, said

'Yes, we used this decree to say to local authorities that the state now is willing to implement land reform. In fact, many local authorities did not know about this decree, but they respect it – I am not saying they were afraid – of the 'Burung Garuda' seal printed on the top of the document and the signatures of all the heads of the people's representative body [MPR] at the bottom. We think this decree was really useful and made it easier to expand our land claims and bases' (Ibang Lukmanudin, Deputy General Secretary of SPP at the Annual Reflection Meeting of the SPP, 20 October 2002).⁵⁶

In contrast the FSPI national secretariat argued that promulgation of the Tap MPR IX/2001 was a sign that pro-neoliberal forces were winning in the battle to change the foundation of Indonesian agrarian law. In this context, FSPI leaders saw KPA as one of the main advocates for the Tap MPR IX/2001 promulgation, tending towards neoliberalism (personal communication with Henry Saragih, 7 December 2004⁵⁷; see also Saragih 2002). FSPI core activists believed that their stand in rejecting the Tap MPR was correct, especially after an assessment by agrarian expert Gunawan Wiradi, a member of the KPA Expert Council, that the TAP MPR contained some traps:

⁵⁶ I was at this 2002 SPP Annual Reflection Meeting, and sat beside Ibang, as an invited speaker. Ibang and other SPP leaders expressed these beliefs much later on several occasions. See also Afiff *et al.* 2005: 20; and Peluso, Afiff and Rachman 2008: 394-395 about this grassroots conviction.

⁵⁷ In December 2004, as Coordinator of PERGERAKAN, I met with Henry Saragih at an international forum on agrarian reform, 'Forum Mundial Sobre La Reforma Agraria' in Valencia, Spain (5-8 December 2004), organized by Via Campesina, the Foodfirst Information and Action Network (FIAN), the Third World Forum (TWF) and Comite Catholique contra la Faim et pour le Developpement (CCFD), among others. On the third day of conference we took a special break for couple hours to discuss the differences between KPA and FSPI in order to seek a unified view on Tap MPR IX/2001. My position on the Tap MPR IX/2001 was to support those agrarian reform proponents who saw the Tap MPR as an opportunity to strengthen agrarian reform movements and peasant struggles to gain land (Bachriadi 2002a). Saragih stuck to his argument that the Tap MPR gave an opportunity to, or was even a part of, the neoliberals who wanted to change populist agrarian law and regulations in Indonesia. To some extent I agreed with his argument, but it got more complicated when he asked me to try and change KPA's support to opposition to the Tap MPR. In the end we never reached agreement on the possibility of agrarian reform proponents in Indonesia reaching a compromise position on the Tap MPR.

There are some words or phrases open to different interpretations in the Tap MPR IX, which provide an opportunity for ‘isomorphism’, or the use of wrong logic (*logika sesat*), intentionally ... for instance Article 2 states that ‘Agrarian Reform is a sustainable process’ (*pembaruan agraria sebagai usaha yang berkelanjutan*). This term creates an opportunity for different interpretations ... [it] provides an opportunity to make piecemeal or makeshift reform (*gerakan tambal sulam*), which possibly goes in a different direction [to what is intended] ... [in] Article 6 about revoking, revision and/or replacement of previous laws ... the BAL is not mentioned ... this means someone can say that the BAL is one of the laws that ‘do not have the same intent/intention as this MPR decree’, and therefore should be revoked... there is also the opportunity to interpret the words ‘will regulate later’, which means to formulate a totally new and different agrarian law... (Wiradi 2002: 1-2).

In fact, prior to the People’s Representative Assembly (MPR) session in 2001, FSPI was supportive and even formulated its own draft TAP MPR on agrarian reform (Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 2001) in response a resolution of the Cibubur Conference (2001). As one of its organizers, the conference produced a resolution that mentioned the need to pressure the 2001 MPR session on agrarian reform.⁵⁸ But FSPI formulated its draft and then lobbied MPR members without collaboration with other social movement organizations; this was different from KPA’s advocacy campaign to pressure the

⁵⁸ The title of the Cibubur resolution is ‘Resolusi Konferensi Pembaruan Agraria untuk Perlindungan dan Pemenuhan Hak Asasi Petani, untuk Panitia Ad Hoc II Badan Pekerja MPR RI, mengenai Desakan Pembuatan Ketetapan MPR RI tentang Pembaruan Agraria’ (‘Resolution of the Conference on Agrarian Reform to Protect and Fulfill the Rights of Peasants, for the 2nd Ad Hoc Committee of the Working Group of the People’s Representative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia [MPR RI], concerning the Demand to Produce the MPR’s Decree on Agrarian Reform’), dated 20 April 2001. See Panitia Konferensi Nasional Pembaruan Agraria untuk Perlindungan dan Pemenuhan Hak Azasi Petani 2001: v; and Bachriadi 2001d: 54-56 for the complete text of this resolution. This conference was a joint initiative of the following organizations: KPA, FSPI, the National Commission of Human Rights (Komnas HAM, Komisi Nasional Hak Azasi Manusia); Bina Desa (InDHRRA); the Institute for Integrated Rural and Agricultural Studies (ELSPAT, Lembaga Studi Pedesaan dan Pertanian Terpadu); the Indonesian Peasant Advocacy Network (Jaringan Advokasi ‘Petani Indonesia’); the Farmer’s Association for Integrated Pest Control (IPPHT, Ikatan Petani untuk Pemberantasan Hama Terpadu); the Center for Agricultural Policy Studies (CAPS); the Center for National Democratic Studies (CNDS); the Humanitarian Volunteer Team (TRK, Tim Relawan Kemanusiaan); Akatiga Foundation and the International NGOs Forum for Indonesian Development (INFID). The conference was held in Cibubur on Jakarta’s metropolitan periphery, from 17-20 April 2001, and attended by more than 300 hundred peasants and NGOs delegates. This conference produced nine resolutions including support for agrarian courts, an end to arbitrary arrests of peasants, opposition to liberalization of agriculture, opposition to genetic engineering, and opposition to the BAL revisions proposed by the National Land Agency (BPN, Badan Pertanahan Nasional).

MPR that was conducted in cooperation with other movement groups.⁵⁹ So the FSPI proposal was not well articulated during the 2001 MPR Assembly meetings, the MPR had more discussions on the proposals presented intensively by the 'Coalition for Advocacy on the Tap MPR' in which KPA was a member.⁶⁰

Actually FSPI's refusal to be part of the initiative coordinated by KPA to pressure the MPR to produce the Tap MPR on Agrarian Reform, occurred during KPA's workshop to formulate a draft Tap MPR in Bandung.⁶¹ Besides criticism of the workshop's conclusion, which according to FSPI was biased towards neoliberal interests and ideology, Saragih criticized the invitation of pro-natural resources management groups and politicians that he considered were also pro-capitalist natural resource management and exploitation.⁶² Saragih did not understand why KPA invited these people whose commitment to agrarian reform was also not clear. Henry also questioning 'Why KPA conducted this workshop with financial assistance from US-funded organizations and programs?'⁶³ (personal communication with Henry Saragih, 7 December 2004).

In other words, FSPI criticism of KPA's initiative, which later led to FSPI's rejection of the Tap MPR IX/2001, was the involvement of several institutions (WWF, KEHATI Foundation and USAID-BSP) whose commitment to agrarian reform was in doubt, and the acceptance of US funding sources. It is clear since

⁵⁹ See Lucas and Warren 2003 for details about KPA initiatives and the coalition before and during the MPR 2001 General Assembly.

⁶⁰ I was part of KPA's advocacy team at that time.

⁶¹ The National Seminar and Workshop 'Arah Kebijakan Nasional mengenai Tanah and Sumber Daya Alam Lainnya', organized by KSPA-Pokja PSDA-and KPA, Bandung, 20-23 Augustus 2001.

⁶² It seems FSPI considered several groups likes the Biodiversity Foundation (Yayasan KEHATI, Keanekaragaman Hayati), WWF, and USAID-BSP (Biodiversity Support Program) as groups of NGOs that support the deep ecology perspective on nature conservation, which denied the existence of local people in conservation activities, particularly in national park areas. While they also questioned the presence at the seminar of Vincent Radja, a member of the national parliament from PDI-P, who became a lawyer of the Indonesian Mining Association. See also Lucas and Warren 2003.

⁶³ KPA got financial support mainly from the CSSP (Civil Society Support and Strengthening Program), a USAID program in Indonesia, to conduct this workshop in a five star hotel in Bandung.

its formation that FSPI has criticized institutions that received US government funding, directly or indirectly, or funding from US-based agencies such as Ford and Rockefeller Foundations (see Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 2004: 54). FSPI considered the US, Britain and Japan as imperialist and neocolonialist countries⁶⁴; while they considered that the Ford Foundation was an imperialist instrument which has created poverty and suffering for many small peasants in Indonesia, especially during its support of the green revolution program of the 70s⁶⁵ (Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 1999: 5). It also provided scholarships for Indonesian academics, which then went on to become important in the authoritarian New Order as technocrats, otherwise known as the 'Berkeley Mafia'.⁶⁶

Looking back on the FSPI-BPRPI relationship and the forced resignation of BPRPI because its involvement in AMAN in 2002 (as described above) we

⁶⁴ FSPI expressed it publicly, for instance, in a series of protest actions conducted in Jakarta on the end of August until mid of September 2006. In 2006 FSPI and several organizations formed a coalition, namely GERAK LAWAN (Gerakan Rakyat Melawan Neokolonialisme or People Movement against Neocolonialism), to organized a series of protests actions against neoliberal states, institutions and events. The GERAK LAWAN coalition consists of organizations such as the Indonesian Association for Legal Aid and Human Rights (PBHI, Perhimpunan Bantuan Hukum dan Hak Asasi Manusia Indonesia); FSPI; Anti Debt Coalition (KAU, Koalisi Anti Utang); Indonesian Friend of the Earth (WALHI, Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia); Jabotabek Workers Union (SBJ, Serikat Buruh Jabotabek); Indonesian Youth Struggle Front (FPPI, Front Perjuangan Pemuda Indonesia); The Study Action Institute for Indonesian Democracy (LS-ADI, Lembaga Studi-Aksi untuk Demokrasi Indonesia); the Student Committee Against Imperialism (KMAI, Komite Mahasiswa Anti Imperialisme) and the Laksi 31 Student Action Front (KAM LAKSI 31, Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Laksi 31). See *Pembaruan Tani* no. 31, September 2006, pp 8-9 about GERAK LAWAN and FSPI protest actions against imperialism and neocolonialism.

