



NEW AND RESURGENT AGRARIAN QUESTIONS IN INDONESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA

Introductions and Thanks.

Nancy Peluso: We would like to welcome you, as well as our speakers, to this crossing borders conference on **New and Resurgent Agrarian Questions in Indonesia and South Africa**. What I would like to do is start by thanking everyone who made this event possible. I am associated with the **Center for Southeast Asian Studies** and a Professor in the Department of Environmental Science Policy and Management. Gill Hart and I will be hosting the event today, and will be taking turns in various roles.

We are very grateful for the work that has gone into making this event possible today. This includes, of course, the **Institute of International Studies** and the **Crossing Borders Program** that has been administered by IIS and, in particular, Abby Lamberg (who facilitated a lot of the arrangements). We also want to thank the **Center for Southeast Asian Studies** and Sarah Maxim (the vice chair) and Thuy Pham, who helped get a lot of material together for this even; the **Center for African Studies** and Martha Saavedra and Amma Oduro helped with the arrangements. There are also a number of students who have helped. Charlie Carol helped with the film and Saafra Doshi helped with translation. This morning, we had a couple of people translating. We also had some special assistance from the **Geography Department**. Finally, one member of our group could not be here today. Sariah Afi could not be here to teach today, as she has gone to Seattle to teach for the rest of the semester. She is a student in ESPM and is working with us on this project. She is working in Indonesia and on a variety of other movements with Noer Fauzi Rachman.

The **Crossing Borders** project that brings us together started as an idea at a party. Gill and I were talking about things we could do here, and the idea of a panel on agrarian questions in Indonesia and

South Africa came up, along with the idea to discuss possible comparisons. Noer has been here for the semester. Lungisile has been here for just ten days to prepare for this panel and to talk about a larger possible project. We have had a very exciting ten days of planning and working together and comparing our experience in South Africa and Indonesia around land reform and the redistributive movements that have been taking place in these two countries. We have already started mapping out the first step in a joint comparative research project. What we want to do today is to have our speakers and guests explain to you some of the things that they have been teaching us. We will also present some of the initial responses that we have been developing about possible realms of comparison.

Let me introduce everyone and talk through some thoughts about the broad frame within which we see all of this emerging. This should put the films you have just seen into a bit of context.

By way of introduction, both of our guests are serious activists and intellectuals. **Noer Fauzi Rachman** is the founder and former head of the **Consortium for Agrarian Reform** (Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria), also known as KPA. He is now a council member of that group. The consortium was established in 1995 and is a network organization of scholars and NGOs. He has been a scholar-activist, writing and researching agrarian land reform issues since 1998 (when that became possible) and started developing training programs and helping groups and individuals think about how to work toward achieving agrarian reform. He describes in his paper, which you should have received via email, the formation of the SPP, or **Sudanese Peasants Union**, which consists of both student activists and peasants. This semester, he is a Fellow with the **Berkeley Workshop on Environmental Policy**.

Lungisile Ntsebeza was a leading figure in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. He was imprisoned by the apartheid state and has done some extremely important research on post-apartheid South Africa since 1994. Next year, he is going to be

an associate professor at the University of Cape Town in the department of sociology, and he is going to be starting a new research project on the landless people's movement over the next few years. Lungisile was one of our first **Berkeley Workshops for Environmental Policy** Fellows several years ago.

Involvement And The Films. As you have seen in the films earlier, both focused on an unprecedented series of movements in the history of each of these places and of the worldwide resurgences in agrarian and redistributive movements. First, we saw a film on one of the many recent peasant demonstrations in Java. This one comprises people from at least three rural sub-districts in a provincial area of west Java. They all went to Bandung, a provincial capital. Then we saw the WSSD march in South Africa, the World Summit for Sustainable Development march in Johannesburg, and some of the events leading up to that. One of the things that we have realized that are quite striking about these two events was that they actually took place within a month of each other in August and September of 2002. What is important to recognize here is that, since the end of the last millennium, there has been a tremendous upsurge in redistributive movements all across the world. All of these movements are, in some way, questioning the role of states and international institutions in setting policy and defining practices.

These movements come only after the uncertainty and fluxes of the late 1980s and mid 1990s – the fall of the Berlin Wall, the fall the Soviet Union, the emergence of post-socialist economies, and an extremely intense period of market triumphalism and neo-liberalism. It is a period in which IMF structural adjustments were biting hard into the lives of people all over the world, and a period where the intense repression of the South African apartheid state and the Indonesian New Order dictatorship were climbing to a climax. One of the things that South Africa and Indonesia have in common is that, during the 1990s, each emerged from under these intensely repressive states. The ANC was legalized in 1990 and came to power in 1994; then, in 1998, the Suharto regime fell in the context of the Asian economic crisis. One of the things that came out of each (nearly immediately, once the euphoria of liberation had worn off) was an upsurge of discontent against development in the form of the resurgence of agrarian and redistributive movements. In the initial throes of excitement,

people began to question this role of the State's past and future. Now, it is very hard to convey to people who are new to Indonesian studies how extraordinary these films are. The feeling that you have when watching these events unfold – it is just a moment that could not have happened ten years ago. It was just impossible to imagine, given the history of repression under the New Order Regime.

I am assuming that the audience is a little bit more familiar with South African events, because they took place a little bit earlier and took more of a global character.

I am just going to take a minute to make a few brief comments on the background of some of the things going on in Indonesia because Noer is not going to be specifically covering this in his paper. Lungisile will be covering some of the more macro events that have been going on in South Africa, so you will get a sense from his paper of the context within which this is all building.

