

## Chapter 4

### Land Conflicts and the 1980s Urban-based Social Movements

At the heart of protest, there are people who dare  
(Tarrow 1991: 6)

Students can be spokesperson of themselves ... [also]  
being a spokesperson of others and acting on behalf  
of other oppressed classes or groups ... (Radjab 1991:  
78)

Most activists considered that an NGO is part of the  
civil society movement, part of the people's  
movement ... but, many NGO's activists, particularly  
from big NGOs, did not see the significance of NGOs  
having mass bases ... (Fakih 1996: 169)

An important stage in the process of rural social movement formation in Indonesia has been the development of campaigns against evictions from rural land. These campaigns were conducted by what were intended to be urban-based social movement organizations. Many social movement organizations, such as the 'committees of student solidarity for peasants'<sup>1</sup>, student movement organizations and legal aid offices, as well as environmental and human rights NGOs, were involved in these activities. These organizations that protested

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<sup>1</sup>A student movement committee is a kind of non-campus based student movement organization; some of them were even formed as part of a city-based and/or inter-city-based student movement network. This is a loose network of student activists, temporary and non-hierarchical. 'Student movement committees' are attempts of student activists of the 80s to carry out political activism in the midst of campus depolitization and the muzzling of student councils after the 1978 student protests against Soeharto. The name 'committee' indicates this movement organization formed for temporary involvement of the students in certain land cases (See Nugroho 1995, Juliantara 1996 and Gunawan *et al.* 2009 about activists' ideas behind the formation of 'student action committees'. Fidro and Fauzi 1995 provided descriptions of 'student committees' or 'committees of student solidarity' for peasants in land conflict cases (cases in this book were republished in Harman *et al.* 1995, and Yayasan Sintesa and SPSU 1998).

against evictions and government land policies were set up as formal organizations and/or loose networks that brought activists together either as individuals or as representatives of existing organizations. Therefore grassroots organizing conducted with advocacy on land problems became the main strategy to challenge the authoritarian politics of the New Order. Organized student bases in land conflict areas, beside workers and radical urban middle-class, were seen as important in reviving mass politics, which had been repressed during the Soeharto regime.

This chapter aims to describe the initiatives to develop mass politics that occurred at the same time as urban-based campaigns on land problems were being conducted by urban-based non-government organizations during the 80s and early 90s. This chapter will explain an important stage in the development of Indonesian rural social movements in the subsequent period from the mid-90s, when the movements' bases were moved to rural areas and mostly relied on local peasant organizations.

First the chapter will describe campaigns against rural land evictions using either legal approaches or human rights perspectives, or both. This developed to delegitimize the existence of the authoritarian regime and led some analysts (Lane 1989, Uhlin 1997, and Aspinall 2004 and 2005), to recognize it as part of Indonesia's pro-democracy movement. This section of the chapter will discuss the views of critics of the 'purely legal approach' to land dispute advocacy that emerged among social movement activists. Then it will describe the role of urban student movement groups from the end of 80s to the mid-90s, which were formed to defend the rights of rural people for land against various evictions at that time.

An important development of social movements against land evictions in this period was the emergence of groups organized by students, ex-students and NGOs activists that tried to revive mass politics and popular mobilization. This chapter will explain forms of collaboration and networks by activists to resist the New Order regime by using land disputes as a political issue. It is

important to explore the dynamics of these student-led urban-based but pro-rural social movements in this period to show how these movements then shifted their base from urban to rural areas.<sup>2</sup>

#### 4.1 Rights-based Land Campaigns and Advocacy for Democracy

On 21<sup>st</sup> of October 1996, the national daily *Kompas*, in an article 'Land is becoming more problematic' (*Tanah semakin bermasalah*) reported a statement by a senior officer at the Supreme Court's Research and Development division<sup>3</sup>: 'Based on my research since 14 State Administration Courts (PTUN, Pengadilan Tata Usaha Negara) and four State Administration High Courts (PT-TUN, Pengadilan Tinggi Tata Usaha Negara) were established, a majority of cases received by these courts have been land disputes' (*Kompas* 21 October 1996, Lucas and Warren 2000). In its annual reports, the National Human Rights Commission (KOMNAS HAM, Komisi Nasional Hak Azasi Manusia) also stated that the most complaints received during the five years since the Commission's establishment were by victims of eviction, rising from 101 complaints related to land rights in 1994 to 327 cases two years later (1996) and 339 cases in 1998 (Komisi Nasional Hak Azasi Manusia 1995: 2, 1996: 1, and 1998: 2). The Jakarta-based non-government organization, the Human Rights Study Centre Foundation (YAPUSHAM, Yayasan Pusat Studi Hak Azasi Manusia), recorded 891 cases of human rights violations over land seizures that had been reported in 28 local and national newspapers published around the country during the 27 months of 1994 to 1996 (*Index* No. 10/II/97).

Almost all the cases received by KOMNAS HAM and PTUN/PT-TUN were reports and complaints submitted by those who claimed to be victims of eviction, i.e. who had claims against government policy because their land was

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<sup>2</sup> The departure point of the shift in the movement base was self-criticism and reflections on urban-based land campaigns that led to the formation of both local and national peasant's organizations, will be explain in Chapter V to IX.

<sup>3</sup> The official, Prof. Dr. Paulus Effendi Lotulung SH, later became a Judge of the Supreme Court.

unfairly or illegally transferred to other parties.<sup>4</sup> The aggrieved parties protested in various ways, but the main way was a direct protest at the location at the time of eviction. The second way was making of a report to local government institutions and/or non-government organizations, which were mainly located in urban areas. Legal aid and student organizations were usually the most likely place they would go to report their losses, beside local (district) assemblies.<sup>5</sup>

Land problems manifested as evictions of local people from land that was then used for 'development' projects, had been occurring since the end of the 70s (*Kompas* 5 February and 18 August 1979, *Sinar Harapan* 30 June 1979, *Tempo* 1 September 1979: 18-19, see also Radjagukguk 1979). However, systematic attempts by NGOs and/or student movements to campaign about human rights violations were not conducted, even though reports about the cases had already been given publicity in the media. This was because under the New Order, NGOs with advocacy orientations had not yet emerged. Many NGOs back then were organizations with community development orientations, especially to develop 'people-based economy' activities, but they did not have a political vision and tended to be project-oriented (see Eldridge 1989 and 1995: 38-43, Fakhri 1996: 101-104, and Hadiwinata 2003: 91-93). Fakhri wrote that the strategy and actions of almost all NGOs at that time were similar or complementary to the New Order's developmentalism strategy, and there was no evidence that they were more participative in their operation (Fakhri 1996: 101-104).

Meanwhile the orientation of the '70s student movements at that time was focusing on maladministration by the New Order regime in development processes, as well as pointing out inconsistencies of the promises made after

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<sup>4</sup> Unfairness in land transfer mechanisms, including evictions, can be found in Lucas 1992 and 1997, Suhendar 1994, Bachriadi 1998a and 2004, and Tim Kerja Komnas HAM 2005.

<sup>5</sup> On local people making reports to NGOs, especially legal aid institutions, when they had been evicted, see Juliantara 1996: 109-111 and the series 'Indonesia's Human Rights Report' published by YLBHI.

taking power in 1966 (see Tjahjono 1979, Akhmadi 1981, Siregar 1994, and Culla 1999: 71-114).<sup>6</sup> Student movements at the end of the '70s, culminating in protests in 1978 about Soeharto's leadership as president, still had no focus on land rights for local people who were being evicted for development projects or manipulation by the bureaucracy including the president himself.<sup>7</sup> For instance, Indro Tjahjono, from the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB, Institut Teknologi Bandung), who was taken to court over his student activities in 1979, and who in the next decades became a prominent NGO activist defending local people's rights over land,<sup>8</sup> only very briefly mentioned manipulation and landholding by high-ranking government officers (*pejabat*) in his defence plea, which he referred to a case of famine in the late 70s in Karawang, West Java. In his defense speech at his trial at the Bandung State Court, 22 February 1979, he said only that 'land holdings by officials are always considered as a gift of development ... Are the villas owned by officials in the Puncak area resolving the problems of suffering people in Karawang who eat *eceng gondok*<sup>9</sup> for their survival<sup>10</sup>?' (Tjahjono 1979: ix).

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<sup>6</sup> Since the early 70s many groups of people, especially from rural areas, made reports about their problems to, the Student Council of the University of Indonesia (DM-UI, Dewan Mahasiswa Universitas Indonesia). These were collected and collated as part of the evidence to support claims of maladministration of the Soeharto regime. See Mangiang 1981: 103.

<sup>7</sup> In 1971 President Soeharto ordered the development of his family-owned Tapos ranch in Ciawi, Bogor, which involved evictions from agricultural land and hamlets of local people. See Bachriadi and Lucas 2001 for the case of the Tapos ranch project. In the 1970, an ambitious project of the Indonesia's First Lady, Tien Soeharto, namely the Beautiful Indonesia Miniature Park, (TMII, Taman Mini Indonesia Indah), in eastern Jakarta, also involved evictions of local people. It is true that students conducted protests against the TMII project, but their concerns were more about waste of money, maladministration and power abuse as well as corruption, not the problems of land eviction and unfair compensation. See Budiman 1978: 618, also Mangiang 1981: 100-101 and Lane 2008: 66-67 about the TMII protests.

<sup>8</sup> In 1982 Indro Tjahjono and other NGO activists in Indonesia founded the Indonesian NGO Network for Forest Conservation (SKEPHI, Sekretariat Kerjasama untuk Pelestarian Hutan Indonesia) that became very active in campaigning about deforestation as well as evictions in Indonesia. SKEPHI published a monthly magazine, *Setiakawan*, between mid-1989 and the end of 1993 that always included cases of eviction and agrarian conflict in many areas of Indonesia during the 1980s-90s.

<sup>9</sup> The famine food *eceng gondok* is kind of water hyacinth, *eichornia crassipes*, with swollen petioles that float on water and have lavender flowers.

<sup>10</sup> The incident of harvest failure on the north coast of West Java was caused by pest attack and a long drought in 1977. It caused a local food shortage and many villagers of Karawang, which had been usually known as the 'rice granary' of West Java, had to consume *eceng gondok* (see note above) for their survival. See *Tempo* 8 October 1977: 55-56, and *Tempo* 29 October 1977: 27-28.

The only exception to the absence of references to agrarian problems in public statements from the 70s student movement was a mention of two land dispute cases (*Jenggawah* in Jember, East Java and *Siria-ria* in North Tapanuli, North Sumatra) in the defense speech of a student leader of the University of Indonesia (UI, Universitas Indonesia), Ibrahim G. Zakir.<sup>11</sup> Of the hundreds of land cases that occurred at that time,<sup>12</sup> these two were given coverage by local and national print media because of the strong resistance of the local people.<sup>13</sup> In his speech in the Jakarta District Court in 1979, Zakir stated his belief that land cases would continue to spread in many areas: 'I am not a fortune-teller, but land problems will flourish in the future. Exploitation in rural areas is already strangling the peasant's throat. One by one, from Jenggawah to Siria-ria, peasants are being threatened and evicted' give Indonesian original in a footnote (Zakir 1980: 56).