⁶⁵ Saragih mentioned this matter frequently in our discussions in the early '90s. He and his groups in FSPI even mentioned their dislike of the Ford Foundation (which they said had an important role in marginalizing small peasants in Indonesia while supporting the New Order's authoritarian state) to Prof. Ben White of the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) when Prof. White visited Indonesia for a conference on 'Land and Natural Resources Control in the Changing Indonesia: Questioning the Answers' held in Jakarta, 11-13 October 2004 (for the proceedings of this conference, see Kemala Foundation 2005). This conference was support by the Ford Foundation and the Kemala Foundation, a successor institution to the US funded project in Indonesia previously named the Biodiversity Support Program (BSP) Kemala. Saragih and his supporters were not happy with the attendance of Prof. White who is well known with his criticism of the New Order's rural development policies, at this conference (personal communication with Ben White, Jakarta, 11 October 2004). About the BSP-Kemala see again note 85-86 in Chapter V; about the role of Ford Foundation in the green revolution program in Asia and in particularly in Indonesia, see Ford Foundation 2003: 74-76; Cleaver, Jr. 1972; Franke 1974; Parayil 2003; Djurfeld and Jirstroöm 2005; and White 2005: 122.

⁶⁶ About the 'Mafia Berkeley' see Ransom 1970; Milne 1982; Tamara 1997; Hadiz 2004; Djurfeld and Jirstroöm 2005: 49; Irwan 2005: 42; and Ford Foundation 2003: 126-128.

can assume that its problems with AMAN began since the beginning FSPI was not happy with the formation of AMAN. This was not only because of AMAN's critical position on the BAL. FSPI also disliked AMAN because it was founded during the 1st Congress of Indigenous People of Nusantara in 1999, a congress that was supported financially by the US funded project BSP (Biodiversity Support Program) Kemala and the Ford Foundation. In a similar way, FSPI's criticism of KPA is also based on two problems: the first is that KPA 'betrayed the idea of building a strong national peasant organization'; and the second is 'KPA tended to be neoliberals with its proposal to revise the BAL'.⁶⁷ When KPA became involved in the International Land Coalition (ILC), a program of IFAD (International Food and Agricultural Development), half-funded by the World Bank, FSPI's assumption that a neoliberal bias was developed in KPA became stronger.⁶⁸ In addition FSPI said KPA had no empathy with the suffering of small peasants in Indonesia caused by the implementation of the green revolution, because KPA received funds regularly from the Ford Foundation and other organizations that used USAID funds⁶⁹ (personal communication with Saragih, 7 December 2004). However, except for BPRPI that became a member of AMAN and KPA, FSPI did not require other members such as SPSU,

⁶⁷ About the KPA's effort to revise the BAL see again Chapter V.

⁶⁸ ILC was funded in 1995 and KPA has been a member of this international coalition since 1998. There are three categories of ILC membership: peasant organizations, NGOs, and multilateral institution that mean the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the UN World Food Program (WFP) and the European Commission also can be members of ILC. From the ideological perspective on agrarian reform, ILC's members are diverse, from those that are anti, those that are pro market-oriented land policies. Via Campesina is not member of ILC, but several of its members, including the Landless People Movement (LPM) of South Africa and a coalition of the Central American peasants (ASOCODE, Asociación de Organizaciones Campesinas Centroamericanas para la Cooperacion y el Desarrollo) also became members of the ILC (See Borras Jr. 2004: 19-21). According to Bruce Moore, former director of ILC, the accusation that ILC is controlled by the World and dominated by the neoliberal perspective is not correct, because many ILC members are anti-World Bank policies, while ILC strategies and programs are formulating by all members at the ILC's annual general assembly. The World Bank does not fund ILC programs; it supports ILC's overhead costs only (personal communication with Bruce Moore, 10 February 2005).

⁶⁹ Although not KPA's only funding agency, the Ford Foundation supported KPA's activities since 1999 to 2002. Ford's financial support to KPA was between 500 million to 1.5 billion rupiah annually. In 1999-2002, KPA was supported also by INPI-Pact with a grant of around 1.3 billion rupiah over three years. INPI-Pact (Indonesian NGOs Partnership Initiative) is a USAID funded organization operating in Indonesia since 1998. It was established to provide support to NGOs involved in education and training on how democracy should operate at the grassroots level.

SPJB, SPP, SPSS, SPKS, and SPM to resign because they are members of KPA and were probably involved in KPA's programs and activities.

Prior to its 3rd Congress (held in Wonosobo, Central Java, 2-5 December 2007) FSPI membership increased with the involvement of several new local peasant organizations such as the West Nusa Tenggara Peasant's Union (SERTA NTB, Serikat Tani Nusa Tenggara Barat); Sikka District Peasant's Union (SPKS, Serikat Petani Kabupaten Sikka) and Manggarai Peasant's Union (SPM, Serikat Petani Manggarai) of East Nusa Tenggara province (NTT). By 2007, FSPI's member consisted of 15 self-proclaimed local peasant unions operating at provincial, district or inter-district level. But the change of organization format from a federative to unitary organization which occurred at the 3rd Congress, forced some members to withdraw or be declared inactive members. SPP is the one that clearly declared its resignation from FSPI membership during the 3rd FSPI Congress; while SPKS and SPM stated they would rethink their involvement in FSPI, finally resigning several months later (Focus Group Discussion, Bandung 14 December 2006; interview with SPM leader, Bandung 10 March 2007 [No.: H-03]). Even SPJB, which had been involved in FSPI since the 1st Congress in 1999 and was referred as a 'role model' by some FSPI activists, was declared a non-active member of FSPI for an unspecified period (interview with Chairperson of SPJB, Bandung 10 February 2009 [No.: O-06]).

Since the 3rd Congress in 2007 FSPI's name was changed to the Indonesian Peasant's Union (SPI, Serikat Petani Indonesia). This name change reflected the change in status from a federation to a unitary organization just mentioned. For instance, SPSU and SERTA NTB no longer exist as individual member organizations; their names have been changed to SPI North Sumatra and SPI West Nusa Tenggara provincial branches. A ranked organizational structure was fully established through this merger, so it becomes a single peasant organization operating from local (village) to national level under the same name. Key activists of SPI believe this will 'increase the peasants' bargaining position' (*Pembaruan Tani* 47, January 2008, p. 5).

The main reason for members (like SPP, SPKS, and SPM) withdrawing from FSPI after its 3rd Congress was they did not want their history and local organizational dynamics to be buried following a merger (Focus Group Discussion, Bandung, 14 December 2006; interview with SPM leader, Bandung 10 March 2007 [No.: O-03]). Moreover, for an organization like SPP that claims a long history of involvement in the political dynamics of social movements in Indonesia at both local and national levels, the merger will wipe out their pride and identity as Sundanese peasants in the social movement history in Indonesia. SPP leaders believed that merger is only the strategy of those FSPI key activists who currently hold the national leadership, in order to control peasant movements in Indonesia, especially to control big peasant unions like SPP (Interview with General Secretary of SPP, Bandung 10 April 2008 [No.: P-01]). For this reason SPP activists are not willing to allow the organization and the mass peasant movement they have consolidated over a long period to 'fall' into the hands of movement elites within the FSPI (interviews with three SPP leaders, Bandung 10 April 2008, and 20 July 2008 [No.: P-01, P-10, P-11]).

For both SPP and SPM leaders, the two organizations which withdrew from FSPI, an organizational merger is not the best solution for strengthening this national peasant union. According to them it will do the opposite, namely weaken the movement's consolidation by increasing friction among activists and pro agrarian reform movement organizations (Focus Group Discussion, Bandung, 14 December 2006). On the other hand, for Henry Saragih, the top leader of FSPI, the merger will resolve 'FSPI's weakness in the face of external challenges because the former federative form of the organization was weak and cannot create a good working rhythm for resistance' (*Pembaruan Tani* 47, January 2008, p. 3); whilst the need is 'for a flexible, fast and appropriate movement organization for quick decision making, a guiding organization' (Serikat Petani Indonesia 2007b: 4).

In other words, Saragih is saying here that a federative format of the organization is not appropriate anymore in the current social and political

context. 'Our preference for a federative peasant organization', when FSPI was formed in 1998, was based on 'the political situation, our innermost feeling (*'suasana batin'*) and the existence of exploited rural villagers at that time' that led to the choice of a federative format (Serikat Petani Indonesia 2007b: 3). But the federative model was followed for several other reasons as well, such as: the strong spirit of localism and 'anti-central government' feeling encouraged by a dualistic mode of thinking about center-periphery (*'pusat-daerah'*), which developed a lot in the post-Soeharto period. The reasons for this include firstly to reduce the impact of possibly forced liquidation by the regime; secondly the difficulties in doing social movement consolidation because 'movement elites' representing mainly NGO's activists cannot unite; and, thirdly strong NGO domination of people movements which are still strong as well (Serikat Petani Indonesia 2007b: 3-4).

Since its formation, the FSPI elite had been strongly critical of the performance of NGOs, even though one of its important members, the SPSU, was founded through the advocacy of an NGO from which some FSPI key activists originally came, namely the Sintesa Foundation.⁷⁰ This criticism is related to the view that one of the threats to the existence of FSPI is that 'NGOs by their work tend to weaken the existence of peasant organizations' and 'NGOs, either consciously or by necessity, work for the interests of neo-liberals' (Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 2004: 54).⁷¹ In the FSPI perspective, the tendency of NGO's to represent or treat peasants as 'their partners' made peasants and their organizations get used to treating activists who are not members of their local organizations as 'the outsiders'.⁷² To some extent, both

⁷⁰ Although some leaders of the SPSU, Sintesa and other activists within its circle are now developing their NGOs networks more through the formation of a NGOs consortium namely KONPORT (Konsorsium Pendukung Gerakan Organisasi Tani), in order to provide support for SPSU's programs and activities. About this see note 28 above.

⁷¹ A general but critical overview about the phenomena of NGOs as agents of global forces that aimed to destroy or reduce the pressures of people movements against capitalism, colonialism and imperialism is provided in Hanlon 1991, Tandon 1996, Petras 1999, and Hearn 2007.

⁷² This view still reflects the general overview developed several years before the formation of FSPI, when some activists initiated a reflective forum on organizing peasant resistance against land

leaders and members of the national secretariat of FSPI frequently received this treatment from local peasant organizations even though they were members of the federation (Serikat Petani Indonesia 2007b: 4).

