

**CONTENTIOUS POLITICS IN TOBA SAMOSIR:
THE TOBA BATAK MOVEMENT OPPOSING THE PT. INTI INDORAYON
UTAMA PULP AND RAYON MILL IN SOSOR LADANG-INDONESIA
(1988 to 2003)**

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by

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Abstract

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This thesis aims to explain the emergence and success of the Toba Batak movement from 1988 to 2003 in closing a pulp and rayon mill, owned and operated by PT Inti Indorayon Utama (IIU). It seeks to explain, first, how this movement developed. Second, what factors made this movement successful? In this study, I draw from the literature on social movements, particularly the theory of contentious politics developed by Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly (2001), to explain the success of the Toba Batak movement to oppose IIU. The theory of contentious politics outlines relevant characteristics of social movements, such as the level of grievance, the legacy of previous protests, the political opportunity structure, the role of brokerage and category formation.

Throughout the research and analysis, the Toba Batak movement succeeded because of the depth of local society's such as water and air pollution, the powerful legacy of previous protests, a major change in the political opportunity structure, the effective brokerage roles played by local organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), students and intellectuals, and the successful category formation through social sanctions.

In this thesis, I applied two methodologies. The first is participant observations. Since I was a WALHI activist from 1997 to 2003, I had many opportunities to observe the Toba Batak movement and to meet, talk with and interview prominent leaders of protests against IIU. The second methodology was archival research to examine events and actors in the Toba Batak movement. I relied on three kinds of archival information: newspapers and magazines (local, national and international), studies and audit document reports, and articles and books.

Approved: Michael Malley

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Glossary

General

ADB	: Asian Development Bank
ANDAL	: Environmental Impact Statement (<i>Analisis Dampak Lingkungan</i>)
AMDAL	: Environmental Impact Assessment (<i>Analisis Mengenai Dampak Lingkungan</i>)
APRIL	: Asia Pacific Resources International Holdings Limited
APP	: Asian Pulp and Paper
BOD	: Biochemical Oxygen Demand
CA	: Chemical Agent
COD	: Chemical Oxygen Demand
DR	: Government Reforestation Fund (<i>Dana Reboisasi</i>)
DHL	: De-Haze Liquid
ECA	: Export Credit Agencies
HTI	: Industrial Timber Plantation (<i>Hutan Tanaman Industri</i>)
HPH	: Forest Concession Rights (<i>Hak Pengusahaan Hutan</i>)
H ₂ S	: Sulfide Hydrogen
IU	: Inti Indorayon Utama Pulp and Rayon Company
IKPP	: Indah Kiat Pulp and Paper Company
INALUM	: Water Power Mill Company
IPK	: Tree Cutting License (<i>Izin Penebangan Kayu</i>)
NESS	: Nucleus Estate and Smallholder System
PH	: Potential Hydrogen
RAPP	: Riau Andalan Pulp and Paper Company
RGM	: Raja Garuda Mas Group
RKL	: Environmental Management Plan (<i>Rencana Kelola Lingkungan</i>)
RPL	: Environmental Monitoring Plan (<i>Rencana Pemantauan Lingkungan</i>)
SO ₂	: Dioxide Sulfur
TDS	: Total Dissolved Solids
TEL	: Tanjung Enim Lestari Pulp and Paper Company
TSS	: Total Suspended Solids

Government Institutions

BAKORTANASDA	: Coordination of Support for the Development of National Stability (<i>Badan Koordinasi Stabilitas Nasional Daerah</i>)
BAPELDALDA	: Regional Impact Management Agency (<i>Badan Pengendalian Dampak Lingkungan Daerah</i>)
BKPM	: Investment Coordinating Board (<i>Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal</i>)
DPA	: Supreme Advisory Council (<i>Dewan Pertimbangan Agung</i>)