Repression of the student movements in 1978 followed by the depoliticization of campus activities<sup>14</sup> reduced criticism of the New Order's developmentalism in the first quarter of the 80s decade. Meanwhile military involvement in land conflicts and use of the communist stigma on protestors quickly ended local protests before they became a political issue that could

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<sup>11</sup> The student movement at the end of 70s, which culminated in r demonstrations against Soeharto as president in 1978, ended in the arrests of many of the student leaders in several cities in Indonesia with 33 charged in the courts.

<sup>12</sup> 'Opstib Pusat' (the National Operation for Public Order), a special arm of the Command for the Restoration of Security and Public Order (Kopkamtib, Komando Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban), at the end of 1978 had received 283 complaints, 205 relating to land problems. During 1978-1979, it received 307 complaints from citizens about maladministration cases relate to land affairs. The National Parliament (DPR-RI, *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republik Indonesia*) in its session at the end of 1978 stated that it had received reports of 39 land cases by people (see *Kompas* 5 February 1979, *Tempo* 1 September 1979: 17-19, and Radjagukguk 1979: 14 especially notes 77 and 78).

<sup>13</sup> Jenggawah was a complex case of land occupation by local people on a plantation estate owned by the state company PTP XXVIII in Jember, East Java. The case of Siria-ria involved reforestation on land that was already being used for small coffee plantations by local people of Siria-ria Village, North Tapanuli district. For more details of these cases, including the arrest of local people who were resisting the takeovers, see *Tempo* 11 August 1979: 8 and 10; *Sinar Indonesia Baru* 8 August 1979 and *Sinar Harapan* 3 August 1979; also Radjagukguk 1979: 14, especially note 79; and Hafid 2001. Another wave of violations and evictions in Jenggawah occurred 15 years later, see *Jawa Pos* 3-6 June 1993, *Kompas* 1 June 1995, and Hafid 2001 for details of these incidents.

<sup>14</sup> About depoliticization of campus and student activities see Mangiang 1981: 105-106, Radjab 1991: 74-75, Culla 1998: 117-125, and Aspinall 2005: 120-121.

challenge the New Order's power (*Kompas* 5 February 1979, *Tempo* 11 August 1979: 8, 10 and 1 September 1979: 17-19). The absence of other social movement groups that made a political issue of land eviction cases, which continued unabated in many areas since the end of 70s, and the mass media's timid reporting on land disputes, also contributed to this 'silence'.<sup>15</sup> However, the wave of global human rights movements that strengthened after the promulgation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), opened new windows on human rights violation issues of land eviction cases in Indonesia. Taking up problems of eviction and land rights violations began to be part of a systematic campaign in order to 'restore' human rights in Indonesia, particularly after the Indonesian Legal Aid Institute Foundation (YLBHI, Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia)<sup>16</sup> developed a 'structural legal aid' approach in order to defend human rights of marginalized people. In this approach legal aid was not limited to assistance in court actions, but covered campaigning and advocacy to encourage structural change in society as a condition for maintaining human rights. According to a later account by Buyung Nasution, one of the founders of the YLBHI, 'the structural approach of legal aid is 'broad and political rather than narrow and legal' (Nasution 1994: 119).<sup>17</sup> Since 1979 YLBHI has published an annual

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<sup>15</sup> Strong pressure on the press by the New Order regime after the student protests in 1978 made the mass media careful to publish reports of mass protests against land evictions for 'development projects'. The case of the revoking of publishing licenses of seven Jakarta dailies and seven student newspapers in January 1978 after reporting student protests made the press editors and owners very careful about what to publish (see Hill 1994: 39).

<sup>16</sup> YLBHI was founded in 1971. This institute was originally formed as PERADIN (Persatuan Advokat Indonesia, Indonesian Advocates Association) to provide legal assistance to the poor. Now it had legal aid offices in 14 cities (Banda Aceh, Medan, Padang, Palembang, Bandar Lampung, Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Semarang, Surabaya, Denpasar, Makassar, Manado and Jayapura). Initial funding for the legal aid institute came from the liberal governor of Jakarta, Ali Sadikin. The Jakarta administration continued to support YLBHI until 1986. NOVIB of the Netherlands was the biggest foreign donor to this legal aid institute since the late 70s before stopping its support in the early 2000s. See Eldridge: 1995 100-103 and Lev 2000: 283-304 about the origin and history of the YLBHI.

<sup>17</sup> See also Lubis 1986 for an argument about the relationship between legal aid and structural poverty.

'Report on the Human Rights Situation in Indonesia' as part of this campaign for the need for structural change.<sup>18</sup>

YLBHI, with branch offices in several cities in Indonesia, began to provide advocacy for victims of evictions from various 'development' projects, which were no longer concentrated only in Java but were spreading out to other regions since the beginning of the 80s. In its 1990 report, the YLBHI stated that the number of complaints related to land problems had increased since 1987 (Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia 1990: 99). Many cases reported were not only relating to the eviction of peasants from their agricultural land in the big plantation cases, but included various 'development' projects in Java's and Sumatra's urban areas. Conflicts based on competing claims over land were now occurring in remote areas in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Papua as the impacts of the opening up of new plantation areas and the implementation of contract farming, development of forestry and timber industries, mining industries, construction of big dams, and other development activities spread to small islands such as Karimun Jawa, Bintan and Gili islands (near Lombok) where local people were being forced to leave their land for tourism development projects.<sup>19</sup>

Two approaches were developed by legal aid offices to handle these land cases, 'litigation' and 'non-litigation'. In the litigation approach, land dispute

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<sup>18</sup> The reports of YLBHI to the public about the condition of human rights in Indonesia was published annually with different titles, but was usually known as *Laporan Keadaan Hak Azasi Manusia di Indonesia* (Report of the Human Rights Situation in Indonesia).

<sup>19</sup> About land dispute cases over the Dayaks' customary land for forestry industries see Djuweng 1996 and Gunawan, Thamrin and Suhendar 1999. Bantaya 1997 and Wanembu 1996 discuss several cases of eviction of indigenous people from their customary land for big plantation development in North and Southeast Sulawesi and Papua. For disputes resulting from the expansion of the tourism industry on the island of Karimun see Joko HS 1994; the Bintan island case is in 'Data-base Konflik Agraria KPA', case-id no. 1220; and for the Gili Islands case see KPA Wilayah NTB 1997 and Firmansyah *et al.* 1999: 125-138. For cases of big dam development, see Stanley 1994 (the case of Kedung Ombo dam in Central Java) and Firmansyah *et al.* 1999: 42-50 (the case of Koto Panjang dam in West Sumatra); for other cases see the five edited books by Fidro and Fauzi 1995; Harman *et al.* 1995: 115-329; Yayasan Sintesa and SPSU 1998; Bachriadi, Faryadi and Setiawan 1997; and Suryaalam 2003. Issues of *Setiakawan* magazine published by SKEPHI from mid-1989 until the end of 1993 contain detailed stories of eviction and agrarian conflicts that happened in the 1980-90s in many parts of Indonesia.

cases were brought to a relevant court for resolution. This approach was usually chosen because of arrests and trials of local people who had been resisting the evictions. Along with legal aid for those arrested, and for the violence and torture experienced by local protesters, legal aid institutions raised the issue of the land rights of local people as a base of defense in the court beside the issue of criminalization, when they fought for what the law formally declared were their citizen's rights. The non-litigation approach, sometimes called the 'collective advocacy' method by YLBHI, was conducted by carrying out a series of public campaigns on local people's rights over land based on existing laws and regulations as well as universal human rights principles. 'NGOs frequently raised the problems of these marginal people as part of social communication, so that very often they spoke in the name of the people in order to urge a kind of collective advocacy' (Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia 1990: 70).

Several methods of campaigning, protesting and lobbying to government institutions and parliaments, both at local and national levels were included in the 'non-litigation' approach<sup>20</sup> (interview with activist of LBH-Bandung, Bandung 19 July 2008 [No.: S-03]). In this approach, attempts to develop action networks that involved other NGOs and groups of student were becoming important. Also we see the beginning of community organizing work, which later became the foundation for peasant organizing toward the formation of embryonic peasant organizations (interview with activist of LBH-Bandung, Bandung 19 July 2008 [No.: S-03]).

Examples of campaigning in the New Order period that involved various social movement groups (legal aid institutes, student movement groups, and other non-government organizations) were published in the 1991 calendar-poster '*Tanah untuk Rakyat*' (the 'Land for People' Calendar). This calendar-

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<sup>20</sup> Some other activists and movement groups called this method a 'political struggle strategy' to differentiate from the legal aid approach.

poster caused the gaoling of two people charged with disseminating it<sup>21</sup> and two others went into hiding, one overseas.<sup>22</sup> A campaign on rights to self-determination was publicized through a 1997 poster from the Consortium for Agrarian Reform (KPA, Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria). Sponsored by eight mainly human rights NGOs, the 1991 *Tanah Untuk Rakyat* calendar included caricatures by 'Yayak Kencrit'<sup>23</sup> about the operation of forces of capitalism supported by New Order regime repression together with stories of six land conflicts in Indonesia.<sup>24</sup> The 1997 KPA poster declared the right of self-determination of indigenous peoples, as stated both in the International

<sup>21</sup> They were two students from Satya Wacana Christian University (UKSW, Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana), Salatiga. Both were members of the Geni Foundation, a study group based in Salatiga (*Tempo* 25 Mei 1991: 85). See also Lucas 1992: 79-80 and Ulrich and Ismaya 1995.

<sup>22</sup> Maria Pakpahan, a student activist of Gadjah Mada University and a women's rights activist of the Yogyakarta's Women Discussion Forum (FDPY, Forum Diskusi Perempuan Yogyakarta); and the poster's designer and creator Yayak Kencrit.

<sup>23</sup> His original name was Bambang Aditya Pradana, but he used the name Yayak Kencrit or sometimes Yayak Iskra Yatmaka or Iskra Ismaya. Of Yogyakarta origin, he had been a social activist since his time at the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) in the 70s. The ban on this calendar-poster and a police pursuit led him and Maria Pakpahan, whose organization had been one of the publishers of this 'banned material', to flee Indonesia to live in Europe. Pakpahan returned, but Iskra lived there for many years until the fall of Soeharto in 1998. Part of the calendar was reproduced as the cover for Bachriadi and Lucas 2001. See Lucas 1992 for an introduction to this case as a background to an analysis of land disputes in Indonesia.