In a reflection on its 9 years existence (1998 to 2007), FSPI concluded there were basic weaknesses that should be addressed to make this organization stronger. These weaknesses, contained in a resolution of the 3rd FSPI Congress in 2007 (Serikat Petani Indonesia 2007b: 4-5), are as follows:

- (1) Campaign actions conducted either at local or national level are not integrated, this creates difficulties in developing public opinion, or uniting to pressure external elements to follow peasant's demands. This is mainly caused by the use of different symbols and names of organizations.
- (2) Relationships between the federation's organizers, the elites, and its members tend to reject an authoritative position of national leaders at the provincial level or below. On the contrary, organization members and leaders considered the national leaders and organizers of the federation to be partners.
- (3) Existing organizational gaps from the local to the provincial levels facilitate differentiation, but do not unite diversity;
- (4) The outsider's view that FSPI is not united makes it easy to influence and/or divide the organization;
- (5) The federation's leaders and organizers have difficulties being involved in agrarian conflict resolution processes of specific land disputes in particular regions, because the government and the police considered FSPI as 'partners of the peasants', not 'representative of the peasants'.

The appearance of different political parties down to the village level; the emergence of terms like 'democracy', 'anti centralism', 'pluralism' and 'human rights' which were not really put into practice; and direct aid to farmers, these

conflicts that led to the initiation of the 1993 Lembang Meeting. See again Chapter V, particularly section 5.1.

things were considered also as external threats to peasants especially to their political unity. These threats, as well as the government giving more facilities to various companies to control natural resources and agricultural production, will increase the likelihood that neoliberalism and globalism will continue to control Indonesia's natural wealth and oppress its people, the majority of whom are farmers (Serikat Petani Indonesia 2007b and 2007c). The federative organizational model is not strong enough to unify peasants against such threats.

Besides uniting the peasants by changing the organizational structure, FPSI (SPI) emphasized the need for a national people's movement to strengthen the sovereignty of the people (Serikat Petani Indonesia 2007c and 2007d). In order to support national unity, a 'pioneer organization' (*organisasi pelopor*) with good leadership was needed for new ideas and social action (Serikat Petani Indonesia 2007d: 3). This breaking of new ground (*kepeloporan*) must come from SPI, because the politics of national unity means unifying oppressed levels of society, all progressively minded groups must oppose neo-colonialism and imperialism (Serikat Petani Indonesia 2007d: 3).

As noted earlier, with the consolidation of peasant organizations carried out at the 3rd FPSI Congress in 2007, member organizations lost their local independence. FPSI members are tied to administrative regions similar to government administrative regions such as province, kabupaten and village. And after the consolidation of member organizations, SPSI administrations existed only in 9 provinces, namely North Sumatra, West Sumatra, Jambi, Lampung, Banten, Yogyakarta, Central Java, East Java and West Nusa Tenggara (see 'Sekilas tentang SPI' in www.spi.or.id). The withdrawals of SPKS and SPM from NTT province and SPP from West Java, making SPJB non-active, and the resignation of STaB, meant that SPI had no branches in West Java, NTT or Bengkulu. Aceh no longer had an SPI administration either, because PERMATA's membership consolidation was weak.

6.2.1 FSPI Struggle Issues and Agrarian Reform Constellations

In principle the concept of agrarian reform espoused by FSPI is not all that different from KPA's concept.⁷³ As can be seen from the 1999 FSPI document 'Basic Views':

Agrarian reform is a corrective effort to restructure unequal ownership, control, allocation and management of agrarian resources [and] to create new structures based on principles of agrarian justice... Agrarian reform starts with a program of land reform...[and] should be followed by raising peasants' capacity through education, provision of credit, ownership of agricultural technology, a fair trading system, all of which will support the growth of mass peasant organizations and cooperatives as well as other infrastructure... the ideal of agrarian reform is based on the sovereignty of the people, not on the sovereignty of the state. The people's sovereignty places great importance on cultural diversity, human rights, democracy, ecological sustainability, and gender equality (Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 1999: 6-7).⁷⁴

Apart from agrarian reform, FSPI's other campaigns were on the issues of rights of peasants, food sovereignty, and anti-neoliberalism. Rights of peasants were taken up by FSPI to become an international campaign with Via Campesina. The issue of food sovereignty originated from groups in Via Campesina and loudly adopted in Indonesia by FSPI.⁷⁵

⁷³ On KPA's concept on agrarian reform see Chapter V section 5.2.

⁷⁴ See the 2007 FSPI/SPI 3rd Congress resolution concerning agrarian reform and village development (Serikat Petani Indonesia 2007a: 6-7), which gives a summary of resolutions from previous congresses on the same issues.

⁷⁵ Since the end of the 1990's, 'food sovereignty' has been an issue for pro-peasant groups, as well as anti-neoliberalism groups. In Indonesia, apart from FSPI, a coalition of NGOs called the People's Committee for Food Sovereignty (KRKP, Komite Rakyat untuk Kedaulatan Pangan) is an organization that was focused on promoting this issue. According to KRKP, there are four pillars of food sovereignty, i.e.: Agrarian reform, sustainable agriculture, fair trade, and local food. For KRKP's advocacy on this issue see www.krkp.or

6.2.1.1 Agrarian Reform, Food Sovereignty and Anti-Neoliberalism

FSPI (SPI)⁷⁶, the Indonesian member of Via Campesina, has always used the food sovereignty issue in its agrarian reform campaigns in Indonesia, in the same way that Via Campesina has used the issue in its campaign at the global level, especially to counter the food security issue.

Originally food sovereignty was an alternative concept launched and funded by Via Campesina at the 1996 World Food Summit in Rome in order to challenge both neoliberal and developmentalist concepts of food security as understood (and reinforced) by multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). SPI rejected FAO's concept of food security, which it said 'had failed to overcome the threat of hunger in the world, and only enriched transnational corporations and people living in developed countries' (Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 2003: 6).

As a concept created by a group of social movements, the principle of food sovereignty opposes neo-liberal politics and the corporate-based food system. As an alternative, it offers a strategy to resist and dismantle an inequitable and unsustainable food system that perversely results in both chronic under nutrition and rapidly rising obesity (Forum for Food Sovereignty 2007b); and to reclaim back democracy in localized food systems (Windfurh and Josen 2005). The idea of food sovereignty reaffirms the rights of people to their autonomy in deciding what they wish to produce and consume (Menezes 2001: 30).

Among other things, this concept prioritizes local agricultural production, safeguarding the right of farmers to produce food and ensuring the rights of populations to make agricultural policy choices (Baumüller and Tansey 2008: 176). It includes the right to protect and regulate national agricultural

⁷⁶ Hereafter I will use the name 'SPI' to follow the change in FSPI organizational structure that occurred since 2003.

production and to shield the domestic market from the dumping of agricultural surpluses and low-price imports from other countries.⁷⁷ According to Schanbacher, the original definition of food sovereignty has evolved since the movement's official inception in 1996, but the core elements have remained the same (Schanbacher 2010: 54). The current meaning of food sovereignty formulated by the 2007 Forum for Food Sovereignty⁷⁸ is as follow:

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers. Food sovereignty prioritizes local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal - fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just income to all peoples and the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage our lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social classes and generations (La Via Campesina 2008: 2).⁷⁹

In Indonesia, SPI said its purpose 'in promoting the idea of food sovereignty was to produce and supply enough food for Indonesia and

⁷⁷ In a Forum for Food Sovereignty held in Nyeleni, Mali, 2007, hundreds of delegates representing rural communities and NGOs from 98 countries, formulated six pillars of food sovereignty, i.e. (1) a focus on food for people (2) value food providers (3) localize food systems (4) puts control of food production in local hands (5) builds knowledge and skills and (6) works with nature. The Forum urged that these six pillars be incorporated into any sets of policies or practices that aim to realize food sovereignty (La Via Campesina 2008: 5-6; also Baumüller and Tansey 2008: 177-178). Compare these six the four pillars of food sovereignty proposed by the Indonesian Coalition for Food Sovereignty (KRKP) as mentioned in note 75 above.

⁷⁸ Around 600 delegates from 98 countries representing rural communities, rural social movement groups, and NGOs attended this forum to formulate principles of affirmative action on food sovereignty. Via Campesina, ROPPA (Network of Farmers and Producers Organizations of West Africa), the World March of Women, the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers, the World Forum of Fisher Peoples, the International Planning Committee of Food Sovereignty, NGO Members of the Food Sovereignty Network, and Friends of the Earth were among the organizers of this forum.

⁷⁹ For comparison see NGO/CSO Forum for Food Sovereignty 2002 and Menezes 2001: 29-30.

overcome world hunger' (Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 2003: 6). SPI rejected Indonesian and global governance institutions' 'symptomatic' approach to overcome hunger and food shortages, which means actions were taken when the food was already in short supply and hunger had already occurred, rather than strengthening local people's capacity to maintain sustainability of food production.

SPI was also highly critical of governments that provided facilities for the development of agribusiness crops, an industry that has grown very quickly in developing countries, and has threatened the ability of communities to produce food. On the other hand food imports, designed to overcome food supply shortages, have in fact lead to more free trade. SPI is convinced that this process is breaking down sustainable food production, i.e. the ability of local communities to produce food in a sustainable way (Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 2003). According to SPI food security cannot be created if communities do not have food sovereignty (Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 2003: 5). According to Menezes, 'in itself, food sovereignty is not sufficient to guarantee food security, although it is acknowledged as a vital element' (2001: 33).

SPI rejects food imports especially by Indonesia, because they argue that such a policy impoverishes local farmers who cannot compete with imported food products, which have very low import duties, not to mention the dumping of food at low prices that occurs (Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 2003: 3-4). The role of institutions that support neoliberal concepts about food such as the World Bank, the IMF and WTO play an important role by putting pressure on the governments of developing countries, including Indonesia, to implement free trade policies that are harmful for farmers (Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 2003: 4 and Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia 2004: 47-48).⁸⁰ SPI

⁸⁰ See also Amang and Sawit 2000, Arifin *et al.* 2001, Sawit 2006 and 2007, and Bachriadi 2005c for extensive discussions on this topic of basic food commodities such as rice and sugar in Indonesia; while Rachbini 2000 explains the impacts of the IMF's Letters of Intent on Indonesian agriculture. La Via Campesina 2006 has provided several Asia-Pacific analyses of rice production and trade from a peasant's food sovereignty perspective. Rossett 2006a provides good critical analysis about the

has therefore rejected the policy of promoting food imports, which has weakened food sovereignty in Indonesia, particularly for farmers and other poor people.