The New Order Regime. The New Order, as I have been saying, is the term used for the Suharto regime. It is a period that basically lasted from 1966 to 1998, a 32-year period that came in on a rush of violence, much of it agrarian violence, in 1965 and 1966. Suharto was, in fact, the second Indonesian President. He came to power after President Sukarno, the President after independence was declared in 1945 following the revolution of 1945-1949. The formation of the Republic of Indonesia occurred in 1950. One way of understanding the radical differences between the hopes and plans of the new nation-state immediately after independence from colonialism under Sukarno (and the one that Suharto reshaped some 17 years later) was that very repressive form of neo-liberalisms defined Suharto's 32-year regime. There is not time to go into the specific politics of that, but I am not trying to say that the Sukarno period was a calm and peaceful period that preceded neo-liberalism and repression; it is a very complicated historical story. What is very clear is that, under the Suharto regime, many personal freedoms and possibilities that emerged in the aftermath of the revolution were eliminated and the scope of political action was severely constrained. Laws, policies, and brute force, a professional and repressive military: all of these were important parts of the regime's power base, and they were used to expropriate land all over the country.

The government and individuals took natural resources through legal and illegal mechanisms. For example, the passage of the Forest Act in 1967 was a legal mechanism, but it negated the rights of many of the people living in the areas declared as forest. Besides losing access to land and other natural resources, civil rights were also severely constrained by the regime and human rights violations happened on a daily basis.

With the incredible expressiveness of that film, it might be hard for those of you who were not in Indonesia in 1998 to imagine that there was literally no freedom of speech, no freedom to organize, no opportunity to object to government policy, or to speak to government officials for the large majority of the population. There was no popular involvement in governance, or development, but “capital D” (Development) was both a major ideological driver and a major shaper of government policy law and practice.

Why The Comparison? To come back to our main purpose – why did we choose to compare South Africa to Indonesia? What makes these two places most interesting is that they did emerge from repressive regimes in the 1990s, and have made a move toward formal democracy? In the context of that transition, what we have seen is the emergence of very strong oppositional movements. It is also important to realize that there are important historical connections between these two regions: from the time that the Dutch East India ships stopped on the way around the Cape of Good Hope to plant some people to farm some vegetables for their sailors on the way to the East Indies, to the bringing of slaves from Java to South Africa, to the mutual implications of the South African and endless East Indies colonies in the global politics of the Napoleonic Wars. These wars led to the dividing of territories in Asia and Africa between England and the Netherlands, to the bankruptcy of the East India Company (at just about the same time and then, in very recent times, in very different contexts), where Indonesian NGOs have been inspired by South African land reform laws.

These are already interestingly entangled spatial types of transnational engagements. Yet, equally important to our comparison are the very historically and geographically grounded analyses that we want to make of these transnational connections—the

resurgence of mass movements demanding redistributive social change is articulated in the peasant idiom in the case of West Java, but it also has other modes of resurgence in West Java and elsewhere in Indonesia. While the South African case that is presented here is articulated in multiple sites, perhaps predominantly urban, it is nevertheless demanding a redistribution of resources, including electricity and water. Moreover, as you saw in these films, both of these movements are linked to other types of articulations that have other great symbolic and practical impacts.

Sudanese Peasants Movement (Noer Fauzi Rachman). If you have had a chance to read my paper, it tried to introduce you to The New Sudanese Peasant’s Union in West Java upland. This new social movement has been changing agrarian practices in almost 100 villages. It has been informing the village governments and parliaments about big forest companies, plantations, and natural reserves. They have been developing support from students, NGOs, and some of the parliamentary members through mass mobilizations and demonstration such as those in the films. They also have been amplifying peasant demands for land rights in official terms. Sudanese peasant unions and their demonstrations are only an example of the resurgence of land-based peasant movements in Indonesia. They are a variety of groups and organizations that are trying to get the government to recognize land rights.

The government of Indonesia now has no adequate policy to deal with the huge country. Sumatra is as big as California and Java is half as big. All of them, including water, are as big as Europe. Those land disputes are the result of state directed land acquisitions for politics, large scale mining corporations, national parks, and other conservation areas. Since 1969, the largest corporations have controlled 64 million hectares, and only 20 companies control more than 24 million hectares; mining companies control more than 12 million hectares. Most of the mining exports are American-based (American-based companies control 2.6 million hectares).

When the government defined the national parks, they did not recognize the local people’s land rights, so that has been a big problem. By using and abusing national laws and government authority, local people’s lands have been claimed as States

land. Then, sectoral ministries give (new) use rights for huge logging, mining, plantation forest corporations, industrial estates, national parks, and other conservation industries.

In Garut, local people always worry about where the State land borders are going to be put, because it often cuts through their land or houses. The markers are determined not in the field, but in an office, probably in Jakarta. In Garut, the Sundanese Peasant's Movement has been working with more than 20,000 people. My paper focuses on the Garut district. In 2000, Garut had more of its land taken by the State and corporations than other areas – at least 60% of the land is classified into those categories. Most of the forestland is under the jurisdiction of Garut Forest District of the State Forest Corporation – 51%. Most of agricultural land (60%) consists of dry fields, except for the about 32% that is irrigated or landscaped. 80% of the upland people are landless.

An example is one village that I describe in my paper, Sari Mukti. It is about 1500 meters above sea level and 75% of the village population is landless. One wealthy Sari Mukti family owns about 50 hectares. For this area, that is a very big piece of land.

At the end of my paper, I present a statistic of land use in Garut. During the last three years, there are almost 5000 families that have been fighting for and concentrating on plantation land and forestland. This example is to explain to you one localized expression of the conflict of land reform following the fall of the New Order Regime in Indonesia.

These reoccupations are popularly called *reclaiming*, or *land seizures*, depending on the side that is taken. Those who do not agree call them land seizure, implying that the land has been taken illegally. Reoccupation has expanded substantially since March 2000. Former President Abdurrahman Wahid made a statement that said that it is not appropriate that the people are being accused of seizing land because, in fact, the plantations have stolen the land of the people. He said that some 40% of plantation land should be redistributed. Moreover, peasants should even hold shares in the plantations themselves. This public statement has had a tremendous impact on the legitimacy of farmers reoccupying their land and other rights that had been taken by force.