<sup>24</sup> These were Jatiwangi (where 2,291 families claimed rights over 1,023 ha of land that the Indonesian air force was renting out since 1987); Kedung Ombo (where 22 villages had to give up 5,910 ha to the government for a dam); Pulau Panggung (where 400 houses of cultivators were burnt in a reforestation dispute with the State Forestry Corporation Perhutani in Lampung South Sumatra); Badega (where 579 families fought for control of 500 ha that the government had leased to a private company PT SAM); Blangguan (where 200 families were paid Rp 200 per square meter and told leave their 140 ha land which Indonesian Marines claimed for military exercises) and Cimacan (where 287 families were paid Rp 30 per square meter and told leave their 31.5 ha land which will use for development of golf course owned by PT BAM, Bandung Asri Mulia). The eight NGOs sponsoring the calendar were the Student Movement Committee for Indonesian People (KPMuRI, Komite Pergerakan Mahasiswa Untuk Rakyat Indonesia), the Human Rights Defenders Institute (LPHAM, Lembaga Pembela Hak-Hak Azasi Manusia), the Yogyakarta Institute for Studies of People Rights (LEKHAT, Lembaga Kajian Hak-Hak Masyarakat Yogyakarta), the Indonesian Women's Awakening Group (KKPI, Kelompok Kebangkitan Perempuan Indonesia), the Centre for Human Rights Information and Studies (INSAN, Informasi dan Studi Hak-Hak Asasi Manusia), Yogyakarta's Women Discussion Forum (FDPY, Forum Diskusi Perempuan Yogyakarta), the Indonesian Front for the Defence of Human Rights (INFIGHT), and the Bandung Legal Aid Institute (LBH Bandung). The wall calendar poster also had an anonymous poem 'About a Movement': *Tadinya aku kepingin bilang:// aku butuh rumah// tapi lantas kuganti dengan kalimat// setiap orang butuh tanah// ingat: setiap orang!!! Aku berfikir tentang// sebuah gerakan// tetapi mana mungkin// aku nuntut sendirian?// Aku bukan orang suci// yang bisa hidup dari sekepal nasi// dan air sekendil// aku butuh celana dan baju// untuk menutup kemaluanku// Aku berpikir tentang gerakan// tetapi mana mungkin// Kalau diam?* See Appendix 13 for a picture of the 'Tanah Untuk Rakyat' ['Land for the People'] wall calendar-poster.

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), including the right to maintain their customary land.<sup>25</sup>

For many activists, joining legal aid organizations to articulate various violations of human rights in land conflicts was a part of the struggle to delegitimize the New Order's authoritarian power and to work for democratization in Indonesia. As stated by the YLBHI, 'people who experienced land eviction also supported democratization because it was in their interests to struggle for it, either through private associations such as LBH or through the parliament, because they appealed to these institutions about unfair treatments' (Kusumah *et al.* 1991: 36).

The legal aid institutions, such as YLBHI's offices, which as we have noted, had been set up in many of Indonesia's big cities, became directly involved in hundreds of land cases in many parts of the country.<sup>26</sup> Until 1998, legal aid offices of YLBHI had been involved in 335 cases (YLBHI 1998; see also Lucas and Warren 2000: 224-225); according to the KPA's Data-base of Agrarian Conflict, in West Java there had been 480 cases in this province from the 70s until 2001 with only 45 of these handled by the YLBHI's office in Bandung, the Bandung Legal Aid Institute, from 1984 to 2007. Fifteen of those 45 were cases had come up before 1998, while the others were recorded in the post-Soeharto era.<sup>27</sup> Also 15 of the 45 were cases that had come up in the eastern Priangan region of West Java, which later became the base of the Pasundan Peasant's

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<sup>25</sup> The statement 'Indonesia is a Diverse Nation! Indigenous Peoples have the Right to Self-determination' was emblazoned on this poster which was covered by pictures of indigenous people's customs and assertions of their rights over land.

<sup>26</sup> Because many cases did not have YLBHI or other NGO involvement, there is no single authoritative source that can provide the total of land cases in Indonesia. Many sources report different numbers. Several government institutions such as the National Land Agency (BPN) and the Department of Forestry, National Parliament (DPR, Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat), judiciary institutions, the National Ombudsman Commission (KON, Komisi Ombudsman Nasional) as well as the National Commission of Human Rights (KOMNAS HAM) give different numbers based on their own sources and records that were used for different purposes. So too, non-government organizations recorded land cases for their own campaign and advocacy activities.

<sup>27</sup> Based on LBH-Bandung's document of the 'List of land claims cases in West Java, 1984-2008'.

Union (SPP, Serikat Petani Pasundan)<sup>28</sup>, with the LBH-Bandung involved in only 7 of these Priangan cases before Soeharto stepped down in 1998.

Many local land disputes did not become matters of wider public awareness, particularly in areas where social movement groups and/or legal aid offices that combined public campaigning with grassroots organizing and advocacy did not exist. In Bengkulu province, for instance, based on the KPA's Data-base of Agrarian Conflict, since the 80s around 10 land dispute cases occurred because of 'development' projects for conservation areas, dams and big plantation estates. In most of these cases victims of eviction asked private law firms for help, which was provided as legal aid for litigation. This could be successful. For example, Muspani, previously a lawyer in a Bengkulu private law firm before he founded a legal aid NGO and became a prominent social movement activist, told this writer that he had provided legal assistance to local people of Tebat Monok in Kepahyang District, who had been evicted because of the implementation of a Forestry Land Use Agreement (TGHK, Tata Guna Hutan Kesepakatan) policy in 1995. In a court case during 1995-1996, he won the local people's claim over land against the forestry authority claim that the area was part of Bengkulu provincial State Forest (interview with Muspani, Bengkulu, 2 January 2008 [No.: E-03]). However, he used a strictly formal-legal approach.

Subsequently, the issue of land conflicts in Bengkulu province became part of the focus around which social movements were organized, when Muspani and two other lawyers changed their method of work and formed the Bengkulu Legal Aid Office (KBHB, Kantor Bantuan Hukum Bengkulu) in 1997, inviting local university students to be organizers (interview with former General Secretary of PKBH-Bengkulu, Yogyakarta, 8 June 2007 [No.: B-31]). After 1997 this strategic change from just providing legal assistance in the formal legal processes into a combining of legal aid, campaigning and grassroots organizing by the KBH-Bengkulu was a significant foundation for the

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<sup>28</sup> The SPP will be fully explored in Chapter VIII and IX.

formation of the Bengkulu Peasant Union (STaB, Serikat Tani Bengkulu), one year later (see chapter VII on STaB).

There were limitations of the legal aid approach, such as having to rely on a formal invitation from activists wanting to set up an organization, and the legal aid office having power of attorney. As legal aid institutions, they were hampered in advocacy and campaigning on cases if they did not have formal power of attorney. Meanwhile land claim disputes involving clashes with formal law and public policy needed court decisions to have legal certainty. These decisions frequently did not address the claims of the victims of eviction.

For social movement activists who saw land conflicts more in political rather than legal terms, the litigation advocacy approach seemed to be problematic. They considered that legal processes in Indonesia had been co-opted by the state and that court decisions were manipulated.<sup>29</sup> They criticized the methods of compromise, very often offered by lawyers, believing that these could not resolve the roots of the agrarian conflicts that were grounded in the authoritarian politics of the time. Moreover for those who had lost land, as well as their organizers, this frustrating condition could lead to direct action through re-occupation of the disputed land.

Since the mid-90s, many parties involved in legal i.e. litigation advocacy affairs in Indonesia were beginning to campaign for an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) approach, essentially an attempt to work out a compromise outside the court system.<sup>30</sup> The development of the ADR mechanism to resolve various disputes was subsequently taken up by several YLBHI lawyers who believed this mechanism could be an alternative instrument to resolve all disputes fairly, including agrarian disputes (Bachriadi 1998c: 12).<sup>31</sup> It seemed the reality of legal decisions over land dispute cases, which usually resulted in

<sup>29</sup> See, for instance, Bachriadi and Lucas 2001 also Bachriadi 2004 for this matter.

<sup>30</sup> In the 1990s the Ministerial Assistant for Law Development of the National Development Planning Board (Asisten Menteri Bidang Pembangunan Hukum Bappenas) was a government officer in charge of the public campaign to develop the ADR mechanism as a matter of urgency.

<sup>31</sup> See also Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Bandung 1998.

the eviction of local people as the losers, made many lawyers optimistic that the ADR mechanism might be an alternative approach. However this was not always the case. SKEPHI<sup>32</sup> was one of the social movement groups that became deeply concerned with the use of the ADR approach in order to resolve land conflicts. SKEPHI was involved in organizing and campaigning to defend the rights of people of Cimacan in West Java who had been evicted from their land for golf course development. It protested against the YLBHI and LBH-Jakarta because their lawyers preferring to use the mediation method rather than seek a political solution to the conflict between Cimacan's farmers and the investor favoured by SKEPHI.<sup>33</sup> SKEPHI believed compromise attempts by LBH lawyers, namely litigation through the courts and ADR, would not be successful to defend the rights of evicted people. Moreover, SKEPHI considered the legal aid model provide by LBH-Jakarta in order to resolve the roots of this conflict, would hamper an ongoing political struggle for the Cimacan farmer's rights over land (Bachriadi and Lucas 2001: 71-72).

SKEPHI, which had been founded in the mid-1982 by NGO activists, believed that a political approach with mass mobilization was the most appropriate strategy, not only to help the victims of land evictions to understand more about their political rights as citizens, but also to challenge the New Order regime. Moreover, several key organizers, such as Indro Tjahjono and Danial Indrakusuma, who were among the pioneers in the attempts to develop a mass-based social movement strategy during the New Order, thought that mass politics and mobilization was important in order to develop an alliance movement of potential radical opposition groups, such as those of peasants, workers, students and other radical middle class elements (see Lane 2008: 124-126). The 'political struggle' approach developed by SKEPHI rested more on mass actions, popular education and organizing the

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<sup>32</sup> About SKEPHI see note 8 above.

<sup>33</sup> See *Gaung* 12/II, September 1989, p. 7.

potential bases of local protest movements, which in practice were mostly conducted by student activists.<sup>34</sup>

By the end of the 80s, many more social movement groups were involved in campaigns and actions to defend evicted local people and 'victims of development'. These included several new legal aid organizations, which opened offices in many regions with activists wishing to defend peasants' rights.<sup>35</sup> Several of these new advocacy institutes based on legal aid activities were established by activists who had previously been with the YLBHI, but had left as a result of various internal conflicts in this fast-growing organization.<sup>36</sup> This tendency reflected the fact that the legal aid approach was considered by many as an appropriate method to organize 'victims' in resolving land conflicts. Also, new and already established NGOs, other than legal aid-based organizations, concentrating on 'participative rural development' issues, were becoming involved in campaigning and advocacy over eviction cases and violations of local people's rights on land. These campaigns, conducted by various NGOs, either locally operated or part of 'nation-wide' networks, had different focuses, such as human rights and democratization,<sup>37</sup> rights of

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<sup>34</sup> For the significance of SKEPHI in the development of a 'different' approach of NGOs' work in Indonesia at that time see, for instance, Setiawan 1996: 42-43 and Lane 2008: 125-128.

<sup>35</sup> For instance, the Bogor-based LBH-Ampera and LBH-Cianjur were involved in many actions over land conflicts around Bogor and Cianjur, West Java; the People's Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHR, Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Rakyat) was involved in defending rights of evicted peasants in Lombok and other islands in West Nusa Tenggara; and KBH-Bengkulu, which was founded in 1997, became the motivator of a rural social movement in Bengkulu as well as the initiator of the network of legal aid offices, the Association of Legal Aid Offices (PKBH, Perkumpulan Kantor Bantuan Hukum) in that province.