In 2005 SPI protested over government policy to allow BULOG (Badan Urusan Logistik, Logistics Management Board), to import rice. This protest was supported by other organizations, including KPA, PPNSI (Perhimpunan Petani Nelayan Seluruh Indonesia), KRKP (Koalisi Rakyat untuk Kedaulatan Pangan), IGJ (Institute for Global Justice), and FPPI (Front Perjuangan Pemuda Indonesia) (*Tempo Interaktif* 17 November 2005, *DetikNews* 17 November 2005, *Pembaruan Tani* 22, November-December 2005, pp. 4-8). This was a 'warming up' action (*pemanasan*) conducted by SPI as part of its new role as a member and coordinator of Via Campesina, to protest against the WTO meeting in Hong Kong, 13-18 December 2005.⁸¹

At the mass action organized by the 'Koalisi Rakyat Menggugat' in April 2006, in which the majority of the protesters were SPP members,⁸² the protesters' two demands were the cessation of food imports and the implementation of food sovereignty. A second big demonstration with thousands protesters, demanding the cessation of rice imports and the implementation of agrarian reform, took place on 19 September 2006 as part of the commemoration of Peasants Day, 24 September (*Pembaruan Tani* 32, October 2006, p. 4-5 and 10). In between these big demonstrations, around 20 people organized by SPI conducted protests in front of the BULOG office in Jakarta on 7 September 2006. They symbolically burnt unhusked rice (*gabah*) to protest against the BULOG's plan to import 200,000 tons of rice in October 2006, in order to meet domestic needs in the following months.

mistaken role of the WTO to regulate free trade in agricultural commodities that has negative impacts not only on food trading, but also on the agriculture, ecosystem, rural livelihoods, and traditional cultures of the world's majority communities, namely rural people.

⁸¹ Around twenty peasants from Indonesia coordinated by SPI together with other Indonesian labour activists and anti-neoliberal groups were involved in this global protest against WTO. See *Pembaruan Tani* 22 Supplement, November-December 2005.

⁸² About this protest action see section 6.1 above.

Regarding BULOG's plan, SPI said that there was enough domestic rice for the remainder of 2006 and that 'importing rice was a waste of government money' (*Pembaruan Tani* 31, September 2006, p. 12). Some governors even refused to accept imported rice because their provinces were in surplus (*Republika* 6 September 2006). According to SPI, the Minister for Agriculture had also said that there was enough rice, and no imports were needed (*Pembaruan Tani* 31, September 2006, p. 12). SPI believed that BULOG 'as the institution that organizes the procurement of rice nationally, does not want to buy farmers unhusked rice ... [but] would rather import rice than buy rice from [Indonesian] farmers, because this will be more beneficial to the importers who are partners of BULOG' (*Pembaruan Tani* 31, September 2006, p. 12).⁸³

SPI was not alone in rejecting rice imports. Other peasant organizations such as API (Aliansi Petani Indonesia), PETANI MANDIRI, AGRA (Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria), and STN (Serikat Tani Nasional) did the same because of negative impacts on their members (see *DetikNews* 25 January 2005). Even the HKTI, set up under the New Order⁸⁴, found its voice after Suharto's downfall in 1998 and spoke out strongly against importing rice. Actually HKTI had voiced its opinion about this policy in 2002 (*Tempo Interaktif* 26 Augustus 2002), but the tone got stronger (see for instance *Koran Tempo* 8 January 2004, *Tempo Interaktif* 17 November 2005). However HKTI never organized mass protests as other national peasant movement

⁸³ The controversy over the rice procurement policy erupted when the Minister of Agriculture said it wasn't necessary to import rice, but the Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs said that Indonesia still needed to import rice, and therefore BULOG, which is under the Ministry of Commerce (and the coordination of the Ministry of Economic Affairs) launched its plan to buy as much as 200,000 tons of rice. This is not unusual in country where a lot of government policy is biased towards the interests of business. A former Coordinating Minister for Food and Horticulture in the Wahid government, AM Saefudin even wrote '... which officials are most enthusiastic about the government importing rice? The answer is clear: Vice President, Muhammad Jusuf Kalla (MJK). Who else? The Coordinating Minister of Economic Affairs, Aburizal Bakrie. It's no coincidence that these two have the same opinion, because they are both businessmen... [they] only see Indonesia from a business point of view... So in whose interest is rice imported? ... Only God knows that. But, if honorable senior government officials are proud of the fact that may businessmen have become politicians, wouldn't it be possible that the imported rice that peasants are protesting about is manipulation by politicians in business. That's the logic of it!' (Saefudin 2005).

⁸⁴ On HKTI see Chapter II.

organizations did, their protests were done through the mass media.

SPI's negative attitude to the WTO, World Bank and IMF as instruments of the neoliberal agenda have led this national peasant's organization, together with a number of other organizations, to form a new coalition called the People's Movement against Neo-colonialism (Gerakan Rakyat Melawan Neokolonialism or GERAK LAWAN) in 2006.⁸⁵ In several protest actions held in Jakarta on August and September 2006, the GERAK LAWAN demands included breaking Indonesia's ties with the IMF and the World Bank, which they say have impoverished the Indonesian people, and they have even demanded that these two institutions be dissolved (*Pembaruan Tani* 31, September 2006, p. 8 and 9; Gerak Lawan 2006).⁸⁶

In May 2007 the GERAK LAWAN coalition, now including more organizations than before,⁸⁷ conducted a mass protest in front of the

⁸⁵ See again note 64 above.

⁸⁶ Before the protest actions in Jakarta, GERAK LAWAN together with Via Campesina and Friends of the Earth International (FoEI) held an international conference called 'Gerakan Rakyat Melawan Penjajahan Baru: Imperialisme dan Kejahatan Kemanusiaan IMF – Bank Dunia' (Jakarta, 15-17 September 2006). This conference was organised at the same time as the annual meeting of the World Bank and the IMF held in Singapore from 9-20 September 2006. A group of delegates from social movements around the world attended the Jakarta conference including Pambansang Ugnayan ng Nagsasariling Lokal na mga Samahang Mamamayan sa Kanayunan (UNORKA) of the Philippines; Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST) of Brazil; Bangladesh Krishok Federation (BKF); Assembly of the Poor of Thailand, and Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS) of India. Another larger conference on 'International People's Forum vs IMF and World Bank', was held in Batam from 15-17 September 2006. This conference was sponsored by the International People's Forum together with INFID (International NGOs Forum on Indonesian Development) dan Friends of the Earth Indonesia who were the local hosting organizations. Because the Singapore government refused to allow any counter meetings outside the formal World Bank-IMF annual conference sessions, these two counter conferences (*forum tandingan*) had to be organised in Indonesia. In fact, the Indonesian government also banned mass protest actions to be held in Batam, which is located close to Singapore (*DetikNews* 13 September 2006 and 15 September 2006; *Kompas* 9 September 2006). For comparison with other conferences critical of the World Bank IMF viewpoint, see the views of a number of international anti foreign debt and 'anti Breton Woods' scholar activists in Danaher 1994.

⁸⁷ The GERAK LAWAN demanded the revoking of UU No25/2007, as well as involving more peasant organizations and NGO coalitions that were pro agrarian reform, human rights groups, student movement groups, and trade unions. These were FSPI (Federasi Serikat Petani Indonesia); ABM (Aliansi Buruh Menggugat); FSBJ (Federasi Serikat Buruh Jabotabek); PBHI (Perhimpunan Bantuan Hukum dan Hak Azasi Manusia Indonesia); API (Aliansi Petani Indonesia); FPPI (Front Perjuangan Pemuda Indonesia); STN (Serikat Tani Nasional); FMN (Front Mahasiswa Nasional); SMI (Serikat Mahasiswa Indonesia); Bina Desa; KPA (Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria); KAU (Koalisi Anti Utang); Solidaritas Perempuan; IGJ (institute for Global Justice), ASPPUK (Asosiasi

Constitutional Court building in Jakarta, demanding that the court order the relevant judicial authority revoke the investment law (UU No 25/2007). The GERAK LAWAN claims that this act has three main defects. Firstly it advances the interests of foreign capital rather than domestic investment, by giving rights over natural resources on which many depend for livelihoods. Secondly the law does not protect the right to work of Indonesian people. Thirdly the act increases the possibility of violations of economic, social and cultural rights by government and by corporations (*Pembaruan Tani* 44, July 2007, p. 11). The GERAK LAWAN coalition was also convinced that UU No. 25/2007 was also partly the result of World Bank influence (*Pembaruan Tani* 44, July 2007, p. 11). At the same time this coalition challenged to validity of the law in the Constitutional Court.

For SPI and other pro agrarian reform organizations there was another big defect in UU No. 25 /2007, namely the clause relating to the granting of 90 year HGU (commercial use rights) to plantation companies. This was in conflict with the maximum HGU lease of 30 years under the BAL. According to SPI 'this clause has a colonial mindset, in fact it is worse than the former colonial Agrarian Law of 1870 that gave long term leases (*erfpacht*) of 70 years duration' (*Pembaruan Tani* 41, July 1007, p. 11). It is a pity that in their final session the Constitutional Court ruled not to revoke Law No 25/2007 altogether, but it did decide that the article relating to 90 year commercial lease rights should be deleted from the law (Mahkamah Konstitusi 2007).

The SPI campaigns to reject rice imports, the role of the WTO in regulating trade in agricultural products and the involvement of the World Bank and IMF in development, added to its campaign for food sovereignty and rights of peasants.⁸⁸ These campaigns were part of a wider movement against

Perempuan untuk Pengembangan Usaha Kecil), SHMI (Suara Hak Asasi Manusia Indonesia); Walhi (Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia); KAM LAKSI 31 (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Laksi 31); SAINS (Sayogyo Institute), dan LS-ADI (Lembaga Studi-Advokasi Demokrasi Indonesia). See *Pembaruan Tani* 41, July 2007, p. 11.