It is estimated that, until December 2000 – six months after the President's statement - almost 120,000 hectares of national estate land had been released. 40% of it is private estate land. The agrarian problems in many parts of Indonesia do not address only land occupations and other related conflicts, they are also about rapid growth of mass peasant organizations. Under the New Order, there was mobilization toward land reform, but there was no hope of it being realized.

Some of us feel that there will be a new government that will commit to land reform. Almost all agrarian reforms have been carried out under government benevolence, so as soon as the government awareness changes, all positive things created by agrarian reform are erased. As soon as the government changes, the new power elites can change things again. Reform can be born through revolution or by grace. Reform by grace is not sustainable, because it depends on so-called political martyrs. It, instead, needs to be based on the initiative of people. Reform occurs when peasants are in strong positions. The notion of land reform by leverage underlies the argument that the primary motivation underlying land reform must be the mass organization of peasants.

Many peasant organizations in Indonesia were formed in late 1998. In 1999, the United Organization of Indonesian Peasants that now has 40 members was formed. The Organization not only speaks for Indonesian land reform, it also has transnational connections to the agrarian movement in South Africa. It is part of the network that is carrying out global campaigning for agrarian reform. This debate is still on going, and you can read about it in another paper that will be published in the *Colonial Journal of Indonesia* in October 2003.

My paper has a simple claim: agrarian reform is the offspring of agrarian conflict. The New Sundanese Peasants movement is only one part of it. During the New Order period, land dispossession was overseen by the strict control of the military on the villages. The trauma of the Indonesia communist party tragedy was still in the peasant's minds. The trauma was created because almost one million people were killed because they were accused of being communist or communist sympathizers during the brutal transition from the Sukarno regime into the Suharto regime.

The consequence of land reform, of course, is conflict between the big landholders and the landless peasants. Sukarno's government had no significant and adequate measures to overcome the conflict caused by land reform. Although land reform has a legal basis from basic Agrarian Law Number 5/1960, the Sukarno regime had no significant adequate measure for overcoming conflicts caused by land reform implementation. Mass peasant organizations and peasant movements were associated with the communist party. What followed was the communist tragedy, which remains in people's minds.

This talk was intended to give you only a glance at the historical background of the New Order regime that has constantly opposed land reform. Land reform was stopped in 1966 when Suharto came to power. We are now in a global situation, because the government after Suharto has addressed land reform as a main agenda.

Many of the peasant leaders come from the cities as a result of economic problems. They come to the rural areas and have a better idea of the national policies and they develop the new positions in the villages. They change the power of the rural area.

Our challenge is to create research that empowers social movements and links politics and activists.

South Africa And Agrarian Reform ([Lungisile Ntsebeza](#)). There were dramatic land occupations in Zimbabwe in 2000. The context of the land reform and the redistribution program in that country justifies questions about the possibility of land occupations in South Africa. As in Zimbabwe, South Africa experienced colonial land possession and the South African land reform program has not achieved even the conservative target set by the post-1994 government. In fact, there is an extent of land dispossession in South Africa that surpasses all others in Africa – even in Zimbabwe. More than 90% of the land was taken, as compared to 3% in Zambia, 5% in Malawi, 43% in Namibia, and 50% in Zimbabwe.

This presentation focuses on the land question in South Africa. It does so by looking at the land of colonial apartheid in South Africa, and how the post-1994 South African State is attempting to address this issue. (I use the term “post-1994 South African

State” deliberately.) I will conclude the presentation by raising some critical questions regarding land reform in South Africa and emerging social and agrarian movements in Dakar.

One of the surviving legacies of colonial apartheid is that, despite the advent of democracy in 1994, the vast majority of land continues to be under White ownership and control. Colonialism and apartheid systematically and violently dispossessed Africans of their land, confining them to small reserves in the available national reserves of land while, at the same time, constraining Africa's access to land outside the reserves. In the process, colonialism created two agricultures: commercial for White settlers and subsistence for African rural people. Critical to the success of commercial White agriculture was the convenient access to cheap Black labor. Black laborers were bound to White farms in tenet relationships, mainly as farm workers and labor tenets. Often, farms were available to seasonal migrant workers driven out by poverty in the rural areas—the so-called communal areas under the jurisdiction of chiefs. African farm workers, in particular, were the worst paid category of workers in South Africa, with an average of \$53 per month in 1996. Their average White counterparts earned an average of \$460 per month, almost ten times the amount for the same work.

White commercial farmers constitute a mere 65,000 of the 45 million South Africans, but they own over 70% of the land. By contrast, about 1.4 million Africans engaged in cultivation eke out an existence on less than 13% of the land. A part of the nature of the exploitation of maintaining the White commercial farmland, cheap labor and subsidies were central to the development of commercial agriculture. The Department of Land Affairs, since the advent of democracy, has spearheaded a land reform program around three components: **restitution, land redistribution, and tenure reform**. Of the three components, redistribution has the potential to reversing the fundamental issue of land inequality in South Africa, but the restitution leg of the program is limited severely. The cutoff date for claims goes back to June, 1913. Land taken before this day cannot be claimed, and claims can be settled through cash payments. This does not repair racial land holding. December, 1998, was the closing date for claims. Since 1994, the Department of Land Affairs has made promises about how they will address the crucial land questions of South Africa.

The first pledge was contained in an election manifesto of the dominant party. It was called the Reconstruction and Development Program (often called the RDP). Based on recommendations of the World Bank, it was planned that 30% of the White-owned agricultural lands would be distributed starting in 1994. However, by the end of 1999, less than 1% was redistributed.