<sup>36</sup> These institutes were the LBH-Nusantara, founded by Efendi Saman (previously a lawyer in the LBH-Bandung); a network of legal aid offices organized as the Indonesian Foundation for Legal Aid and Education (YPBHI, Yayasan Pendidikan Bantuan Hukum Indonesia), founded by Dedy Mawardi (previously a lawyer in the LBH Bandar Lampung of YLBHI) among others, including several lawyer alumni of the Faculty of Law of the Indonesian Islamic University of Yogyakarta (UII); and the Association of Indonesian Legal Aid (PBHI, Perkumpulan Bantuan Hukum Indonesia), which was founded by Hendardi among others (he was previously a student activist at the Bandung Institute of Technology in the 70s who joined the YLBHI then left after an internal conflict). For internal conflicts in the YLBHI, see, for instance, *Suara Pembaruan* 7 May 1996 and Uhlin 1997: 100.

<sup>37</sup> For instance, those run by the Indonesian Front for the Defence of Human Rights (INFIGHT), the Center for Human Rights Information and Study (INSAN, Informasi dan Studi untuk Hak-hak Azasi Manusia), the Human Rights Defenders Institute (LPHAM, Lembaga Pembela Hak-hak Azasi Manusia), the Institute of Human Rights Studies (ELSAM, Lembaga Studi Hak Azasi Manusia), the

indigenous people,<sup>38</sup> environmental issues,<sup>39</sup> rural development,<sup>40</sup> development and foreign debt,<sup>41</sup> including agrarian policy reform and promotion of agrarian reform ideas.<sup>42</sup> In this torrent of activism, locally operated NGOs<sup>43</sup> were important elements in the organizing of people in eviction areas and in campaigning activities that were conducted at provincial,<sup>44</sup> national and even international levels.

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Human Rights Study Centre Foundation (YAPUSHAM, Yayasan Pusat Studi Hak Azasi Manusia), and the Centre for Human Rights Information (PIPHAM, Pusat Informasi Hak Azasi Manusia).

<sup>38</sup> Such as those run by the Association for Law and Society (HUMA, Perkumpulan untuk Hukum dan Masyarakat); a network of human rights defenders, the Network of Defenders of Indigenous People Rights (JAPHAMA, Jaringan Pembela Hak-hak Masyarakat Adat); and a network of indigenous communities, the Indigenous People' Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN, Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara).

<sup>39</sup> Such as those run by the Friends of the Earth Indonesia (WALHI, Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia), the Indonesian NGOs Network for Forest Conservation (SKEPHI, Sekretariat untuk Pelestarian Hutan Indonesia), the Indonesian Tropical Institute (LATIN, Lembaga Alam Tropika Indonesia), the Study Group for People's Initiatives and Community Development (KSPPM, Kelompok Studi Prakarsa dan Pengembangan Masyarakat) and the Network for Mining Advocacy (JATAM, Jaringan Advokasi Tambang).

<sup>40</sup> Bina Desa and Bitra Indonesia were among other groups that focused on rural development.

<sup>41</sup> The International NGOs Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID) is an example.

<sup>42</sup> The Consortium for Agrarian Reform (KPA), a network of organizations and individuals, is an example in this field.

<sup>43</sup> Such as the Institute for Rural Development and Education (LPPP, Lembaga Pengembangan dan Pendidikan Pedesaan) in West Java; the SINTESA Foundation in North Sumatra; the Institute for Studies of People Rights (LEKHAT, Lembaga Kajian Hak-hak Masyarakat Yogyakarta), the Geni Foundation and the Institute of Defenders of the Peoples (LAPERA, Lembaga Pembela Rakyat), among others in Yogyakarta and Central Java; the Arek Foundation in East Java; the Manikaya Kauci in Bali; the Advocacy Network for the People (JAKAD, Jaringan Advokasi Rakyat) in West Nusa Tenggara; the Centre of Information and People's Advocacy (PIAR, Pusat Informasi dan Advokasi Rakyat) in East Nusa Tenggara; the Institute of Bela Banua Talino (LBBT, Lembaga Bela Banua Talino) and the Institute of Dayakology Research and Development (IDRD) in West Kalimantan; the Talusung Damar Foundation in Central Kalimantan; the Puti Jaji Bina Banua Institute in East Kalimantan; the Tanah Merdeka Foundation (YTM, Yayasan Tanah Merdeka), Bantaya Foundation and Evergreen Foundation in Central Sulawesi and ; the Institute of Defenders of Indigenous Peoples (LPMA, Lembaga Pembela Masyarakat Adat) in Papua. Many other organizations not mentioned here were also actively organizing, campaigning and doing advocacy over land cases. However, most of these organizations joined in 'nation-wide' campaigning and advocacy networks with groups such as WALHI, INFID, JATAM, AMAN and KPA.

<sup>44</sup> In some regions, where provincial-based NGO networks existed, campaigns at regional and provincial level were usually conducted by network organizations such as the People's Information Network (WIM, Wahana Informasi Masyarakat) in North Sumatra, the Yogyakarta NGOs Forum (Forum LSM-DIY) in Yogyakarta, and the Papuan NGOs Cooperation Forum (Foker [Forum Kerja Sama] LSM Papua).

Many of the ‘solidarity action committees’ of student movement groups, formed either exclusively or as alliances between student groups and NGOs, became important in the campaign for people’s rights over land. They had bigger goals, namely delegitimizing the New Order authoritarianism.<sup>45</sup> Peasant organizations which operated both in local (such as SPP and STaB among others) and national (Indonesian Peasants Union [SPI, Serikat Petani Indonesia], Indonesian Peasant Alliance (API, Aliansi Petani Indonesia) and others, which had been formed since the beginning of the 90s as a continuation of rural organizing work, were an important part of the new character of rural social movements in Indonesia that were now based more in rural areas.<sup>46</sup> Another recent grouping was a network of indigenous communities, consolidated into the Indigenous Peoples’ Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN, Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara) that also regards rural communities as its basis of political support. If the NGOs referred to above (and in footnotes 33-42), mostly conducted their campaigning in urban areas, this was due to two factors. Firstly because of the political capacities of urban-educated activists, and secondly because centers of state power were located there. In contrast, peasant organizations and indigenous networks exemplified attempts to build an alternative political power base of marginalized rural people.

The urban-based social movement organizations ranged in form from single to network organizations, and from temporary and loose networks of individuals, to permanent network organizations which had only organizations as their members or had a mixed membership of individuals and organizations. Their actions ranged from litigation advocacy, public campaigning through to the print media, lobbying the authorities, to demonstrations. These were conducted in many public places (on the streets, at the locations of evictions, government offices and the courts, parliamentary buildings, city parks and plazas and on campuses). Activities included various ‘popular education’ activities and grassroots organizing in order to educate the victims of eviction

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<sup>45</sup> The student movement will be explored more specifically in sub-section 4.2.

<sup>46</sup> The rebirth of local and national peasant organizations will be explored in Chapter VI-VIII.

about their rights and problems from various legal, economic and political perspectives, as well as raising their consciousness about their rights as citizens.<sup>47</sup>

Besides making complaints to urban-based social movement organizations, evicted people still made reports to government institutions and district assemblies (DPRD), as well as to the national parliament in Jakarta. This was done even though their leaders were pessimistic about the ability of those formal institutions to bring their problems to a fair resolution. Some evicted people hoped the demonstrations would lead to a more pro-people public policy making process, or to more control over governance (interviews with activist of LBH-Bandung, Bandung 19 July 2008 [No.: S-03], and with three peasant leaders from West Java and Bengkulu peasant movements [*Berjuang untuk Tanah, Penghidupan, dan Kebebasan*’, recorded interviews for oral history project, tape no: 1-5, 11 and interview No. B-03, Bengkulu 29 June 2006). A Bengkulu peasant who had been a victim of land grabbing and became a leader of STaB, expressed his disappointment with the political party, which he had supported for long time:

No political organizations care for the suffering of peasants that have lost their land here. I served as local leader of Golkar, [but] having lost my land, my party did not give any help to me and other villagers. I had campaigned for their victories in every election, and almost all voters in my sub-district actually voted for Golkar in every election; but now we must struggle alone to defend our rights. With no help from the party that I fought for over such a long time, instead [now I am] criticized for obstructing development (interview in Bengkulu 29 June 2006 [No.: B-03]).

The failure of local assemblies, the national parliament and other government and judicial institutions to resolve land dispute cases provided an opportunity for NGOs and student movements to use land cases from the mid-80s until the end of the 90s to re-articulate the necessity for regime change and the overthrow of the New Order administration. Also, from the beginning of the

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<sup>47</sup> This variety is summarized in Appendix 1, which provides a table of the actions of urban-based social movement organizations that used agrarian conflicts in Indonesia as issues for political action.

90s, coalitions of NGOs and student movement activists, supported by several academics from various universities<sup>48</sup> was also beginning to re-articulate the urgency of fundamental change in agrarian policy, including the promotion of agrarian reform in Indonesia.<sup>49</sup>

#### **4.2 The Student Movement of the 80s: the New Format, toward Mass Politics**

Different from previous student movements, which had concentrated on a set of macro issues of national significance – such as the national debt, the role of foreign capital, the development strategy, levels of corruption and the involvement of the country's top generals and bureaucrats in business – the student movement in the decade of the mid-1980s to mid-1990s was organized around two sets of issues. First, the extension of students' political rights and the winning back of campus space for student political activism, and second, the problems experienced by poor communities. Both these issues led the student movement to challenge the authoritarian Soeharto regime again. Nevertheless, these problems continued, and the associated series of student solidarity actions, which occurred in many places and on many occasions, in support of the problems of the poor, especially local people experiencing evictions in Indonesia, made the latter set of issues more dominant over time (see Faryadi 2007: 319-321; Lane 1989 and 2008: 124-126; Denny J.A. 1989; Aditjondro 1990; Aspinall 1993, 1995 and 2005: 122-129). In one actor's words the 'student movement in these years had a more down-to-earth outlook' (Juliantara 1996: 106). Moreover it was claimed that the student movement in this decade was more populist in outlook than other student movements since Indonesian independence (Radjab 1999: xviii).

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<sup>48</sup> Such as Gunawan Wiradi and SMP Tjondronegoro from Bogor Agricultural Institute (IPB), Achmad Sodiki of Brawijaya University, and Soetandyo Wignjosubroto of Airlangga University.

<sup>49</sup> Chapter V will explain more about this topic.

The emergence of the theme of the 80s student movement, namely focusing on the social, economic and political problems of the poor, was caused by 4 factors: First, the intensity, developed from the beginning of the 80s, of the formation of study groups,<sup>50</sup> which discussed socio-political and economic problems of Indonesian society (see *Tempo* 22 April 1989: 28-30);<sup>51</sup> second, their interconnectivity with the NGO movement which was involved in advocacy cases related to violations of human rights (see Radjab 1991: 76 and Lane 2008: 90); third, as a strategy, learnt from previous student movement experiences, to avoid direct confrontation with the state and centers of power (Denny J.A. 1989: 77); and fourth, a contrary strategy to work together with evicted rural groups as a reflection of an emerging new consciousness among student activists to rebuild a strategy for mass politics and mobilization (Lane 2008: 90-131).