⁸⁸ Regarding the FSPI campaign for peasant's rights, their understanding of this issue will be discussed in more detail in section 6.2.1.2.

globalization, which also articulated different meanings of agrarian reform, not limited to rights over land and the restructuring of an unequal agrarian system.⁸⁹

6.2.1.2 Agrarian Reform and the Rights of Peasants

The concept of ‘peasants’ rights’ in Indonesia comes out of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and put in the context of peasant livelihoods.⁹⁰ In the beginning these concepts were drawn up by a group of activists and organizations in Indonesia, and were closely connected with concepts for agrarian reform.⁹¹ In the Preamble of the Declaration of Indonesian Peasant’s Rights it is stated that:

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, peasants have the right to enjoy political freedom, and the freedom from fear and want that can only be realized when conditions are created when people can enjoy these rights... According to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the State is obliged to respect and guarantee the civil and political rights of peasants without discrimination.... According to the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights the State is obliged to recognize peasant’s ‘s rights and achieve a reasonable standard of living and the right to freedom from hunger by means of agrarian reform (Declaration of the Peasants’ Rights 2001, in Bachriadi 2001d: 42).

Peasants rights became a main topic of discussion at the 2001 National Conference on Agrarian Reform for the Protection and Fulfillment of Peasant’s Rights) held in Cibubur (17-20 April 2001), usually called the ‘Konferensi Cibubur 2001’. FSPI was one of the organizers⁹² and together with Komnas

⁸⁹ See also Rosset 2006b that emphasizes that agrarian reform is a part of food sovereignty.

⁹⁰ Examples of international agreements that refer to particular social groups are CEDAW (Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) adopted by the UN General Assembly on 1979, while the most recent is the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 September 2007.

⁹¹ See also Chigara 2004 for a discussion about the relationship between agrarian reform and the upholding of human rights.

⁹² For names of other conference organizers see note 58 above.

HAM was also one of the formulators of the Declaration of Peasant's Rights (Panitia Konferensi Reforma Agraria 2001). This Declaration, consisting of 8 sections and 67 articles, covered peasant's rights to a decent livelihood, control over natural resources, production, consumption and marketing of agricultural commodities, product inputs, as well as intellectual capital needed for the above.⁹³

The formulation of peasant's rights was the result of a long period of work by many organizations since 1998. The original concept was not from FSPI, but arose at a national seminar on biodiversity and peasants rights, held in Yogyakarta in 1998.⁹⁴ At this seminar for the first time it was proposed to start recording the issues concerning peasants' rights. There were several follow up meetings in Yogya coordinated by Francis Wahono from the Cindelaras Foundation, the latter being appointed to coordinate the writing of a draft document on peasant's rights. Six months later the process to formulate this concept of rights of peasants was strongly supported by those attending the National Peasants' Conference on Integrated Pest Control organized by the FAO Farmers Association for Integrated Pest Control (IPPHT, Ikatan Petani untuk Pemberantasan Hama Terpadu) in Yogyakarta from 11-13 June 1999.

In due course Wahono with activists from INSIST/ReAD (Institute for Social Transformation), Cindelaras Foundation, Mitra Tani Foundation, IPPHT, and KPA finalized a first draft to be discussed by NGO's and peasant organizations in Yogyakarta, Medan and Bogor (Wahono 2001: v-vii and 33-

⁹³ A full discussion of peasant's rights can be found in Bachriadi 2001d: 42-53 and Wahono 2002; while a draft plan can be found in Wahono 2001. Appendix 6 of this thesis provides copy of this declaration.

⁹⁴ This seminar was organised by the Realino Study Group (Lembaga Studi Realino), Yogyakarta on 14-15 November 1998. As well as agricultural, legal and environmental experts such as Sajogyo (sociologist, Bogor Agricultural Institute); Setijati D. Sastrapradja (biologist, Indonesian Institute of Sciences); Hari Kartiko (genetic engineering, Gadjah Mada University); Loekman Sutrisno (sociologist, Gadjah Mada University); Koesnadi Hardjosoemantri (environmental law, Gadjah Mada University); Tjut Djohan (marine biologist, Gadjah Mada University); Benny Setianto (international trade and environmental law, Soegijapranata Catholic University), the majority of those attending were peasants and NGO activists (Wahono 2001: v).

39).⁹⁵ On 26 July 2000, approximately 2000 peasants from Yogyakarta and Central Java held a mass gathering at Gadjah Mada University to pass on their demands to the government. Their demands were to implement agrarian reform, guarantee cultivation rights for peasants who were working land owned by the Sultan of Yogyakarta, and support for peasants' rights. Their demands were formulated in the Peasants Charter of Yogyakarta and Central Java (Piagam Rakyat Tani Yogyakarta and Central Java) (Wahono 2001: 36-39). Unfortunately the 'Petani Indonesia' coalition⁹⁶ formed at the Bogor meeting in April 2000 to struggle for legal recognition of peasant's rights, failed in its attempt to carry out the planned mass action to launch the Peasant's Rights Charter because of poor coordination and poor commitment by coalition members to mobilize resources and people for the demonstration (Wahono 2001: vi-vii).

It was not until the Cibubur Conference in 2001 that the discussions held on peasant's rights were communicated to the public through the launch of the Declaration of the Fulfillment and Protection of Peasant's Rights (or Declaration of Indonesian Peasant's Rights). After this meeting FSPI took the discussion to various international forums organised by Via Campesina. At the Southeast and

⁹⁵ The first meeting to discuss a draft document of peasant rights was held at Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta on 14 August 1999, and attended by 43 participants representing NGOs, peasant groups, research institutes and universities. A further meeting were held in Medan on 17 September 2000, namely 'the Lokakarya Perumusan Konsep Pembaruan Agraria, Resolusi Konflik Pertanahan, dan Perlindungan Hak-hak Petani' (Workshop to Formulate Agrarian Reform Concepts, Land Conflict Resolution, and Protection of Peasant's Rights) organized by FSPI, with 20 participants, mostly from FSPI. It was at this meeting that FSPI became involved in the process of formulating peasant's rights. The final important meeting on the issue of peasant's rights was held in Bogor on 28-29 April 2000, attended by 35 participants from 17 institutions, and produced a concept of peasant's rights which was to be announced publicly on Hari Tani, 24 September 2000. The participants agreed to form a coalition called 'Petani Indonesia' (The Peasants of Indonesia) as a forum to promote the legal recognition of peasant's rights in Indonesia (Wahono 2001: vi-vii and 33-39).

⁹⁶ 'Petani Indonesia' was yet another ill-fated coalition formed at the Bogor meeting 28-29 April 2000 (see note 95 above). The organizations in this coalition included INSIST/ReAD, KPA, FSPI, Bina Desa, IPPHT, Kehati Foundation, Sikep Foundation, Pro Farmers NGOs Network (Jarnop-PP, Jaringan Organisasi Non Pemerintah Pendamping Petani), Cindelaras Foundation, Mitra Tani Foundation, and the Coalition of Indonesian Women (KPI, Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia).

East Asian regional meeting of Via Campesina in 2002,⁹⁷ both the name and content of the Declaration of Indonesian Peasant's Rights were altered to become the Declaration of the Fulfillment and Protection of Peasant's Rights. A number of Indonesian key activists and organizations, which had been involved since 1998 in the formulation of the Declaration of Indonesian Peasant's Rights, were not invited in the formulation of this new declaration. The Indonesian delegates in this meeting were mainly members of FSPI. FSPI wanted to be the main actor to promote rights of peasants at the international level.

Indeed, there was not much difference in content between Via Campesina's Declaration of the Fulfillment and Protection of Peasant's Rights and the original Declaration resulted from the 2001 Cibubur Conference, except an editing of the document's structure into 10 chapters and 76 points (La Via Campesina 2007). The main difference between the Via Campesina version and the Cibubur version was the deletion of any reference to the need for agrarian reform to uphold rights of peasants. This was because the Via Campesina meeting concluded that agrarian reform as an action or program is not part of the actual rights of peasants, but it is a way to uphold these rights; and the fulfillment of rights of peasants would cover structural reform of the peasantry as the main objective of agrarian reform implementation (La Via Campesina 2007).

Through Via Campesina, FSPI (SPI) then pushed for the Peasant's Rights Declaration to be adopted as a global agenda for peasant's struggle. This became possible after Via Campesina adopted it as part of their formal struggle agenda in 2008, with the issuing of a document called 'Declaration of Rights of Peasants – Women and Men' (La Via Campesina 2009), which was developed from the original Declaration of Indonesian Peasant's Rights.⁹⁸ Then Via

⁹⁷ This was the Southeast and East Asia Regional Conference on Peasants' Rights organised by Via Campesina in Jakarta, 1-5 April 2002.

⁹⁸ The formal adoption of peasant's rights as a Via Campesina struggle agenda occurred at the International Conference of Peasant's Rights ('Konferensi Internasional Hak Asasi Petani, June 2008) organised by Via Campesina and hosted in Jakarta by SPI and the Indonesian Human Rights Committee for Social Justice (IHCS). The conference mapped out a process for getting the

Campesina wanted this document to be the basis of an international agreement sponsored by the UN General Assembly. Since 2008 advocacy campaigns and international lobbying was carried out, for example with the UN Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council, the High Level Panel on Realization of the Right to Food, and the UN General Assembly on the Global Food Crisis and the Right to Food, to campaign for peasants rights to become a formal UN document (See Indonesian Human Rights Committee for Social Justice 2009).

In the context of social movement politics in Indonesia, the efforts of FSPI (SPI) to bring the issue of peasant's rights to the international arena can be seen from two different perspectives. The first perspective sees the 'success' of FSPI (SPI) as an Indonesian social movement organization to carry out an advocacy campaign at the international level, by using the resources of various national and international organizations to continue the struggle in SPI's country of origin. Their success is not limited to raising Indonesian peasants' rights issues in new ways in the context of world peasant struggles. SPI has also succeeded in inserting the peasants' rights issue into the international agenda including the agenda of the UN Human Rights Council.

The other perspective on SPI is a very different one. Behind the 'success' mention above, SPI has forgotten how the concept of peasant rights originated, how it was first discussed, how it was first formulated, and who was behind its original advocacy in Indonesia. As we have seen, the work of formulating a concept of peasant's rights was a long process starting in 1998 and culminating in the 'Declaration of Indonesian Peasant's Rights' at the 2001 Cibubur conference. This process has been claimed entirely as the work of FSPI (SPI). In the Via Campesina document called 'The Declaration of Rights of Peasants' that

declaration of peasant's rights that originated as a document of non-state actors to be recognized by the UN as an international agreement. At the 5th International Congress of Via Campesina in Maputo, Mozambique, in October 2008, this agenda was formally adopted; and at a meeting of the International Coordinating Committee of Via Campesina in Seoul, South Korea (March 2009), the document 'Declaration of Rights of Peasants – Women and Men' became a formal Via Campesina document.

became the official advocacy document for SPI and Via Campesina in sessions of UN organizations, says that:

During the Regional Conference on Peasants' Rights in April 2002, Via Campesina formulated the Declaration of the Rights of Peasants through the Workshop on Peasants' Rights in Medan North Sumatra on 2000,⁹⁹ the Conference of Agrarian Reform in Jakarta April 2001,¹⁰⁰ the Regional Conference on Peasants' Rights held in Jakarta in April 2002 and the International Conference of Via Campesina also held in Jakarta, in June 2008 (Via Campesina 2009: 4).