When the new Minister of Rural Land Affairs was appointed in 1999, she changed the target and announced a new target of transferring 15% of the land over five years. This, again, changed in August 2001; the goal of the new target was 30% of land was to be transferred to what was called **emerging black commercial farmers**, and the period was to be 15 years. It is not clear at this time whether the land was to only be White-owned agricultural land or if it would also include State and communal lands.

To date, very little has been achieved. At the end of 2002, a total of 2.3% (around 2 million hectares) of land has been transferred. In order to achieve even the conservative target of 30%, over 2 million hectares per annum would have to be delivered. At the moment, they are delivering .25 million per annum. There is clearly a huge discrepancy between the political freedoms that are enshrined in the Bill of Rights and the agrarian reality. The land reform program, in its current form, is clearly unable to reach even a modest target.

The question is why the political project is not translating in this way. Part of the answer is that there is a fundamental contradiction between the objectives of protecting existing rights and a commitment to redistributing land. The two objectives simply cannot be achieved at the same time. The bulk of the land is under private ownership and safeguarded by the constitution. In this regard, the declaration that land will be made available to Blacks is null and void for the simple fact that Whites privately own most land.

Market land mechanism is not only restricted to willing seller and willing buyer conditions, it also has huge budgetary constrictions. The budget allocated to land reform will not meet the current target. The budget over the last three years has been less than 1% of the total budget. The current 2003-04 budget, the highest so far, amounts to about 1.6 million rand, a mere .49% of the total budget.

Tinkering with the property clause in the constitution is not going to address the vital racial inequality question of land in South Africa. A comprehensive program is needed. Purchases of land that has been acquired and developed in the manner that has come about can hardly be the mechanism for the redistribution of land. White commercial farmers should donate land and make it available to Black farmers. How groups or individuals can hold that land also needs to be addressed. Giving land to the poor could render them landless, as they would sell their land to the rich.

How are we to achieve this objective? One suggestion is the expropriation of land that is underutilized. The other possibility is a ceiling on land holding. Most post-colonial African states have adopted large-scale commercial farming. Agrarian reform might mean the maintaining the traditional patterns of land ownership, rather than a transformation.

It is appropriate at this stage to ask how South Africans have dealt with the land question. So far, I have been looking at reform from above, and the question might arise: what about reform from below, such as in Indonesia? Many of the African countries encounter the land question as a peasant question. My contention is that, in South Africa, this was not as central in the liberation struggle as in the case of other countries. Part of the answer lies in the drastic character of land dispossession of South Africa. Faced with landlessness and poverty, the indigenous people were forced to sell their labors in the mines, farms, and cities as migrant workers. With the growth of manufacturing and the need for stable labor, more and more Africans resided in urban areas on a permanent basis. When the government changed in 1994, an estimated 70% of the population was urban. It is not surprising that the liberation struggle has been, on the whole, peasant-based in orientation. It is, in particular, the case that the struggle against apartheid capitalism re-emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s, following the rootless crackdown on urban and rural resistance in the early 1960s. Workers and the youth dominated the struggle and the issues were centered on employment conditions, education, and the rising cost of living in urban areas.

Land struggles in the 1980s emerged primarily in the form of urban-based struggles that exposed the

removal of people from land in the apartheid era and informed them of their land rights. When the political negotiation process began again in South Africa in the 1990s, the land question was not prominent. As I said, the 30% target of land redistribution came as a recommendation from the World Bank. With the job losses over the last two decades or so, there have been expectations that the land questions would shift into a more prominent spot, yet there does not appear to be any evidence that shows that mine workers are attempting to shift to cultivation.

This is not to say that Black Africans are not interested in making a living off of the land. What my argument does not make is that the focus on agriculture alone is not going to fully address the problems at large and the underlying poverty in the country. The video clearly showed that land is as much a rural as an urban issue. However, when land becomes an issue in urban areas, it is around housing. The establishment of the Landless People's Movement has close ties with a key land network in South Africa, the National Land Committee, and the Brazilian MST has brought the land question in South Africa to the fore. This development took place against a backdrop of resurgence of agrarian movements across the globe and, closer to South Africa, the land occupation in Zimbabwe. Those methods seem to be forcing even those NGOs that collaborated with the State to adopt a more confrontational position.

However the nature of the emerging agrarian movement, their program and strategies are not at all clear. I will, over the next few years, continue to conduct research on agrarian issues in South Africa, including the Landless People's Movement.

Commentary.

Gill Hart: I want start by emphasizing that this workshop is really a starting point of what we hope will be a much longer project. We are not presenting you with finished results of comparative research, we are presenting you with thoughts. We have spent ten days together bouncing ideas around, and plotting and scheming for much longer-term research (which will, hopefully, allow us to visit one another's place of interest). What we would really like to accomplish here is to have some serious feedback from the audience, because we see it as a great opportunity to create an active discussion.

Let me start by emphasizing something that Nancy pointed out to you that I think is really crucial, which is that both of our speakers are very experienced activist intellectuals. During the extremely repressive phases in South Africa and Indonesia, both of them were very heavily involved in opposition to these repressive regimes. They have really lived through and fought against and experienced in some very direct ways the depth and extent of what were really viciously repressive regimes. What is also important is that both are critically engaged in questions of social change and social justice in this era of formal democracy. While many people in both places despaired of seeing such a change in their lifetime, nevertheless (as Lungisile has pointed out very clearly) this has brought about major disappointments—but also regroupings and determinations. What both Noer and Lungisile represent is a very serious linking of theory and practice, although they are coming from different directions. We hope in one way or another to link the teaching programs that we are developing into the research back to Berkeley, partly so that Berkeley students can benefit and so that students in South Africa and Indonesia can have access to some of the wonderful resources here as well.

What came out of the two papers is similar, but they were pitched at different scales. Noer's paper is first and foremost about a deep experience with a particular peasant movement in southwest Java that he has been working with very closely and has been a key figure in. Lungisile's paper was pitched at a much broader scale, at what has and has not happened in terms of land reform in South Africa. Even at this initial stage of our project, there are connections.