A student movement that blended into study groups outside the campuses, after in-campus student organizations had been repressed by the Soeharto regime in 1978, followed by a campus depoliticization policy from the beginning of the 80s, did not satisfy some activists' political aspirations. They considered that a channeling of this urban educated middle class' social and political concerns only through off-campus study groups was insufficient as a form of expression of the students' role as a moral force and agent of change.<sup>52</sup> Some of these critical student groups believed they had to conduct direct actions as an expression of this role. Many student activists in Indonesia felt

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<sup>50</sup> For the development of study groups in the 80s, see *Tempo* 22 April 1989: 28-30, Denny J.A. 1989: 76, Culla 1998: 126-128, Radjab 1991: 74-76, and Aspinall 2005: 121.

<sup>51</sup> In Aditjondro's 1990 view, student activists in the 80s had a better grasp of theory than their predecessors in the 60s and 70s, who depended on theoretical input from outside their own circles. The 80s student activists' actions was based on their own in-depth reading (Aditjondro 1990: 20).

<sup>52</sup> The position of students as 'moral guardians' of the society, according to Pieke 1998 and Kluver 1998, has roots in the eastern tradition. Students have the motive and are expected to protest; and they see themselves to some extent as actors on the historical stage, fulfilling their role on a cosmic plan. In the Indonesian context, a vision of a student movement based more on moral than political interest as well as being involve in political games for power, was enunciated by ex-student activists of the '66 movement after reflecting on the weaknesses and failures of their movement, which overthrew Soekarno's power (Mangiang 1981: 100-101). On this issue see also Siregar 2001.

they had to carry 'historical mandates' as agents of change.<sup>53</sup> They always referred to the history of the independence revolution as having been coloured by the role of 'students' and 'youth' as important actors in freeing their nation from colonialism. That is why some student activists of the 80s frequently took the view that social, economic, political and cultural developments in Indonesia society were like a new kind of colonialism (see defense statements in court by Purba 1990 and Ammarsyah 1990). Land grabbing cases, evictions and ignoring the rights of local people over use of land was viewed as arising from the same mechanism of colonial rule; taking people's access to their sources of livelihood for unlimited exploitation by capitalist enterprises.<sup>54</sup>

An ex-Bandung-based student activist who, after the end of 1987,<sup>55</sup> was involved in many actions in Indonesia to defend the rights of peasants and other marginalized people, has said that research and discussion in study groups, which are conducted to sharpen analyses and to elaborate theoretical explanations with social facts, is not enough to change the reality, because

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<sup>53</sup> A vision of Indonesian students having a historical role not only as a moral force, but also as an agent of change, can be found in some defense speeches of students in their court trials because of their protests against the New Order. See Tjahjono 1979, Zakir 1980, Akhmadi 1981, Ammarsyah 1990, Hidayat 1990, Lasijanto 1990, Purba 1990, Rachman 1990 and Supriyanto 1999. For theoretical considerations on students' political roles, see Lipset 1967, Altbach 1989, Lipset and Altbach 1970, and DeGroot 1998. In the Indonesian context, theoretical considerations were published by Budiman 1976 and 1978; Heryanto 1989; Akhmad 1989; Aspinall 1993, 1995 and 2005: 116-144; and Siregar 2001 among others; while Douglas 1970 made an analysis of the socio-political background of the 60s student activists and of activism in Indonesia. A good historical analysis of educated youth in the Indonesian revolution was Anderson 1972, while analyses of student involvement in regime change in post-independence Indonesia can be found in Anwar 1980, Railon 1985, Culla 1998, Aspinall 2005, and Lane 2008: 60-62. For critical analyses on the political role of students as a moral force and well as an agent of change in Indonesia, see Mangiang 1981, Akhmadi 1985, Radjab 1991 and 1999.

<sup>54</sup> Student groups discussed various social, economic and political problems in Indonesia from the perspective of critical theory, from classical Marxism to dependency theories, and even the early version of post-colonial theory developed by Franz Fanon.

<sup>55</sup> In Bandung, for instance, some study groups such as the Kanal Study Group (Kelompok Studi Kanal); the Land Study Group (Kelompok Studi Pertanahan); the Saturday Study Group (Kelompok Diskusi Sabtu); and the Thesa Study Group (Kelompok Studi Thesa), discussed various case of evictions which had occurred since the middle of 1987. The Student Solidarity Committee for the People of Badega (KSMuRB, Komite Solidaritas Mahasiswa untuk Rakyat Badega), which was first among student movement groups to support peasants' rights in land issues, was formed in mid-1988 (see Ammarsyah 1990: 216, Faryadi 1997: 319, Hendaradi 1998: 99 [originally 1993]). These accounts can be compared to that of Lucas who emphasized that student groups have been involved in disputes with landholders over rights to land and over levels of compensation since 1989 (Lucas 1992: 90).

direct actions are needed (interview, Bandung 25 November 2008 [No.: S-04]).<sup>56</sup> Another, in his 1991 defense speech in the Bandung State Court in 1991, declared:

Hundreds, maybe thousands, of land cases and resistance occurred as an expression of people's rage against the voracity of the development bandits, from case to case and from place to place. These cases angered students and they began to articulate exploited voices through various actions ... The interests of the poor are our interests too ... I have been feeling all this intimidation, repression and terror throughout my body. This country is controlled by a tyranny, which is untiring in exploiting the poor, the landless, plantation workers and transmigrants whose houses were set on fire, and razed to the ground (Purba 1990: 14, 88 and 89).

The significant change in student movement methods from study groups into mass movements, which was signified by mass student actions outside the campuses *à la* 'street parliaments', was begun when massive student demonstrations occurred in some cities to demonstrate their solidarity against the bloody violence experienced by students in Makassar in their protests over police operations against motorcyclists who were not wearing crash helmets at the end of 1987.<sup>57</sup> Those actions initiated new kinds of student movement solidarity groups that relied on direct actions on the streets to express their political aspirations to challenge the Soeharto regime. Among solidarity groups which were formed after the Makassar incident, those declaring themselves to be in support of victims of land eviction and anti-violence were the most conspicuous.

Student mass actions were held not only on campuses, but also streets and other public spaces. The April 1988 'long march' of students and youth from Bandung to the district capital of Garut to support the Badega peasant leaders who were on trial in the Garut District Court, the student street

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<sup>56</sup> See also Naipospos 1996: 30, *Tempo* 22 April 1989: 22-30, and some defense speeches of Bandung students in the 1990 trial courts (Ammarsyah 1990, Hidayat 1990, Lasijanto 1990, Purba 1990, Rachman 1990 and Supriyanto 1999) for these topics.

<sup>57</sup> Two students were killed and many others were injured in this bloody incident because of the violent action of police and military officials used to break up that protest (*Tempo* 7 November 1987: 26 and 14 November 1987: 34).

demonstration in April 1989 against eviction in the heart of Bandung,<sup>58</sup> the student and youth mass actions at the Kedung Ombo dam project in Central Java,<sup>59</sup> and a student camp at Cimacan golf course on 29 October 1989<sup>60</sup> are four examples that achieved publicity at the end of the 1980s.

Subsequent writers have considered these student mass actions during the 80-90s to be important turning points of the student movement to reclaim its role in the democratization processes in Indonesia (see for instance Juliantara 1996: 103-104, Radjab 1999: xiv, and Aspinall 2005: 116-141). Different from previous student movements, the 80s student movement pulled out of university organizations such as the Student Councils (DM, Dewan Mahasiswa), they also avoided extra-university organizations, which had developed since the 60s and had traditionally had been linked with particular political groups.<sup>61</sup> The 80s student movement groups instead formed 'action committees', which as we have already noted, are loose movement networks, using the name of the cities in which they were based as their identity of origin, or they used the name of the human right violations case about which they were campaigning and actively advocating (*Tempo* 22 April 1989: 30; Nugroho 1995: 74-78; Juliantara 1996: 104; Radjab 1999: xv; and Bachriadi 2005a: xi-

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<sup>58</sup> Thousands of students and youth were involved both in the long march of about 60 km from Bandung to Garut on 28-29 April 1988 and a year later in the actions in the heart of Bandung in 17 April 1989. In the latter action 33 students were arrested and held for one day by the police. I was an eyewitness of both actions where student protesters faced certain violence by the police and military forces (*Editor* 22 April 1989: 22-23). In fact, mass student actions outside the campuses against evictions of peasants had been urged by students since January 1988, when together with housewives from Badega, they conducted a protest in front of the national Parliament Building in Jakarta. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 1988 a Bandung-based student group, the Student Solidarity Committee for the People of Badega (KSMuRB, Komite Solidaritas Mahasiswa untuk Rakyat Badega) had conducted a similar action in the West Java Provincial Parliament Building in Bandung. See Lane 1989: 14, and *Tempo* 22 April 1989: 26-27, which published a chronology of student actions during 1988-1989.

<sup>59</sup> Mass actions of students from some campuses in Central Java to protest the eviction of local people for the Kedung Ombo dam project were conducted at the project's location on 6 February 1988. Some of these demonstrators also conducted a similar protest at the Central Java Provincial Parliament building in Semarang. See *Inside Indonesia* No. 18 (April 1989), pp. 12-14.

<sup>60</sup> Hundreds of students from various universities in Java and South Sulawesi camped at the location of the golf course to commemorate Youth Pledge Day (which is actually on October 28). See *Setiakawan* No. 3 (November-December 1989), p. 53.

<sup>61</sup> Such as the Islamic Student's Association (HMI, Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam), the Union of Indonesian Christian Students (PMKI, Persatuan Mahasiswa Kristen Indonesia), the Indonesian Nationalist Student Movement (GMNI, Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia) and others.

xiii).<sup>62</sup> Calling themselves ‘student solidarity groups’ on the one hand reflected a vision of the students that recognized their outsider status, with sympathy for the victims of land evictions. By using this name they also wanted to share feelings of suffering with the victims of evictions, that they are also the victims of authoritarian politics of the New Order. On the other hand, they wanted to share analyses of the roots of land problems, which meant that authoritarian politics had to be challenged.

‘In these ‘committee’ movement strategies the design and tactics of actions, as well as solutions for social problems were cooked up’ (Suprpto 1998: 71 [originally 1993]). The lack of experiences of rural people to organize and formulate action strategies after the muzzling of rural mass-based organizations for so long in the post-1966 period, made them depended on the student groups and urban-based activists to formulate various action strategies.