The way activists in the national secretariat of FSPI (SPI) promote the success of FSPI (SPI), especially at the international level, is to claim work done with other organizations as their 'own work' in the name of 'the peasants'. This has created tension and antipathy from other pro agrarian reform activists towards FSPI (SPI)'s existence (Focus Group Discussion, Bandung 14 December 2006). Even Agustiana, Secretary General of SPP, which was also a member of FSPI before withdrawing in 2007, said cynically 'Let them be popular if that's what they want, as long as peasants have land' (*'biarlah ketenaran untuk mereka, tapi tanah untuk petani'*) (personal communication with Agustiana, 27 July 2006). Iwan Nurdin, one of current national KPA leaders, said 'It is very difficult to work with FSPI ... usually they reject invitations to work together on common issues and programs, but they will agree to work on joint actions, or short term cooperation, especially if there is a protest action being organised, they will join in with their flag for sure (personal communication with Iwan Nurdin, Deputy for Research and Advocacy of KPA, Jakarta 19 April 2010).

6.2.1.3 SPI's Peasant-based Initiative for Agrarian Reform

Using new ideas such as food sovereignty and rights of peasants, SPI widen its concept on agrarian reform as 'the process of reorganization and rebuilding social structures, in particular rural community social structures, to

⁹⁹ For the status of this workshop in the whole process of producing the document 'The Rights of the Indonesian Peasants' declared at the 'Cibubur Conference 2001' see above.

¹⁰⁰ This is the 2001 Cibubur Conference.

build a strong base for agriculture and to have a system of land ownership which guarantees security of livelihood for the people ... This is a way for the State to protect human rights, obligations to land rights and other natural resources (Serikat Petani Indonesia 2007a: 6).

In other words, if the state carries out agrarian reform by protecting peasant's rights and also maintains food sovereignty, this will open the way to social justice also. But to convince the government to address these issues requires a strong political commitment of the powerholders and involvement of a strong peasant organization. If the state and its powerholders have no commitment on these issues, 'peasants shall take matters into their own hands, and SPI as a mass peasant organization has been trying to enact agrarian reform in the context of rural development based on people initiatives' (Serikat Petani Indonesia 2007a: 7).

The ongoing grassroots processes developed by SPI toward agrarian reform include: (1) developing a strong mass peasant organization, (2) struggle toward 'land for the peasants',¹⁰¹ (3) develop sustainable agriculture in the interests of the peasants,¹⁰² (4) develop independent finance for commodity production and (5) develop fair trade in agricultural production¹⁰³ (Serikat Petani Indonesia 2007a: 7). The advantage that SPI has to unite its peasant bases from the local to the national level gives the organization the opportunity to develop advocacy for agrarian policy change, and also an opportunity to encourage the government to implement reforms.

Even though this is important, the policy change toward agrarian reform

¹⁰¹ SPI claims that its members have succeeded in reclaiming around 150,000 hectares of State lands, but there is no data provided to back up this claim. There have been difficulties in accessing FSPI data to clarify these figures, as the FSPI national secretariat is unwilling to provide data on the work with peasant bases. This is one of the weaknesses of my research as has already been explained in the methodology section of Chapter I.

¹⁰² SPI runs several training centers, in North Sumatra and Cibubur in West Java to develop sustainable agricultural systems. It has obtained financial support for the Cibubur center from CCFD France (personal communication with Hatim Issoufaly, CCFD program officer, 10 December 2009).

¹⁰³ To develop fair finance and trade by SPI members in one of their strongest North Sumatran bases, see notes 28 and 29 above.

is no longer the most significant factor. For SPI it is not so important that the government implements agrarian reform or not. On paper conceptually SPI wishes to 'take over' this duty to develop new sovereign agrarian communities and to develop society (Serikat Petani Indonesia 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, and 2007e), but it really depends on the local dynamics of the members themselves.

6.3 Other 'National' Peasant's Organizations

Since FSPI was established and since it restricted membership with certain conditions to a limited number of peasant unions, a lot of organizations at the local level as well as urban-educated activists who are these days the principle organizers of local peasants' groups are unable to join FSPI (SPI). This has encouraged a number of dissatisfied groups to organize their own unions at the local level, while at the national level new organizations like API, AGRA, and PETANI MANDIRI have been formed both for ideological and political reasons. They are unhappy with FSPI (SPI)'s efforts to consolidate the peasant movement in Indonesia, which they think is too 'international-minded', meaning too orientated to international campaigns, rather than being Indonesia focused (see also Peluso, Afiff and Rachman 2008: 392). However, as with the formation of FSPI or even STN (Serikat Tani Nasional) in 1993, it seems the formation of all these national coalitions of peasant movements were heavily driven by interests of activists to control the movements.

6.3.1 Building Political Parties versus Strongly Rooted Rural Mass Organizations: the National Peasant's Union

At the same time as the Lembang Meeting was held in November 1993 to consolidate peasant movements nationally,¹⁰⁴ in Central Java some left-orientated student activists¹⁰⁵ were gathered to form the national peasant's

¹⁰⁴ About this meeting see Chapter V subsection 5.1.2.

¹⁰⁵ The majority of student activists from Yogyakarta and East Java were part of the Student Solidarity for Democracy in Indonesia (SMDI, Solidaritas Mahasiswa untuk Demokrasi di

organization namely the National Peasant's Union (STN, Serikat Tani Nasional).¹⁰⁶ The aim was to consolidate people movements in rural areas to fight against the New Order authoritarian regime and to build new rural bases of the left movement.

Using the network of student activists that consolidated in SMDI and then SMID (see footnote 105), STN immediately had branches in various regions like Central Java, East Java, Lampung, North Sulawesi, North Sumatra and South Sumatra (Luwarso *et al.* 1997: 110). Apart from peasant's interests, STN actually was formed to unite peasants as the basis for a new radical new political party in Indonesia (interview with present Coordinator of STN, 18 May 2010 [No.: O-10]). In 1994, STN activists and activists of several other mass organizations like the Centre of Indonesian Workers Struggle (PPBI, Pusat Perjuangan Buruh Indonesia); Indonesian People Union (SRI, Serikat Rakyat Indonesia); Network of People Art (Jakker, Jaringan Kerja Kesenian Rakyat) dan SMID, formed the PRD (Persatuan Rakyat Demokratik, People's Democratic Union), which evolved into the People's Democratic Party (Partai Rakyat Demokratik (PRD)).¹⁰⁷

However this concentration on party building meant that peasant bases that were supposed to be part of the STN network were not maintained (*tidak*

Indonesia). SMDI was a group of student movements from Java who joined together to form a radical student network in 1992 (see Gunawan *et al.* 2009: 25-65 and Miftahuddin 2004: 76-77). SMDI activists had been involved in advocacy with peasants in several land dispute cases such as the Lomanis case in Cilacap (about this case see Suprpto 1995, republished in Harman *et al.* 1995b: 115-122 and in Yayasan Sintesa and SPSU 1998: 219-227); the Kedung Ombo case (about this case see Stanley 1994 and Susilo 1995, republished in Harman *et al.* 1995b: 281-288 and in Yayasan Sintesa and SPSU 1998: 163-170) and Blangguan case in East Java (about this case see Yayasan Arek Surabaya 1995, republished in Harman *et al.* 1995b: 267-272 and in Yayasan Sintesa and SPSU 1998: 189-198). About SMDI involvement in land conflicts see Gunawan *et al.* 2009: 57, and Human Rights Watch/Asia and Robert F. Kennedy Memorial for Human Rights 1996: 35-36. In 1993 SMDI changed its structure and its name become SMID (Solidaritas Mahasiswa Indonesia untuk Demokrasi).

¹⁰⁶ According to Doni Pradana, present Coordinator of STN, this organization was formed on 12 November 1993 (interview, 18 May 2010 [No.: O-10]). But the STN brochure says it was formed on 13 November 1993 (Serikat Tani Nasional 1999), while other activists close to STN say in their book that it was founded in 1992 (see Gunawan *et al.* 2009: 57).

¹⁰⁷ On PRD's formation see Miftahuddin 2004 also see again Chapter IV.

terawat). Since its foundation at the end of 1993, until its involvement with the formation of PRD (accused of being a communist party by the New Order regime), STN faced two difficult challenges, how to consolidate the new radical party and how to deal with government repression. With only a small group of activists, and not enough interaction with peasant groups, the bases of support did not develop at the local level STN was very dependent on the networks of SMID and PRD to organize peasant opposition in land dispute cases, but these actions didn't last long and were unable to strengthened local communities after the protests ended (interview with former SMID activist, Bandung, 17 March 2007 [No.: S-01]).

Up until 2006, 13 years after STN's founding, nearly half the bases claimed spread over 44 regions in Indonesia still had the status of 'peasant group preparatory committees' (*komite persiapan organisasi tani*). This meant that peasant groups at the local level were not consolidated and these committees relied on the existence of very small groups of local organizers (interview with present Coordinator of STN, 18 May 2010 [No.: O-10]). On the contrary, some of the STN activists still wanted to be part of a left wing political party, which was clearly committed to struggle for socialism in Indonesia. This is why even though PRD failed in the 1999 election, STN activists still tried to make their organization part of another new party, which was to be 'a continuation of PRD'.¹⁰⁸ Some other STN activists considered that the involvement in the formation of a political party took valuable resources, which should have been used to strengthen peasant groups politically, economically and socially

¹⁰⁸ After being threatened repeatedly by the New Order regime since its formation in 1996, PRD survived until the 1999 national election the year following Suharto's downfall, But PRD failed to reach the electoral threshold of votes needed to participate in the next (2004) national elections. So PRD activists formed a new party, called POPOR (Partai Persatuan Oposisi Rakyat or the United People's Opposition Party), but POPOR failed to get through the verification process to be a participant in 2004. The ex-PRD activists then tried to form another party, namely Papernas (Partai Persatuan Pembebasan Nasional or United National Liberation Party) to fight the 2009 election. When it seems unlikely they would pass the verification process either, Papernas activists built a coalition with Partai Bintang Reformasi (PBR) at the 2009 election that did not win even a single seat at the national parliament (Komisi Pemilihan Umum 2009).