One of the interesting connections is that we have figured out that Lungisile, Noer, and I were all at the same room at the world summit. We were at Share World, which is the place where the Landless People's Movement gathered at the time of the summit. It is in Soweto, one kilometer away from where NGOs were meeting. It is a derelict theme park that was set up in 1985 by brothers who made their money from skin lightning cream. What is left is a huge cavernous building, literally crumbling away, with little electricity or plumbing. There were sort of medieval scenes of huge cooking pots where maize meal and stew was being cooked out in the open.

It turned out that the three of us were all in a meeting in the same day in the same room. One of the things that came up was that Noer tells how the land reform program in South Africa, particularly the issue of land restitution, inspired him. As he was talking, I scribbled something that Noer said. He said that the idea of restitutions made him see how dissatisfaction over land in Indonesia can be channeled into pressure on the State. It made him see how they can set up claim-based mechanisms for people who were dispossessed during the Suharto period to reclaim their land. He was seeing something going on in South Africa and was seeing it in a way that he could use it to think about things differently in Indonesia. One of the things that is interesting to me, and I did my dissertation in Java, was that here was a paper written in Indonesian about South African land reform. What Noer said was that he used this paper to put pressure on the government in Indonesia. This is a wonderful example of transnational interaction in a very concrete, specific way. We are not talking about flows and fragments and scapes, we are talking about really specific and grounded interactions.

When we talk about comparisons between South Africa and Indonesia, we are not just talking about the sort of boring comparisons where you compare case A and case B and look at their similarities and differences. Our underlying push here is to help forge, enrich, and extend transnational connections in ways that will feed into and extend precisely into the kinds of projects that the speakers have been talking about. It is also about enabling new kinds of understandings that will precisely contribute to expanding these understandings. One of the things that has been quite extraordinary about the last ten days is that, as we have been discussing things back and forth, we have seen the same themes. We are seeing these comparisons as relational comparisons.

What I would like to quickly do is pull out three key themes that have emerged from our discussions. They seem to us, at this initial stage, to be quite productive to these sorts of insights (but we are very open to suggestions and critiques).

The first has to do with **rural-urban connections**; it is very closely linked to the whole idea of transnational connections. We want to blur rural-urban boundaries, and get away from the kind of dichotomous understanding of the urban and the

rural. This certainly in South Africa has been very dominant, and both Lungisile and I feel it is very dangerous. It has been part of what has enabled the neglect of agrarian question. Part of what is important is that the land question is as much an urban as it is a rural issue. What is also very clear is that the land question is not only about the materiality of land, but also about histories, memories, and meanings of dispossessions. This is why the land question is such a crucial issue - it connects with so much else. Part of what has come out very clearly from research in what I have been doing is the way the land question is directly linked with industry, with wages, as well as living and working conditions in urban areas.

Java is one of the most densely populated areas on the earth. Where rural ends and urban begins is impossible to tell. South Africa, on the face of it, is far more clearly demarcated, but for millions of Black South Africans, their lives span rural and urban areas in a deep and ongoing sort of way. These urban rural connections are also very important when we think about the movements that we have seen, how they get constituted, and the relationship between them. Noer singled out rural-urban connections as being crucial to the future of the movements in which he has been so central as encouraging. One of the things that is really important to emphasize here is that the peasant leaders in the movements are people who have worked in urban areas, but who came back to rural areas and, having worked in urban areas, were able to confront these plantation companies as well as the State in progressive, highly organized kinds of ways that have been really crucial in the formation and the expansion of this movement. Likewise, in the South African case, the whole question of the shift of the Landless People's Movement to the anti-privatization forms is very complex. Lungisile and I are both going to be very cautious, because there are some very complicated things going on here. But one of the things that is very clear is that there are quite a lot of tensions between both of these movements and organized labor although, even in organized labor, there are those groups who are increasingly interested in making these urban rural connections in more direct ways. One of the things we have been trying to do is tap into what we see as the progressive part of the labor movement that is interested in the rural-urban connections, and interested in the fact that huge numbers of people are moving back into the rural areas. A lot of them have

organizational experience on the shop floor, where there are some interesting possibilities for different and new types of organization.

The second sort of cross cutting theme that we think is really productive is the **relationship between customary land rights on the one hand and other forms of land rights on the other**. In both South Africa and Indonesia, these are absolutely central issues that are deeply disputed.

The third cross cutting theme is the whole question of the **changing role of NGOs and social movements in relation to the changing character of the State**, in relation to the processes of accumulation in this moment of on-going neo-liberal capitalist triumphalism.

In both Indonesia and South Africa during the period of oppression, the NGOs were very actively involved in oppositional movements. In Indonesia, it happened in a more underground way. In South Africa, it was a more openly oppositional. With the transition to formal democracy, what came out beautifully from the movie is the way NGOs have reorganized and put enormous pressure on various elements of the State. One of the things that they accomplished was not only the agreement that came out of the peasants movement in West Java on the 24th of December, 2002, but also, in 2001, they got the Indonesian legislative assembly to pass an agreement about the centrality and the importance of land reform. What seems to be happening is that, in quite effective ways, the NGO movements working together have held the feet to the fire around land reform questions and seem to be getting somewhere. In South Africa, the rural NGOs were adamantly opposed to forced removals in the apartheid period. In the immediate post-apartheid period, huge numbers of people who belong to NGOs were drawn into the government and collaborated closely with the government in implementing land reform. What happened in 1999 was that they were basically getting fed up with implementing thoroughly rotten land reform. It was at that point that many NGOs started thinking about more oppositional points of action. What you see, in stark contrast to Indonesia, is the fierce opposition that seems to be developing between some of these social movements and the ANC government. That is not to say that there is a stark difference between the two. In both cases, there are tensions and there are collaborations. One of the key things that we want to try to get at is how that,

by thinking comparatively and relationally, we might get at the question of how to go about what one might think of as the room to maneuver within which relationships in ways that can move things in the sort of direction that people in both places fought for and died for.