On one hand, these movement groups were usually formed as small decentralized action units that consisted of students and ex-student activists, which were relatively autonomous. Involvement was on an individual basis, even though sometimes certain activists unofficially represented the organizations or groups to which they belonged. The organizational structure was characterized by a loose coalition with a non-hierarchical leadership, more like a ‘network organization’. In Poletta’s definition, these were movement organizations that tried to develop a ‘friendship-based participatory democracy’ (Poletta 2002). Paradoxically, within these organizations there

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<sup>62</sup> Examples include the Bandung Student Coordination Committee (Badan Koordinasi Mahasiswa Bandung); the Yogyakarta Student Communication Forum (FKMY, Forum Komunikasi Mahasiswa Yogyakarta); the Student Solidarity Committee for the People of Badega (KSMuRB, Komite Solidaritas Mahasiswa untuk Rakyat Badega); the Women’s Solidarity Group for Badega (KPSB, Kelompok Perempuan untuk Solidaritas Badega); the Solidarity Committee for the Victims of Kedung Ombo Dam Development (KSKPKO, Komite Solidaritas untuk Korban Pembangunan Kedung Ombo); the Solidarity Committee for the Victims of the Cimacan Golf Course Development (KSKPLGC, Komite Solidaritas untuk Korban Pembangunan Lapangan Golf Cimacan); the Action Group Against Golf Course Development (KAAPLAG, Kesatuan Aksi Anti Pembangunan Lapangan Golf); the Solidarity Committee for the People of Blangguan (KIRAB, Komite Solidaritas untuk Rakyat Blangguan); the Student and Youth Solidarity Committee for Sumber Klampok (KSMPSK, Komite Solidaritas Mahasiswa dan Pemuda untuk Sumber Klampok), and so on.

were a few core activists that maintained the existence of the group and utilized a kind of control mechanism of recruitment to 'their' movement. Camaraderie, trust, identification and introduction of activists and other people based on personal recommendation were a basic foundation in deciding how deep someone could be involved in these organizations. These intra-personal and intra-group security mechanisms were implemented in order to protect possible repression and infiltration from the state's security apparatus and its intelligence agents. The separation of the movement core group (the activists) and the masses could be clearly seen within groups that claimed themselves to be 'student mass movement groups'.<sup>63</sup>

In other words, the organizations were semi-open/semi-secret with participation on non-ideological grounds, they were non-bureaucratic, resilient and ad hoc action groups that were formed for instrumentalist purposes, namely to mobilize resources and organize actions, which could easily change or disperse at any time.<sup>64</sup> The binding factor was not reliance on particular ideologies, but on the same interests; first, to defend the rights of oppressed people; second, to wear down the political power of the New Order regime; and, third, to expand oppositional political power. Nevertheless, the strength of these action groups was to go beyond primordial ties within student movements to become a political stream (*aliran*), by developing inter-city action networks of students and other youth. In addition to that, according to Aditjondro, through this kind of organization and direct action method (which began to be developed by the student movement groups in the mid 80s), 'there has been a greater chance of finding a meeting point with spontaneous movements by the people, than was achieved by the action of students in the 70s' (Aditjondro 1990: 20). Moreover, in his opinion, 'the small scales and diverse leadership', which developed in those groups, 'has also reduced the

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<sup>63</sup> This is the author's conclusion based on personal experiences and observations of several student movement groups at this time.

<sup>64</sup> See also Barker, Johnson and Lavalette 2001; Poletta 2002; Diani and Bison 2004; Clemens and Minkoff 2007; Morris and Staggenborg 2007 who explain characteristics of social movement organizations and their leadership.

danger of the formation of a clique or elite which can dominate leadership for years... the student activists of the 80s have shown sensitivity to what the French sociologist, R. Michels, called 'the iron law of oligarchy' (Aditjondro 1990: 20).

### 4.3. Student Political Orientation and Debates about Mass and Elitist Politics

One conspicuous characteristic of the 80s student movement was the special relationship it developed with non-government organizations early on (Heryanto 1989, Radjab 1991, Uhlin 1997, Hadiwinata 2003, Aspinall 2005, Lane 2008: 117-139). In fact, many ex-student activists from previous generations became founders or organizers of these non-government organizations. YLBHI and its branch offices in several cities,<sup>65</sup> SKEPHI,<sup>66</sup> INFIGHT,<sup>67</sup> WALHI,<sup>68</sup> Bina Desa,<sup>69</sup> LPPP,<sup>70</sup> LPHAM,<sup>71</sup> PIPHAM,<sup>72</sup> INSAN,<sup>73</sup> LSP,<sup>74</sup>

<sup>65</sup> At the YLBHI headquarters in Jakarta, several ex-Bandung-based student activists of the 70s such as Hendardi, Paskah Irianto and Rambun Tjajo became prominent organizers for a decade from the mid-80s.

<sup>66</sup> One of the founders of this organization was Sukmadji Indro Tjahjono, an ex-Bandung student activist of the 70s.

<sup>67</sup> INFIGHT was founded by several activists including Indro Tjahjono and Saleh Abdullah. See also note 8 above

<sup>68</sup> From 1993 to 1996, the National Secretariat of WALHI was led by MS Zulkarnaen and Deddy Triawan, ex-Bandung-based student activists of the 70s.

<sup>69</sup> Before he led WALHI, Deddy Triawan had been a program officer of Bina Desa who helped student groups conduct leadership and grassroots organizing training.

<sup>70</sup> LPPP was founded by several Bandung-based student and ex-student activists such as Paskah Irianto, Boy Fidro, Noer Fauzi, and Airianto.

<sup>71</sup> The League for the Defence of Basic Human Rights (LPHAM) was founded by HJ Princen, a prominent human rights activist in Indonesia, and several ex-student activists were involved as organizers, such as Setya Dharma (an ex-Bandung student activist of the early 80s).

<sup>72</sup> PIPHAM was founded by Agus Edi Santoso, an ex-student activist of Yogyakarta before he moved to Jakarta in the early 80s and joined SKEPHI. He was a noted radical activist of HMI when he was a student in Yogyakarta.

<sup>73</sup> INSAN was founded by Heri Akhmadi an ex-Bandung student activist of the 70s). Syarif Bastaman and Teten Masduki (both had been ex-Bandung student activists of the 70s) were also active in this organization. INSAN had a connection with the Institute for Development Studies (LSP, Lembaga Studi Pembangunan) founded by Adi Sasono (ex-Bandung student activist of the 60s) and Todung Mulya Lubis (a human rights activist from YLBHI) among others. Teten Masduki later became a high-profile anti-corruption activist, led the Indonesian Corruption Watch (ICW), and also became a member of the National Ombudsman Commission (KON, Komisi Ombudsman Nasional).

and the Mandiri foundation<sup>75</sup> among others, were non-government organizations that had relations with student movement groups at that time. In fact, as observed by Radjab, student movement groups could always find ways to have direct contact with many oppressed groups such as peasants and workers, which they claimed to fight for, through learning experiences and working together with NGOs (Radjab 1991: 76). In many leadership and community organizing training sessions run by student groups, usually some NGO's and ex-student activists were invited to share their experiences. They also provided information about potential communities in which groups could be organized. Through these training sessions, student movement groups and NGO activists began to work together to conduct grassroots activities.

However, in their subsequent development, many student movement groups also criticized NGOs, claiming they were more influenced by the personal interests of their founders or donors. These criticisms, according to some observers, departed from an idealism and desire to make their movement 'pure' (the movement's 'purity') and not to be 'exploited' (*ditunggangi*) by others, which was also reflected in attempts to distance themselves from political and military elites, as had occurred in the 60s and 70s student movements (see Zakir 1989: 81, Akhmad 1989: 94, and Aspinall 1995: 43). But actually, student groups and activists were deciding how and with whom they could work together to build close relationships based on congruent political and ideological interests (interviews with two ex-student activists of the 80s, Jakarta 30 November 2008 and Bandung 25 November 2008 [No.: S-06 and S-04]).

In other words, this desire of student activists to maintain their movement's 'purity' does not mean they had no specific political interests. On the contrary, as part of the educated middle class, they had a political

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<sup>74</sup> LSP (Lembaga Studi Pembangunan or the Institute for Development studies) was founded by Adi Sasono (see previous note).

<sup>75</sup> The Mandiri Foundation was an organization established by several ex-Bandung student activists of the 70s that worked to develop appropriate technology for rural communities.

orientation that was not always identical or did not always represent interests of the grassroots, particularly rural villagers. This was reflected in two different ways. Firstly, to be part of the political dynamic for power, with a tendency to be trapped in the elite's political struggles; and secondly, to make themselves pioneers of radical social change in the social life of the nation (see also Lucas 1992: 91). Both motivations, of course, used the same slogan: struggle for the people.

In his criticisms of the 80s student movement, Aditjondro said that 'like previous generations, the student movement of the 80s has been oriented to the intellectual ambitions of the middle class. They have struggled for the people, not trying to help the people achieve success in their own struggle' (Aditjondro 1990: 21). The political orientation of the middle class, in Eldridge's argument, 'is likely to come into conflict with the specifically local, survival-oriented focus of most peasants and workers' (Eldridge 1997: 220).

The student movement of the 80s had two basic aims. The first was to build public opinion against the New Order regime, based on moral arguments by using land evictions as their main issue (see, for instance, *Tempo* 22 April 1989: 22-34, *Editor* 22 April 1989: 22-23, *Setiakawan* No. 2 September-October 1989 and No. 6 July 1991, *Inside Indonesia* April 1989, Lucas 1992, Aspinall 1993 and 2004). They saw land evictions as struggle instruments using the struggle over these land evictions to overthrow Soeharto and develop democracy in Indonesia. However, this still relied on the power of student groups (see for instance the defence statement of Ammarsyah, a 80s student activist at his trial (Ammarsyah 1990: 226).

The second aim was manifested in attempts that concentrated on the development of radical mass politics and alternative political power based on oppressed people both in rural and urban areas. Both these student movement aims, in the context of that time, treated Soeharto and his New Order regime as the common enemy whom they certainly wanted to challenge. The difference between the student groups was in their strategies. Those with the first aim

gave more consideration to the power of students and other middle class and elite opposition groups to bring Soeharto down, with the expectation of filling new political positions when the New Order regime fell. Some groups that preferred this strategy then abandoned other kinds of activism organizing peasants and other evicted people.<sup>76</sup> In contrast those with the second aim held the opposite priority, believing more in the power of the masses, especially oppressed workers and peasants, to topple Soeharto and his authoritarian regime and to bring radical change in Indonesia's political and social system.

These differing student activists' orientations, one wanting to topple the existing powerholders and open the path for new state power, the other wanting to bring radical social change, led student activists to collaborate in building alliances with various oppositional groups in Indonesia, either based on political interest or on ideological principles. Besides working with NGOs, students with their core groups of activists also built relations with New Order politicians, ex-bureaucrats and members of military elites who had been expelled from the elite circle by Soeharto. Similar collaborations with other groups to oppose the New Order's authoritarianism, has lead some researchers to categorize the 80s student activism as part of the wider pro-democracy movement in Indonesia; while several journalists and politicians raised question about the student movement's independence and purity (see, for instance, *Editor* 34/II, 22 April 1989, p. 24; *Tempo* No. 7/XVIII, 15 April 1989, p. 26).<sup>77</sup> However, beyond this debate, according to the activists themselves, the 80s student movement was successful in conducting political education for

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<sup>76</sup> For instance, in 1993 one group of student activists developed a Jakarta-based movement organization, the Centre for Information and Action Networks for Reformation (PIJAR, Pusat Informasi dan Jaringan Aksi untuk Reformasi), which declared that organizing land cases was a dead end. It was time for students to involve themselves in playing the elites' own political game (*bermain politik elite*) and to seek broader alliances in a middle-class opposition (Aspinall 2005: 129). See also the 1995 defense statement of Tri Agus S. Siswuwihardjo, a founder-member of PIJAR, in the Jakarta State Court (Siswuwihardjo 1995).