(interview with present Coordinator of STN, 18 May 2010 [No.: O-10]). As a result STN split at the end of 2007.¹⁰⁹

6.3.2 The Peasant Movement's 'Correction Move': the Alliance for Agrarian Reform Movements (AGRA)

Another group of radical ex-student activists who wanted to strengthen grassroots peasant groups' opposition to oppression, colonialism and imperialism, formed AGRA (Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria) in 2004. Preparations for AGRA's formation began several years before, when a group of activists got control of the KPA leadership at the 3rd Munas KPA (National Meeting) in 2002.

The new Secretary General, Erpan Faryadi, supported by a group of Bandung based activists consolidated in the Committee for People's Advocacy (BAR, Barisan Advokasi Rakyat), like Sugiharno, Ucok Sirait, and Surya Wijaya amongst others¹¹⁰, including Yoko¹¹¹ and Martinus Ujjianto¹¹² from Yogya, agreed that the agrarian reform movement needed a 'correction' (Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria 2004a; see also Sekretaris Jendral KPA 2005). The

¹⁰⁹ The STN 'non political party' group claims to have around 30,000 members spread over 16 districts in 8 provinces, namely the districts of Simalungun, Labuhan Batu and South Tapanuli in North Sumatra province; Batanghari and Muaro Jambi in Jambi province; Karawang and Majalengka in West Java province; Semarang in Central Java province; Ponorogo, Malang, and Pasuruan in East Java province; Mamuju in West Sulawesi province; Parigi Mutong in Central Sulawesi; Seruyan and East Kotawaringin in Central Kalimantan (interview with a leader of STN 'non political party', 18 May 2010 [No.: O-10]).

¹¹⁰ BAR activists were originally students from Padjadjaran University who were members of KAU-Unpad (Keluarga Aktivis Universitas Padjadjaran or Activist Group of Padjadjaran University). Several KAU activists were co-founders of KPA in 1995. BAR activists separated from KAU because they thought that their radical-left thinking could not be accommodated by KAU. Ucok Sirait from BAR was jailed for a year and a half in 1999 for organizing peasants to occupy land leased by a state plantation (PTPN VII) for sugar cane under commercial use rights (HGU) in Subang, West Java. He also led the formation of the Subang Peasant Struggle Front (PPRTS, Persatuan Perjuangan Rakyat Tani Subang) in early 2000.

¹¹¹ Yoko was an ex-activist from the 90's who had connections with the Rode Group in Yogyakarta, which from the late 80's until the early 90's was involved in organizing community opposition to the Kedung Ombo dam in Central Java. Via LEKHAT, the formal institution of the Rode Group, they were involved in organizing the 1993 Lembang meeting, and initiated the formation of HPMJT (Himpunan Petani Mandiri Jawa Tengah). See again Chapter V subsection 5.1.2.

¹¹² Martinus Ujjianto was once Coordinator of Forum LSM Yogyakarta in the period from 2000-2003. See Hadiwinata 2003: 220

establishment of AGRA was part of this correction move, as ‘an answer to the leadership of the national peasant’s movement’, which at the time was ‘very problematic’ (Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria 2004a: 2). To quote an AGRA document:

Many peasant organizations that have formed executive committees at provincial or national levels with the aim of uniting peasant’s struggles ... have found that these struggles are still weak at the regional level [sic]. At the provincial level they have appointed committees to deal with organization, tactics, strategy and action programs... [but] the real peasants’ organizations [sic] are still trying to focus on conditions at local and regional levels. This puts them in a difficult position [because] on the one hand they have to respond to the conditions at the national and international levels, while on the other hand they have to be prepared to work at the district level. This is why we have to build a national peasants organization called AGRA (Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria 2004: 2).

According to AGRA, agrarian reform must change the structure of land ownership and control ‘based of peasant sovereignty, not on state grants and initiatives’ (Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria 2004a: 17). AGRA does not trust the government that it believes serves the interests of foreigners, instead of the interests of Indonesian peasants (Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria 2004b: 4 and 2006: 16). Agrarian reform will only meet peasant’s needs if they are have power and for that they have to be well organised (Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria 2004a: 17).

AGRA’s idea of ‘agrarian reform by leverage’ is much the same as KPA’s idea. But there is a difference in that AGRA has formulated a strategy to promote this idea, as part of their ‘correction move’. The formulation of AGRA’s strategy for implementing agrarian reform by leverage is as follows: (1) Reclaiming actions taking over land to fulfill their rights and change landholding structures under which the state or corporations own excess land; (2) Redistribution of the land that has been obtained by reclaiming actions in a fair way to prevent control of excess land; (3) legalization for collective land control, not land certification on individual basis; (4) rearrangement of agricultural production so farming activity can be matched to the land

conditions; (5) collective agricultural production to increase productivity; (6) market intervention to obtain the fair prices for agricultural products, which enable peasants to get a fair return on their cost of productions (Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria 2004a: 18-19).

In practice, however, these strategies have been easier to formulate than to implement. The ideological perspective of AGRA activists to change the mode of production in rural areas (peasant communities), starting from peasant groups organized to occupy the State Land, is not easy to implement. Peasant groups were involved in collective land occupation actions to control the land on an individual, ie private ownership basis. They can be organized during occupation actions because it easier to fight collectively and the organization can provide political support for this struggle. So regarding AGRA's strategy to build its movement bases, the most that has been achieved is fair redistribution of land. Obstacles to the implementation of subsequent stages in AGRA's program, such as getting legislation on collective ownership, and developing collective production, have been hampered by the fact that 'in general peasants involved in reclaiming actions find it difficult to understand why this land should not be certified on an individual basis (private ownership)' (interview with member of AGRA's national leadership committee, Subang 13 December 2006 [No.: 0-02]).

AGRA activists has been trying to resolve the gap between the strategies of AGRA's national and provincial committees to consolidate the movement toward radical change in rural areas, by which they mean changing the peasant mode of production from individual to collective production, and the needs of local peasants, through a very tight organizational structure. AGRA was controlled by small group of activists that rule this movement organization in a strongly top-down approach in order to maintain their ideological strategy.

AGRA activists want to build a mass based peasants' organization with a strong central leadership, which will manage the activities which have to be implemented in accordance with the principles and strategies of agrarian

reform that have been determined by the organization. A peasant movement organization should be 'a unified organization with strong and centralized leadership (*kepemimpinan yang kuat dan terpusat*)' (Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria 2004a: 1). This is part of the 'correction move' that they want to implement in order to bring the peasant movement in Indonesia into 'the struggle of the rural toiling masses' (interview with member of AGRA's national leadership committee, Subang 13 December 2006 [No.: O-02]).

In this context AGRA ideologues are convinced that the best principles and strategies are those that will liberate peasants from oppression and exploitation. They were convinced the gap between their ideas and the daily aspirations of peasants could be overcome by forming collective leadership institutions in AGRA from the district to the national level. In this way, representatives of peasant farmers at the district level ('AGRA kabupaten') will represent the voices of local peasant farmers to the national level. This is what is meant by strong leadership principles, which are democratic and based on the interest of the masses (*garis massa*) (interview with member of AGRA's national leadership committee, Subang 13 December 2006 [No.: O-02]).

Based on this principle, the structure of AGRA's collective leadership is implemented by functional committees operating at different administrative levels, namely district, province and national levels. The lowest level is the peasant masses, which are organised at district level ('AGRA kabupaten'). Peasants do not become individual members of AGRA, rather it is the organization at the district level that is referred to as the 'AGRA member', i.e. it is the organization and not the individual that is the member of the AGRA collective (see Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria 2004a: 4-8). According to AGRA activists, this collective structure will correct the problems in the past with national level consolidation, by eliminating local loyalties (*sifat kedaerahan*) and narrow sectional interests (Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria 2006: 16-19).

To implement these ideas, AGRA activists chose Erpan Faryadi, who at the time was General Secretary of KPA (in the 2002-2005 period), to be a member of the National Committee and as General Secretary of AGRA. As well as having a reputation as an important thinker in AGRA circles, Erpan was chosen because it was thought that he could mobilize sources of funds, in particular KPA sources of funds, to develop AGRA.¹¹³

However, Erpan neglected the needs of other peasant organizations, which were members of KPA. He and his fellow AGRA committee members concentrated solely on building the new organization, which meant taking funds away from other KPA programs. This was the reason that many KPA members were not satisfied with his leadership (Focus Group Discussion, Bandung 14 December 2006). Although this opposition did not force him to resign midway through his term of office, Erpan failed in his efforts to be re-elected for a second term as KPA General Secretary (2005-2008) at the 4th KPA Munas held in Prapat, North Sumatra, in 2005.

Although several AGRA activists were chosen as members of KPA's National Board for 2005-2008 after the 4th Munas, AGRA no longer controlled the KPA Executive Board, so access to KPA funds was gradually closed off. But thanks to Erpan's actions as Secretary General, KPA in this period no longer had the capacity of generate funds, there were obstacles even to run the secretariat or to implement the work program due to the limited funds.¹¹⁴ But Erpan could still exploit KPA's membership of the steering committee of the ILC

¹¹³ When chosen as General Secretary of KPA in 2002, Erpan inherited around 2.5 billion rupiah of donor funds from the European Commission. These funds were the result of cooperation between KPA and a French institution named Frère des Hommes (FdH). The funds were for developing peasant organizations, policy advocacy and for building an agrarian resource centre. But the KPA executive board under Erpan used these funds without clear accountability for how the money was spent. The result was the FdH donor had to bear the brunt of this in an unpleasant financial report (personal communication with Ivés Altazin, Director of FdH, 16 February 2006).

¹¹⁴ The inability of the KPA executive board to mobilize donor funding during the 2002-2005 period was largely due to the failure under Erpan's leadership to keep good relations with funding agencies. This was on top of bad internal financial management. Erpan depended on the grants inherited from the previous executive committee and neglected to build cooperation with other donors.