Audience Questions.

If you did not get a copy of the papers, they are available on the IAS website.

Question: I am keen to take off with something that Jill ended with, which is the area of the discussion that is about State and society relations. It strikes me that any movement that happens by peaceful circumstances needs a strong State in order to make those land reform changes and in order to police the redistribution of land (if that is what is going to happen). We find, of course, that the State that we are talking about is particularly beholden to transnational organizations and are more than unusually captive to transnational interests, in terms not just of corporate interests, but also to the World Bank (if one wants to make that distinction). I am interested to find out what your thoughts are on how the movement relates to the State. On the one hand, they want things from the State and, on the other hand, the State is becoming increasingly divorced from any popular base. The South African case strikes me as one that is quite interesting to look at this in, because the Landless People's Movement is one of a number of movements that forms the National Land Committee. The National Land Committee itself seems a bit self-destructive as of late, under what seems to be ANC pressures. It seems to be the case that the State is infiltrating and influencing the movements that attempt to challenge. The distinction between the State and society strikes me as being quite muddy in South Africa, and my suspicion is that the situation is similar elsewhere. If that is the case, the suggestion might be that the model to follow is not one of constructive engagement with the State, but of constructive disobedience underneath it. The MST provides an example of that, where the movement takes over land and then the State sanctions that distribution from the top. Basically, do the people on the panel think that is a better way to go as a very practical way of engaging in land redistribution, as opposed to attempting to engage with the State when the State is so captive to capital?

Question: I have a follow-up question to that. Should one be supporting a peasantry because, to call for the restoration of a peasantry is, in a certain way, a call for the re-exertion of some form of exploitation. Can we hear from other people about whether there is any precision on what is being called for exactly?

Lungisile Ntsebeza: How do South African movements relate to the State? I think that is a good question. Initially, between 1994 and 1999, most of the land-based NGOs (including the National Committee) had a friendly relationship with the State and it took several forms. At one level, some key members resigned from the NGOs and joined the government. The first Minister of Land Affairs was on the land desk of the ANC and a leading advocate in one of the NGOs. The message was that we have our government and the government does not have capacity, so we must go and help the government. In a way, that was a parochial way of looking at the State that emerged after the negotiation process in South Africa. The transition was a negotiated decision and, during the negotiation process, a number of compromises were made. One key compromise was to accept the neo-liberal agenda. So, at one level, you have a State in 1994 that uses the old language: the liberation language that the reconstruction and development promises. It makes all the old promises but, at the same time, the State accepts an agenda that is proposed by the World Bank and the IMF that does not make it possible for the State to fulfill those objectives. People listened to rhetoric, and it became part of the State. With time, they became disgruntled and, in some way, marginalized by the government after 1999.

At the same time, at the level of civil society, there was growing resentment because the State did not deliver on a number of issues. Over one million jobs have been lost since our independence. After 2000, I think the consciousness and the mood in South Africa began to change. The relationship between the State and civil society changed too. In 1999, Mandela, who was a charismatic leader, could say the most embarrassing things and would be accepted. In 1999, he stepped down and a new President stepped in. He was very intelligent, but stubborn and opinionated. I think that that, on the AIDS issue, the President became well known. I think that, at that point, the relationship between the State and civil society started to change and be

confrontational. However, it is not as simple as that. Up to 1999, the NGOs were working with the government and then, after 1999, stopped. Between 1994 and 1999, there were NGOs and individuals who were critical of the relationship with the government. After 1999, there were people within the organization who said it was worth working with the government. NGOs and civil society are not homogenized.

As for the relationship between the NLC and ANC, I have heard about it but have not come across much empirical evidence. I think that, on one level, they have embarked on civil disobedience and, on another level, they are engaging with the ANC and encouraging cooperation with the government. Presently, I would like to hear about other things such as questions about the type of land holding in South Africa, or such as what people are going to do with land once they have it. I would like to learn from other experiences, especially of the MST. What are the tenure arrangements and how does production work?

Noer Fauzi Rachman: In 1999, the Indonesian state passed a new law on regional governments. This law erased all of the village government laws. All of the village governments has to be uniform and under the control of the central government. In 1999, the laws were to be effectively operational in January, 2001. They contained more than 120 articles. It is difficult to learn them. Many of the district level parliaments needed to be trained about the laws. Many of them did not recognize the laws, but they had big implications for the village. In five days, they made a special arrangement and some friends and I went to teach them the laws. But I did not want to teach them the laws, I wanted to push the land issues agenda into parliament; it worked. Many of them recognized that the problem is landlessness and the concentration of land in the hands of the corporations and the plantations, and that peasants should take back their land through expropriation. My consortium uses these NGOs and peasants unions as part of the training committee. I hope that the message of the peasant movement and the NGOs supporting them has a part in the district reorganization.

In 2001, they produced the district-level regulations on the so-called village parliament. I also participated in that workshop. Before the regulations were passed on to the public I conducted a special

meeting with the SPP local chapter. It was a rare opportunity to be a village parliament member. In 2002, there was an election in every village to elect seven to fifteen village parliament members. Now, in 50 villages, peasant unions have village parliament members. That is just an example of how the movement is using the change in the State level.