<sup>77</sup> Critical statements on the myth of the student movement's 'independence' and 'purity', mostly based on a perspective of the student movement as a movement of moral force, were delivered by some of the ex-student activists themselves. See for instance Siregar 2001; also Akhmadi 1985 and Radjab 1991.

rural masses (Suprpto 1998: 71 [originally 1993])<sup>78</sup> and successful in creating embryos of new mass movements (Juliantara 1996: 100-101). These became a significant political force in overthrowing the New Order in 1998 when Suharto could no longer had power to suppress these protests.

The Bandung student movement, an important base of the national movement, had a different strategy again. Since the beginning of 1988, Bandung activists consolidated the student movements of various universities in the city into an organization with collective leadership called the Bandung Student Coordination Council [Badan Koordinasi (Bakor) Mahasiswa Bandung]. However, when they took the initiative of trying to develop an inter-city network to coordinate the movement, the differences in strategic preferences mentioned above arose. In a student meeting to attempt to consolidate groups and the power of both the Jakarta<sup>79</sup> and Bandung student movements, attended by representatives of activists from four universities in these cities,<sup>80</sup> a fierce debate occurred. Students from the University of Indonesia wanted to concentrate only in strengthening movement bases within each campus, while bringing issues of student politics back into campus life; several participants led by students from the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) wanted to develop a nationalist-populist movement relying on the power of a consolidated student movement, thus they promoted the slogan 'back to

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<sup>78</sup> Edi Suprpto, who had been a student activist in the 80s, later said: 'The process of emergence of many solidarity committees in conflict areas was a main pillar of the disbursement of frozen political power at the local level. Access to information began to open up as the chains of isolation were eroded and then broken, which made local bureaucrats deal with public opinion. Intimidation and hidden repression was slowly made known by the public outside the conflict areas. Local people began to hold meetings to discuss their problems and government policies through these movement committees. Political education, which had already disappeared from the social arena for a long time, now was becoming a need' (Suprpto 1998: 71 [originally 1993]).

<sup>79</sup> Bandung-based student activists, were pessimistic about Jakarta-based student groups who rarely showed their face in movement dynamics and street actions, which had begun to flourish since the beginning of 1988. But they were aware that they had to invite Jakarta-based students if they wanted to 'enter Jakarta' in order to challenge Soeharto in his centre of power (interview with ex-Bandung-based student activist, Bandung 25 November 2008 [No.: S-04]).

<sup>80</sup> The student activists were from Padjadjaran University (Unpad) and the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), which claimed their campuses were important bases of student activism in Bandung, and students from the University of Indonesia (UI) and the Institute of Teacher Training and Pedagogy (IKIP, Insitut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan) of Jakarta.

campus'; while a third group led by students from Padjadjaran University in Bandung wanted the student movement to focus on organizing activities both on and off campus, but the consolidation of on-campus bases had to be dedicated to strengthen grassroots organizing. Thus they promoted the challenging slogan 'back to the people' (interview with ex-student activist of the 80s, Bandung 25 November 2008 [No.: S-04]). Actually the 'back to campus' slogan being promoted by ITB students, paralleled the government's plan to 'pull' student activism back onto campus in order to curtail the possibility of students building strong alliances with other social forces (see also Naipospos 1996: 33).<sup>81</sup>

The Bandung activists involved in this debate were key actors who had organized both the Bakor Mahasiswa Bandung, which worked actively to defend people's rights in various land cases in West Java, and the KSMuRB, which, as mentioned previously, succeeded in mobilizing a student and youth long march action to demonstrate their support for the Badega peasants of southern Garut. KSMuRB had been founded in mid-1988 by several student activists of Padjadjaran University (Unpad), Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), Parahyangan Catholic University (Unpar), and Bandung Islamic University (Unisba).<sup>82</sup> Many students from other universities around the

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<sup>81</sup> In 1992 the government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, led by Fuad Hasan at that time, introduced a 'new' form of student organization within campuses called the University Student Council (SMPT, Senat Mahasiswa Perguruan Tinggi), a new version of the former student councils that had been abolished at the beginning of the 80s.

<sup>82</sup> Almost all the Unpad students who became leaders and organizers of KSMuRB were originally from the Kanal Study Group. Some of them, such as Airianto, Agusjaya Siliwangi, Erpan Faryadi and Yulius Hendra, were later active in LPPP, which was involved in grassroots organizing in land conflicts in West Java that led to the formation of the West Java Peasant Union (SPJB, Serikat Petani Jawa Barat). Other members of this study group who also joined KSMuRB, included Avi Taufik, Dianto Bachriadi, and Bastian H. Wibowo. Some of KSMuRB's activists along with other LPPP activists such as Noer Fauzi and Boy Fidro were then actively involved in forming the Consortium for Agrarian Reform (KPA, Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria) in 1994. Several of the ITB students had joined the KSMuRB and Bakor Mahasiswa Bandung were arrested in mid-1989 because of their on-campus action to protest against the visit to their campus of Rudini, Minister of Internal Affairs. Akhmad Taufik, a Unisba activist, and Eko 'Item' Maryadi of Unpad, both of whom were also active in KSMuRB became prominent actors in the Indonesia Journalist Alliance (AJI, Aliansi Jurnalis Indonesia), an opposition journalist organization at that time, which supported an underground journalism to maintain *Tempo* magazine when this weekly publication, founded by Gunawan Muhammad, a writer of the generation of '66, was banned by the Soeharto regime in 1996. About the KSMuRB see also Faryadi 1997: 319-320.

Bandung area, including the Bandung Tertiary Institute of Law (STHB, Sekolah Tinggi Hukum Bandung) and Sunan Gunung Djati Islamic Institute (IAIN-SGD, Institut Agama Islam Sunan Gunung Djati) were involved in KSMuRB's activities. KSMuRB was originally formed as a solidarity group of students for Badega's peasants who, as we have already noted, had been evicted because of a new Commercial Use Right (HGU) granted to PT SAM (Surya Andaka Mustika) to operate an abandoned tea plantation estate in southern Garut. One of its significant mass actions was a long march of students and other youth over the 60km from Bandung to Garut city at the end of April 1988 in order to demonstrate their solidarity and support to the Badega peasants' struggle to defend what they considered to be their land.<sup>83</sup>

KSMuRB became more closely involved in organizing peasants not only in Badega but in other land cases around West Java, particularly after succeeding in a test-case to consolidate thousands of students and other youth in the first long march action, which gave them confidence in that mobilization through mass-action was possible. For that purpose, KSMuRB conducted a series of popular education courses on grassroots organizing in order to recruit more student organizers.<sup>84</sup> Use of class analysis and a live-in approach in teaching the courses that meant organizers had to live together in the communities they were training. These training sessions also introduced the need to expand organized bases outside peasant groups.

Based on its leaders' idea of expanding these grassroots organizing activities, KSMuRB changed its name to the Student Movement Committee for Indonesian People (KPMuRI, Kelompok Solidaritas Mahasiswa untuk Rakyat Indonesia) in 1990. The purpose of forming the KPMuRI, whose leaders were mostly Unpad students, was to rebuild the militancy of the student movement

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<sup>83</sup> About the Badega case see Chapter II, section 2.1. For a chronology of the case see YLBHI (Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia) and JARIM (Jaringan Informasi Masyarakat) 1990: 53-60, and Bachriadi 2002b: 33-37.

<sup>84</sup> For this training KSMuRB had support from Bina Desa, a long-established NGO for rural development in Indonesia. One of Bina Desa's organizers is Deddy Triawan, an ex-Bandung-based student activist of the 70s.

in Indonesia, particularly after more government repression of student activism in mid-1989.<sup>85</sup> The movement was shocked at that time by two repressive actions: Student arrests and banning of several ITB student movement groups because of their actions in protesting against the visit to their campus of General Rudini, Minister of Internal Affairs; and a bloody Yogyakarta incident where a student protest against the court trial of a student and Yogya-based study group member Bambang Isti Nugroho for distributing Pramoedya Ananta Toer's novels was suppressed by the military (Faryadi 1997: 319-320).<sup>86</sup>

On one hand, these incidents were a blow to ITB students who wanted to challenge the Suharto regime more directly, but KPMuRI went on the offensive by distributing a series of pamphlets against New Order authoritarianism<sup>87</sup> and organised protest actions against the regime's human rights violations in East Timor - even though East Timor was a highly sensitive issue at that time.<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, rural grassroots organizing activities were expanded through the development of network beyond West Java, joining activists from other social movements such as SKEPHI and a group identified as the Rode Group from Yogyakarta.<sup>89</sup> Its relations with human rights defenders became more

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<sup>85</sup> See also Gunawan *et al.* 2009 for short description about leadership competition between KPMuRI leaders and other leftist student group during the formation of Student Solidarity for Democracy in Indonesia (SMID, Solidaritas Mahasiswa Indonesia untuk Democracy) in the early 1990s.

<sup>86</sup> For more about ITB's students protest, its aims, actions and consequences, see the defense speeches of 6 ITB students in the court (Ammarsyah 1990, Hidayat 1990, Lasijanto 1990, Purba 1990, Rachman 1990 and Supriyanto 1999), Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia 1990: 4-19, and Radjab 1999: xix-xxv. Erpan Faryadi, an Unpad activist and organizer of KSMuRB, in anger as well as disappointment, said that the ITB student protest on 5 August 1989 was an abortive action that had been mostly influenced by the *salon* thinking of an opportunistic group of one element of the ex-Socialist Party of Indonesia (Faryadi 1997: 319-320).

<sup>87</sup> See, for instance, a pamphlet released by KPMuRI on 10 February 1998 titled '*Seruan Umum KPMURI: Nasionalisasi Harta Milik Koruptor: Langkah Darurat Atasi Krisis*' (Komite Pergerakan Mahasiswa untuk Rakyat Indonesia 1998).

<sup>88</sup> As a consequence several students from KPMuRI were arrested after this action, leading to a bigger student protest the day after (interview with ex KPMuRI activist, Bandung 25 November 2008 [No.: S-04]).

<sup>89</sup> The Rode Group was a group of student activists originally stationed in Rode Street in Yogyakarta. They were mostly students from the Faculty of Law of the Indonesian Islamic University (UII, Universitas Islam Indonesia), Yogyakarta. Some members of this group then became founders and organizers of the People Democratic Party (PRD, Partai Rakyat Demokratik). Several others later became well-known political activists in Indonesia, such as M. Yamin who joined the Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle (PDI-P,) and became a member of the national parliament in 1999-2004;

intensive with radical activist groups such as INFIGHT (notably led by Indro Tjahjono and Danial Indrakusuma), LPHAM (led by HJ Princen) and INSAN (led by Heri Akhmadi). Nevertheless, working with YLBHI's network was still maintained because leaders, such as Mulyana W. Kusuma, Hendardi and Paskah Irianto, had a vision similar to KPMuRI of the necessity to develop mass bases outside the radical middle class to challenge the Soeharto regime. As a manifestation of their collaboration, a joint campaign which directly hit out at Soeharto, produced the previously mentioned campaign poster-calendar on land eviction experienced by peasants in several areas of Indonesia, that as we have seen was known as the 'Land for the People' Calendar (*Kalender 'Tanah Untuk Rakyat'*).