(International Land Coalition) by self-appointed himself as representative of KPA in this international coalition.¹¹⁵

Erpan who was still a member of KPA's National Board, used his position as the KPA delegate (member) of the ILC Steering Committee to gain access to ILC funds which were channeled to AGRA, until KPA's term as a member of the ILC Steering Committee ended in 2008 (interview with Deputy General Secretary of KPA, period 2005-2008, Bandung 22 June 2009 [No.: S-12]; and personal communication with Kasmita Widodo of the Indonesian Network for Participatory Mapping [JKPP, Jaringan Kerja Pemetaan Partisipatif],¹¹⁶ Bandung 28 October 2009).

With AGRA activists' gradual loss of power in KPA, the flow of funds to AGRA decline drastically. Efforts to create a 'radical' national peasants movement organization also weakened. At the same time AGRA's peasant bases declined as well. One of the most prominent of these was at Subang where the PPRTS (Persatuan Perjuangan Rakyat Tani Subang) split not long after AGRA's National Peasant's Congress in Subang (11-14 December 2006). Part of the PPRTS leadership, under Iwan Sudarman made an issue of AGRA's transparency of its financial management, including unclear funding expenses for and during the Congress in Subang, hosted by PPRTS (interview with former PPRTS leader, Subang 7 February 2009 [No.: O-08]).

Another issue raised was the dominance of a handful of AGRA national leadership committee, whose policy was to strictly limited relations of AGRA members with other social movement organizations. As a result of these problems, after the 2nd AGRA Peasant's Congress, Sudarman and his supporters withdrew from AGRA, left PPRTS and formed a new peasant's union, the North

¹¹⁵ ILC was an IFAD program to build international networks of NGOs to support land rights for improving agricultural productivity in developing countries. On ILC see www.landcoalition.org; also Borras Jr. 2004: 19-21, and note 68 above.

¹¹⁶ Since 2008, JKPP replaced KPA as the Indonesian member of the ILC Steering Committee.

Pasundan Peasant Union (SPP-U, Serikat Petani Pasundan Utara) (interview with former PPRTS leader, Subang 7 February 2009 [No.: O-08]).¹¹⁷

We have already noted the inflexible leadership style which dominated AGRA's National Leadership Committee, and its attempts to use the 'correction move' to control local peasant bases. This in turn created problems for local AGRA activists who were either expelled or had strict limits placed on what they could do or not do by the AGRA national leaders. In Garut several SPP activists who had joined AGRA¹¹⁸ were expelled for being too divisive (interview with SPP General Secretary, Tasikmalaya DATE [No.: P-01]). In Bengkulu, STaB (Serikat Tani Bengkulu) delegates who had been appointed to AGRA's 'collective' national leadership found themselves being made redundant because they were accused of destabilizing STaB consolidation (interview with former STaB General Secretary, Palembang 17 March 2008 [No.: S-11]). Both leaders of STaB and SPP were not happy with their cadres being AGRA organizers, because as AGRA organizers they tried to separate some STaB and SPP bases and internalized AGRA's movement strategies. As a consequence some STaB and SPP bases tried to shift their orientation from SPP and STaB, and follow instead directions given by AGRA's organizers only (interviews with former STaB General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary of SPP, Palembang 17 March 2008 [No.: S-11] and Garut July 2008 [No.: P-10]). 'This is the politics of *divide et impera* to control the movement organizations' (interviews with former STaB General Secretary, Palembang 17 March 2008 [No.: S-11]).

At the 3rd FSPI Congress in 2007 when the organization changed from a FPSI federative form to an SPI unitary form, several AGRA bases which had dual membership were faced with a choice of continuing in AGRA and be expelled

¹¹⁷ Although PPRTS remained in AGRA, its mass base declined significantly after this split. Out of 20,000 PPRTS members, around 15,000 followed Iwan Sudarman into the newly formed SPP-U (interview with former PPRTS leader, Subang 7 February 2009 [No.: O-08]).

¹¹⁸ These included Agus 'Ebot' dan Agus 'Kapal' who had been two of SPP's highly skilled organizers.

from SPI, or continuing in SPI and be forced to leave AGRA. The majority of AGRA bases, like the group in Wonosobo in Central Java and the Lombok peasants in SERTA NTB for example, decided to leave AGRA and keep their involvement in SPI.

The decline in AGRA's bases continued until 2009 when the withdrawal of a peasant's group in South Bandung (Pangalengan) again highlighted the problems between AGRA and its supporters. In this case they were the leaders of a group of farmers, who since 2006 had occupied 136 ha of land controlled by the local government owned PDAP (Perusahaan Daerah Agribisnis dan Pertambangan Jawa Barat, West Java Mining and Agribisnis Company). These local peasant leaders were dissatisfied with the domination of the activists in both the AGRA National Leadership Committee and in the provincial level leadership. These activist leaders did not seem to have clear policies about what should happen to the disputed land after it was occupied.

The AGRA leadership collective always said there was a need to strengthen the bases of production of local peasant's groups, but did not take any action against those who were involved in selling off occupied land. These groups were not satisfied with AGRA's ban on having contact with the local BPN office, although this was done as part of the process of negotiating recognition of cultivation rights to the occupied land (interview with ex coordinator of AGRA West Java leadership, Bandung 8 June 2010 [No.: S-10]).

6.4 Concluding Remarks

The previous chapter has shown that there was a scaling shift (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001; Tilly and Tarrow 2007) i.e. a broadening of social movement bases with the development of coalitions of NGOs and peoples organizations (PO's) at the national level, which in this dissertation has been called 'the first way'. In this chapter scaling shift is also reflected in the development of coalitions of peasant organizations at the national level – 'the

second way'. On one side efforts to form national peasants' organizations like FSPI, STN, and AGRA¹¹⁹ were examples of urban-educated activists wanting improve their bargain position by demanding the implementation of agrarian reform and social change, particularly in rural areas. On the other side the formation of these peasant organizations were attempts to control peasant movements, as reflected in the leadership competition, controversies and splits amongst them and efforts to direct the peasant movement in another political direction i.e. political party building.

The main difference between 'the first way' and 'the second way ' in relation to changes in the scale of the movements is in activists' polemics about the movement base for agrarian reform. In the first way, activists considered that broad bases, including peasant and indigenous people groups, NGOs and individual committed scholars, are an advantageous to push the government to implement agrarian reform. On the contrary, in the second way, other activists believed that the agrarian reform movement should be based only on peasant groups, in order to reduce any goal displacement of the movement. Ironically, behind the ideological arguments of both the first way and the second way,

¹¹⁹ There are two other organizations that have declared themselves as national peasant organizations. The first is API (Aliansi Petani Indonesia) and the second is PETANI MANDIRI (Pergerakan Tani Nelayan Indonesia Mandiri). API was established in 2003 as a continuation of the rural community organizing work of Bina Desa - Indonesian Secretariat for Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas or InDHRRA – one of the oldest leading NGOs in Indonesia). API was established to cover many local peasant groups who could not join with FSPI. In fact, there were close parallels between API and its mother organization – Bina Desa. Heru Wardoyo, ex-student activist and one of Bina Desa's rural organizers, was originally based in North Sumatra, and was the first General Secretary of API before being replaced by Nurrudin, another ex-student activist and Bina Desa rural organizer who was based in East Java. API is a member of AFA (Asian Farmers Association), a peasants' organization initiated by the AsiaDHRRA (an organization based in the Philippines to which Bina Desa was affiliated). API was criticized by FSPI and AGRA when it hosted the 2005 AFA General Assembly: FSPI and AGRA accused AFA of financing the Assembly with support from IFAP (International Federation of Agricultural Producers), an international organization of middle agricultural producers based in Paris, which seemed to be a proponent of the global neoliberal agricultural policies. Based on its last National Meeting in 2009, API has 28 peasant organization members. PETANI MANDIRI is a coalition of 9 peasant and fisherfolk's organizations. Some of them were participants in a series of workshops organized by the RACA (Rapid Agrarian Conflict Assessment) project in 1999-2000. See again note 85 in Chapter V about the RACA project and its workshop that produced guidelines for land reclaiming actions. From a project of YLBHI, RACA became an organization namely the RACA Institute in 2000, which then generated the establishment of PETANI MANDIRI in 2004. The RACA Institute always looks after PETANI MANDIRI in its campaign and advocacy work.

activists developed similar strategies, tactics and approaches to control the movement itself for their own interests.

In these two scaling shift processes similar problems occurred, which is the problem of coalition members' autonomy and independence. This problem became an embedded problem in coalitions of various movement organizations like KPA, as explored in previous chapter, and in the national peasant organizations that came from similar backgrounds. The problem of autonomy and independence in managing both work and 'directional relationships' (*hubungan kerja dan 'perintah'*) that arose within KPA also arose in national coalitions of peasant unions as well.

Independence and autonomy of peasant movement members of national coalitions make them on the one hand at the same level as national executive boards. But on the other hand independence and autonomy creates 'distance' and differentiation (*pembedaan*) that is quite strong between members and their national executives. It is as if the latter has a separate identity, or is treated as separate from the grassroots members. This is an important problem in the consolidation of peasant movements in Indonesia.

The 'unity' between different peasant's organizations that claim to be national level organizations only happened when they mobilize the masses for particular protest actions. This unity is temporary, and doesn't continue into working programs over the long term. Unity occurs for example when celebrating Peasants Day and the passing of the BAL on 24th September every year. Joint actions also happen when there is an initiative from one or several organizations that want to carry out protests to pressure the central government in Jakarta on issues of agrarian reform, and then other peasant groups will quickly join in.

From one point of view, the unwillingness of national level peasant organizations to build a united front has two possible consequences. On one hand it helps local level movements to broaden their involvement in collective

actions at the national level. It is like going into a shopping mall where all the stores invited you to come in, when each national coalition tried to recruit more members. This could strengthen local movements in their struggles for peasant rights and interests. On the other hand, it can weaken local movement groups when national coalition activists can intervene in decision making and consolidation processes at the local level as part of their own leadership competition. For strong and well-consolidated local peasant organizations, like SPP for instance, this is not a problem, because it had enough power and autonomy to bargain with organizers of the national coalitions. On the contrary, for weak local peasant's organizations, like some SPI groups, their development depends on this national coalition and its core activists.

From the other point of view, the fact that these groups have not been able to unite and build a bigger common struggle (*front perjuangan*) means that their demands for agrarian reform weren't well coordinated; while political and regime changes that have occurred since the fall of Soeharto seem to have weakened the government's commitment to implement agrarian reform.