Question: I was quite surprised that, in that list of three key themes that emerged, that one of the questions was not that of the post-reform productions and livelihood. I am coming from research in Chiapas, Mexico where, in 1994 and after 1993, there was one of the largest cases of constructive disobedience. This was where peasant groups of all stripes invaded land and catalyzed a massive redistribution of the whole Chiapas countryside. That was constructive disobedience, but flash forward five years. A most recent look at that redistribution is that almost half of that land is vacant. I talked to my friends who work on the US-Mexico border, and they are seeing greater numbers of Chiapans crossing the border than ever before. I just want to point out that constructive disobedience is not enough. There needs to be some emphasis on what to do next. I think that is an area in which the MST has done a lot more thinking, in terms of creating both rural to rural and rural-urban networks to make livelihood possible on that land that has been redistributed.

Nancy Peluso: Can I ask you to say why this has happened? What has happened or not happened since the redistribution?

Question: Well, there is something that happened and there is something that didn't happen. What happened was the coffee meltdown; things that did not happen had to do with the neo-liberal context of the Mexican state and some kind of engagement to win support for other kinds of production. Land redistribution combined with massive cutbacks of support for making lands productive created a bad situation.

Lungisile Ntsebeza: In my point of view, that is a really critical question. Land claims could be a no-through road regarding the changing concentration of economic power in agricultural markets. Is it possible to avoid production and market issues in this debate? Do you think that an activist comparative project must include direct issues between the in and out, and the way the local or the

national government is managing (or include the global)? Is there a place for Black commercial farming in South Africa now? Is there a place for African commercial farming now with trade and investment barriers? Noer does not give any clear answers on this debate on market issues in this debate either, and I wanted to ask him how the SPP is managing the land redistribution. Do they have a specific strategy regarding these issues?

Question: This has made me think of some of the older work that was done on land reform and it was made very clear that there was a strong and occupying State. It was not liberal, in the sense that the States were very much supporting those farmers. Now, in places like Japan, a lot of the farmers are having problems. I think the model of the global and local production and all of these questions is part of a larger goal that we are dancing around.

Nancy Peluso: There is also the question of whether there is a goal to try to re-create a peasantry, and what does that mean in 2003 or later.

Question: That seems to be something that the MST is struggling with. I spent a summer with them in Brazil. One of their real concerns right now, since land has been won, is that it is very difficult to make these collective farming arrangements work within a neo-liberal context. As a result, some of the people who had been part of the struggle are leaving the settlements. A related question that I have is what is the end result? Once we get land, how do we make it work, given the international context that we all have to work within?

Gill Hart: To add to that, South Africa now has one of the most free or exposed agricultural sectors in the world. It is clearly a crucial question.

Question: We are talking about neo-liberalism, and the largest controllers of agricultural production, the US and the EU, don't have a liberal agricultural system. So it is also an issue of hegemony and global power. They talk neo-liberal, but they do not walk it.

Question: The Indian economics minister calls it the "sword and shield". You use your sword to cut other people's tariffs and protections, and then you put your shield up to protect yourself.

Lungisile Ntsebeza: One thing that strikes me, when reading literature from Latin America, is the use of the term **peasant**. I have been asking myself what that term might mean at the dawn of the 21st century. To what extent is it theorized and conceptualized by the movements, or are they just using a term? Does it mean a livelihood that is exclusively based on land? I do not know whether it has been theorized enough in the context of Latin America. As for the question of what happens to land once it is acquired, we have an idea of what happens in South Africa. There are communal property associations that were established by an act of parliament; these act as a sort of company for the poor. Their requirements are less stringent. There is no need for the CPA auditor, so it is cheaper. On the whole, what has happened is interesting. Most of the land is underused and underutilized. The land program is market-lead. Between 1994-1995, the State assisted poor people who earned less than about \$150. They were given subsidies of about \$1,500, with which they were expected to acquire expensive and, sometimes, commercial farms. In order to acquire them, they had to put together a subsidy. Up to 120 families would come together to buy one farm. Often the farms were those that the farm owners themselves were struggling to make a living on. What did we expect? Most of the farms are not working. There is a term now called “post-settlement support”. The state hands the land over to people and then forgets about it. It is not just about acquiring land, it is also what you do with it.

Is there a place for African capitalist farming? One way this can be addressed is to look at the success of White African farming. There are two major conditions for the success of White farming: cheap labor and state subsidizes. In a post -994 South Africa, the state subsidy is gone. If you are serious about our democracy, no Black farm worker should be exploited. So the two key conditions that made White farming successful are no longer there. In what ways are capitalist farming, let alone Black farming, possible in South Africa?

Gill Hart: One thing that is happening in White commercial agriculture is the conversion of farms into game parks. In the process, dispossession is speeding up. The pace at which this is happening in Natal is just stunning. Ironically, the extension of Security and Tenure Acts, which were set in place to try to protect Black tenants, is actually teaching White farmers how to evict tenants legally. So that is

one of the ways in which, in the face of these sort of fierce neo-liberal competitive forces, they are luring tourists in and kicking numbers of additional people off the land.

Noer Fauzi Rachman: Unfortunately, the SPP has no specific policies on what kind of productions will be implemented in the reoccupied land. Basically, in the last three years of experiences, one season can produce smoothly. In the next season, they may not be able to produce at all. In my case studies in the village, already 300 million hectares are cleared from the cultivators. I realize that the production is the biggest discussion in the international global debates. What are the types and modes of productions that you want to push in the land reform models? There are all types of big corporations and forest companies and, at the same time, there are all types of small holders.

Families with five children are trying to use half hectares to produce something to sell. It is my guess that 60% of food also comes from the cities. Instant noodles are very popular. This is not made from rice, it is made from wheat. How does Indonesia get wheat? From America and some from India. Wheat has become popular because Suharto’s cronies monopolized the import of wheat from India. For one dime, you can eat the dried meat in the noodles. People need something to be sold to get money to buy things. They sell cassavas, bananas, whatever can be sold. Income comes not only from land, but also from jobs in the cities. There has to be something in the movement about the type of production. I recognize that there are big issues in the debate, and I also feel that there has to be something put in the movement about the type of production that we want after the people get land.