Grassroots organizing activities to rebuild mass politics seemed to find its form through the activities of KPMuRI and several other Yogyakarta- and Central Java-based student groups, who organized peasants and a group of Jakarta-based students who concentrated on organizing workers in urban area. Unfortunately, an internal conflict in SKEPHI and INFIGHT in 1992, particularly between Indro Tjahjono and Danial Indrakusuma,<sup>90</sup> affected the consolidation within KPMuRI. Some ITB students in the KPMuRI followed Indro Tjahjono whom they considered as their senior. Being from Bandung, he had a 'historical relation' with them as well. Other Unpad students with a more populist

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Budiman Soedjatmiko was one of the founder members and leaders of the PRD before he joined PDI-P for the 2009 election; Ifdhal Kasim was active in ELSAM and now is Head of the National Commission of Human Rights (KOMNAS HAM); Saiful Bahari was active in the Secretariat of Bina Desa and now leads the People's Confederation Party (PPR, Partai Perserikatan Rakyat); Dedy Mawardi was active in the YLBHI's network then formed the YPBHI; and Hendra Budiman who became an organizer of social movements in Bengkulu from the end of the 90s for several years.

<sup>90</sup> There are two versions of this conflict. The first version was given by Lane (2008: 128-130). He explained that conflict happened because of a different vision between Indro and Danial about the need to build a well-structured organization to develop skills, understanding and consistency to successfully pursue a popular mobilization strategy to rebuild mass politics in Indonesia (Lane 2008: 129). It seemed that Danial wanted to build that kind of organization soon, while Indro recognized that the preconditions for building an organizations at that time did not exist amongst the activists. It was reflected in the formation of the embryo of the People's Democratic Union (PRD)), before it was transformed into a political party, the People's Democratic Party, in 1994, as a result of the efforts of Danial (and others) not long after his conflict with Indro. The other version says that the origin of conflict came from their contestation over financial transparency within INFIGHT and SKEPHI that made Danial withdraw from both these organizations and then form the embryo of PRD (interview with ex SKEPHI activist, Tasikmalaya 23 December 2008 [No.: P-01]).

orientation were close to Danial Indrakusuma, even though they were not much involved in the development of PRD, which became Danial's new organization after the conflict. They then decided to set up the West Java Peasant Union (SPJB, Serikat Petani Jawa Barat). Other KPMuRI's activists, whether originally from ITB, Unpad or other campuses, preferred not to 'take sides' in this conflict (interviews with ex KPMuRI activists, Jakarta 30 November 2008 [No.: S-06] and Tasikmalaya 23 December 2008 [No.: P-01]). But it was enough to weaken the solidarity within the KPMuRI. The initial ambitious plans for intensive work on building a campaign against Soeharto's authoritarianism and building a political party of young Indonesian opposition activists, including a program of grassroots activities in rural areas, proved too hard for KPMuRI's activists, who were too few in number to build a new party (interview with ex KPMuRI activist, Jakarta 30 November 2008 [No.: S-06]).

After their failure at mass mobilization, some KPMuRI activists, mostly those from Unpad, together with several from the YLBHI Bandung network, then formed the Institute for Rural Education and Development (LPPP) in 1991, seeing education and an alternative to grassroots mobilization of peasant farmers in West Java.<sup>91</sup> Later that year LPPP formed the West Java Peasant's Union (SPJB) as a vehicle for them to revive rural mass-based organizations.

Also in 1991, through an initiative of several activists, notably Deddy Triawan (an ex-Bandung student activist of the 70s who was in the Secretariat of Bina Desa), M. Yamin (of the Yogya Rode Group), Agustiana (a community organizer from Garut in West Java), formed the Indonesian Community Organizers Network (ICON or SPR, Serikat Pendamping Rakyat).<sup>92</sup> The SPR was formed with the idea of consolidating community organizers who were

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<sup>91</sup> See note 70 above.

<sup>92</sup> At the time of its formation, SPR was led by Deddy Triawan then replaced by M. Yamin, before Agustiana took over the position in 1993 until this organization disappeared in 1996, following the 'Dark Jakarta' incident of 27<sup>th</sup> of July 1996 (interview with Agustiana, Tasikmalaya 23 December 2008 [No.:P-01]). For the 'Dark Jakarta' incident, see Human Right Watch/Asia and Robert F Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights 1996, Ajidarma and Saptono 1997, and Tim Relawan 1996 for the relationship between this incident and the SPR.

working not only on campaign and advocacy, which meant they could claim their activities were ‘on behalf of the people’, but who were recognized as having a clear constituency in ‘their’ community. The SPR also wanted to go ‘beyond’ tensions among NGOs, which were focused on developmentalism and advocacy.<sup>93</sup>

These activities show the way student activists had begun to separate into two streams, those who with an orientation towards grassroots organizing, and those who preferred organizing student activities on their own campuses. In its later development, SPR also had the idea of developing a populist political party, which would be based on several organized communities in both rural and urban areas (interview with leader of SPR, Tasikmalaya 23 December 2008 [No.: P-01]). Through a series of meetings SPR agreed to declare this political party before the 1997 general election, but serious differences in ideological vision and political strategies meant made the idea to form an embryo political party which they had called ‘parkubel’<sup>94</sup>, was never feasible. Those activists already aware of differences about the role and function of a political party in Indonesia, were separated into two streams: One stream emphasized the need to build a mass-based political party while the other emphasized the need to build a cadre-based political party, in order to consolidate the scattered younger opponents to the Suharto regime (interview with ex Bandung-based student activist, Bandung 25 November 2008 [No.: S-06]).<sup>95</sup>

This ‘parkubel’ initiative was the first effort of Indonesian social movement activists since the New Order took power to consolidate the potential power of young opponents to the regime, scattered across student

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<sup>93</sup> On developmentalist versus advocacy NGOs, see for instance Fakhri 1996.

<sup>94</sup> Activists involved in this initiative were aware about differences in ideology and strategy among themselves, but they agreed to ignore these differences temporarily. That’s why they had no agreement about the name of the formal party, but named this attempt a ‘parkubel’ initiative, an abbreviation of *partai kucing belang* or ‘the striped cat party’.

<sup>95</sup> In Indonesia, this classical debate can be traced back to the debate among the Marxists who built the PKI (as a mass-based political party) and Marxists who built the PSI (as a cadre-based political party).

movement groups and NGOs throughout the country. In particular this 'parkubel' initiative wanted to continue a non-exclusive consolidation of activists, as in Danial's attempt with his PRD, through an involvement of people with various backgrounds and visions but with similar interests. The common aim was to overthrow the Soeharto regime through popular mobilization. Unfortunately, several pioneering attempts of those progressive activists to revive mass politics in Indonesia, starting with SKEPHI, INFIGHT, KPMuRI, through to the SPR, all failed (interview with ex-Bandung based student activist and one of the initiators of 'Parkubel', Bandung 25 November 2008 [No.: S-06]).<sup>96</sup> But efforts continued through other initiatives that brought about the birth of the Uni Indonesian Democratic Party (PUDI, Partai Uni Demokrasi Indonesia)<sup>97</sup> and the People's Democratic Party (PRD, Partai Rakyat Demokratik)<sup>98</sup> near the end of the *pre-reformasi* period, followed in the *post-reformasi* era by the People's Confederation Party (PPR, Partai Persatuan Rakyat)<sup>99</sup> and the United National Liberation Party (Papernas, Partai Persatuan Pembebasan Nasional).<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> However, according to a leftist ex-student activist, the failure of 'Parkubel' provided a way for leftist student and ex-student activists to reconsolidate their group in a new attempt to build a more radical political party (interview with ex-Bandung student activist, Garut 11 January 2008 [No.: P-05]).

<sup>97</sup> PUDI was formed in 29 May 1996 by several SPR activists among others; and for the first time this party was led by Sri Bintang Pamungkas, former politician of PPP, with Agustiana as Deputy of General Secretary. The idea behind the formation of PUDI was to encourage a revival of populist and opposition political parties in Indonesia (interview with ex Deputy of General Secretary of PUDI, Tasikmalaya 23 December 2008 [No.: P-01]).

<sup>98</sup> About the formation of PRD, see Miftahuddin 2004 and Lane 2008: 104-139.

<sup>99</sup> The PPR will be explored more in Chapter VIII and IX because it has strong relation with social movement organizing in Bengkulu.

<sup>100</sup> Papernas is the third effort of several ex-PRD activists to build a political party in order to participate in the 2009 general election. The second effort was the formation of the United People's Opposition Party (POPOR, Partai Persatuan Oposisi Rakyat) for the 2004 election. Papernas evolved as a party comprising the PRD and an extensive section of the PRD's periphery and past contacts. See also Lane 2008: 277 and [http://blogs.usyd.edu.au/maxlaneintlasia/2008/03/an\\_important\\_development\\_on\\_th.html](http://blogs.usyd.edu.au/maxlaneintlasia/2008/03/an_important_development_on_th.html).

#### 4.4. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has given an account of an important episode in the political development and processes of rural social movements in Indonesia, in which the initiative to rebuild mass politics re-emerged between the 1980s and 1990s along with a series of campaigns and advocacy against evictions conducted by urban-based social movement groups. However, behind the grassroots organizing activities, there were different strategic visions among those who wanted to challenge the New Order regime. Some considered that the victims of eviction could not be radicalized more in order to topple the Soeharto regime. Others considered that organizing peasants in areas of land conflict was important, even though this was not the only way to bring politics 'back to the people' after the 1965-66 massacres and destruction of the Left.

In spite of these different visions about the most appropriate strategy to challenge the Suharto regime, and the best way to deal with organized masses, both were based on a similar middle-class' political orientation of urban-educated activists who dominated the political arena of social movements. This orientation stimulated the activists to try to use social movements as the way to achieve their long term political objectives, on one hand, and to develop their political influence and bases in society, on the other. Almost all urban-educated activists, as part of the middle class, were not simply involved in actions to defend the rights of evicted people without certain interests 'beyond' the interests of those evicted. This was reflected in various attempts to 'open a space' for political opportunities to challenge the power holders through land conflict cases.

The emergence of a new trend to form local peasant organizations, which will be explored in the following chapters, even though it was based on activists' reflections on urban-based campaigns and advocacy activities, also reflected a political interest of the activists. They had grown up in the midst of New Order authoritarianism and wanted to develop political bases outside the mainstream of existing political groups. The domination of these ex-student

and NGO activists in local peasant organizations was reflecting their political interests in developing bases for their political activities as a direct result of their own involvement in the student movement and in reaching over the limitation to them of the existing NGOs.

Of course various arguments about the need for organizations that are 'closer' to the peasants themselves colour the reemergence of peasant organizations at the beginning of the 90s. In addition, the revival of agrarian reform and ideas about agrarian justice, which will be explained further in Chapter V, made this new politics of rural social movements develop as part of an attempted reemergence of post-1965 alternative political forces for social change in rural areas.