Question: In the discussion, you have been talking specifically about activists and there seems to be an understanding about the civil society movement. The whole issue about the State is not very clear. What is most unclear is what enemy are you up against? It is as if there is this ghost, but I think it is very important to be specific about what it is. In Indonesia, you can be pretty specific. Once you are specific at that level, I think you will see more clearly what is to be done and what is not to be done. The World Bank, of course, has drafted the autonomy laws and it has been passed by rubber-stamp legislation. When you look at the issues that are facing peasants today, what is the government

doing? They are redistributing the land and, then, it gets sold. In that sense, what is happening in Indonesia is not really that different than what is happening in South Africa or Brazil or Chiapas. The issue is poverty. The issue is also when you look at what happens with the land. On the one hand, you have all these movements taking back small areas of land in some areas, and then losing millions of hectares in others. Something like Freeport is the biggest corporation in Indonesia that has an impact and it is taking over everywhere. It does not matter whether the peasants own the land when the machines that die and cannot be used, or are forced to use certain crops. The impact of a corporation like Freeport is huge. It is the palm oil, the plantations, the coffee, and then you get policies by USAID that are funding the civil society at the same time they are making a rubber-stamp for multi-national corporations. If you look at the programs for strengthening civil society, you are going to see that it becomes another way of privatizing things.

Question: I think this is a really crucial question, and it really ties in with what we are trying to get at. We are assuming that the target of action is the State, but how effective can that action be when the State really is beholden to these other interests? I think social movements are dynamic. They change over time and confront predicaments generally over the questions who we are and how are we going to go about getting what we want? In the case of what the MST wants, it used to just be agricultural reform, but now that goal has broadened to overall social and economic justice. In terms of how we get there, that is a conversation that the MST, in my view, should hold with a lot of folks. This is occurring in two dimensions. Do we go about getting what we want through limited change or systemic change? In other words, can we do it within the system that currently exists? I have talked to MST officials who say that they recognize that the system of democracy that they have now is a good one, one that they are happy with, and all we need to do is work within the system and we will be able to achieve our goals. This goes all along the spectrum, and I have talked to others who say that what they really need is revolution and Cuba is their model and a systemic change needs to happen to meet that goal. Closely tied in with this, I think, is another continuum. Do we achieve our goals via legal means or extralegal means?

Question: This can also not just be about changing the system or getting land for production, but land struggles can have meaning in the Chiapas case in terms of questions about indigenous autonomy and creating racial territories, and questions of municipal government and the democratization of municipal government.

Question: I think that, when we look at the social movements and we put the whole thing into the context of the State being a rubber-stamp beholden to the international power structure, I think it is important to recognize how these social movements can use their struggles to strengthen their States so that the State then has a strength that can be applied to the international arena. We can see these social movements strengthening the States rather than weakening them or causing a battle between the two.

Question: I just wanted to pick up on something that was in Noer's paper. I will just leave it as a question. The quote is that there is a difference between revolution by leverage. Is there actually a difference between these two? In other words, is there something that you would call revolution by grace? I am thinking land reform by grace versus land reform by leverage. I am trying to think of any land that was actually given by grace. Perhaps, from our point of view now looks like they happened by grace but, at that time, I am not sure that was the case.

Lungisile Ntsebeza: Who are we up against? Some people would say that it was easy during the apartheid, because we knew we had a common enemy. In many ways, apartheid brought us together. When the State disappeared, we had to ask ourselves who we were and what we were going to do. Differences emerge when it comes time to move forward. One of the discussions that comes up is how do we reach the negotiation processes in South Africa. I do not think that the debate has been resolved. Some people think that the ANC is still our movement and cannot betray us. That given, time and our support, it will resolve itself. That was particularly the case in the Mandela years. I think that the terms are changing in South Africa. It is being recognized that some of them are giving themselves big salaries. It is not the old bureaucrats in the apartheid era, but the new ones who are now engaging in corruption.

In terms of the question of the weak or strong State, I think the State is weak, when you relate it to the

global forces but, at a national level, the State is still strong. The State is strong within. What the challenge was, in 1994 and 1995, was the State being weakened by neo-liberal forces. Increasingly now, the State is identifying with the neo-liberal forces. The State is becoming a big employer through government jobs. People find a way to adjust. Revolution changes. There are people who are saying that enough is enough. There are other people saying that we need to go for radical reform.

Noer Fauzi Rachman: The peasants union is still embryonic. The three-year stage is the embryonic stage. I differentiate between the protest movement and the movement itself. The protest is the specific space created by the political structure, the group that conducts the protests using some maneuvers and tactics to benefit. In my view, the Sudanese Peasants Union is still of this type. The next type is the MST. It is a difference – they have already set up the movement in the field and more than 200,000 people are involved. There are ideologies and educations. You cannot compare SPP with them. It is still in the beginning. The biggest challenge is how to make them metamorphize into the movement. To rectify the trauma over the communist party and also to be organized and to have leadership confidence and to use the government machines, these are all goals that need to be accomplished. How do you use the village government as the machinery of the peasant? There is also the discussion about the production. We cannot move from small holders. They want to get their own land, but how this is to be accomplished is a problem. From 1960 to 1965, there were difficulties because they could not deal adequately with the conflict recently organized by landholder resistance. Disempowerment of the land elites is more difficult than empowering the peasants.

Question: The other part of my research is that I do ethnography of landlords in Mexico and I have looked at their experience with agrarian conflict and how they have changed over time. I am not sure you can draw big lessons from it about how to go about disempowering landlords, because it is so specific to Chiapas. Globalization and liberalization of trade and the effect on small holders have also disempowered some of the more traditional large-holders as well. In that sense, it could be a useful strategic moment, in terms of disempowering landowners.

Gill Hart: I am going to officially bring this to an end. I want to thank you all. Thank you so much for being a small but fantastic audience.

End of Workshop.