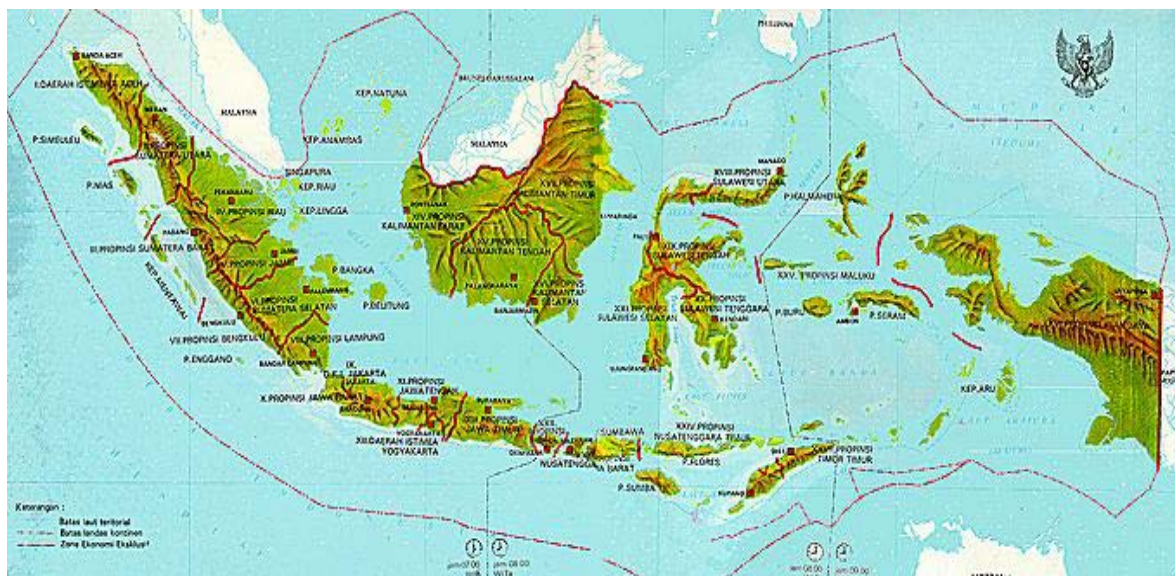
DPR	: House of Representative (<i>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat</i>)
DPRD I	: Provincial Legislative Council (<i>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah Tingkat I</i>)
DPRD II	: Regional Legislative Council (<i>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah Tingkat II</i>)
FKMUI	: The People Health Faculty of Indonesia University (<i>Fakultas Kesehatan Masyarakat Universitas Indonesia</i>)
GOLKAR	: Functional Groups (<i>Golongan Karya</i>)
KODAM	: North Sumatra Military Command (<i>Komnado Daerah Militer</i>)
KODIM	: District Military Command (<i>Komando Daerah Distrik Militer</i>)
KOREM	: Resort Military Command (<i>Komando Resort Militer</i>)
KOMNAS HAM	: National Commission on Human Rights (<i>Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia</i>)
PDIP	: Struggle Indonesian Democratic Party (<i>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan</i>)
PMA	: Foreign Investment Company (<i>Penanaman Modal Luar Negeri</i>)
PMDN	: Domestic Investment Company (<i>Penanaman Modal Dalam Negeri</i>)
PNI	: Indonesia National Party (<i>Partai Nasionalis Indonesia</i>)
POLRI	: National Police Command
POLDA	: Provincial Police Command
POLRES	: District Police Command
POLSEK	: Sector Police Command
PPP	: United Development Party (<i>Partai Persatuan Pembangunan</i>)
USU	: The University of North Sumatra

NGOs

AGRESU	: Alliance of People in North Sumatra People for Reformation (<i>Aliansi Gerakkan Rakyat Sumatera Utara Untuk Reformasi</i>)
FAMSU	: Student Action Forum of North Sumatra (<i>Forum Aksi Mahasiswa Sumatera Utara</i>)
FKGMSU	: The Young Generation Communication Forum of North Sumatra (<i>Forum Komunikasi Generasi Muda Sumatera Utara</i>)
FKMTM	: Medan Forum of Concern with TAPUT People (<i>Forum Kepedulian Masyarakat Taput Medan</i>)
FPRD	: Forum of Peaceful Reformation Supporters (<i>Forum Pendukung Reformasi Damai</i>)
GKPA	: Padang Angkola Christian Church (<i>Gereja Kristen Padang Angkola</i>)
GMI	: Indonesia Methodist Church (<i>Gereja Methodist Indonesia</i>)
GMPS	: Porsea Young Generation Movement (<i>Generasi Muda Porsea dan Sekitarnya</i>)
GKPI	: Indonesia Protestant Christian Church (<i>Gereja Kristen Protestan Indonesia</i>)

GKPS	: Simalungun Protestant Christian Church (<i>Gereja Kristen Protestan Simalungun</i>)
GKPPD	: Pakpak Dairi Protestant Christian (<i>Gereja Kristen Pakpak Dairi</i>)
HKBP	: Congregations of Toba Batak Protestant Churches (<i>Huria Kristen Batak Protestan</i>)
HKI	: Indonesia Christian Huria (<i>Huria Kristen Indonesia</i>)
JANNI	: Japan NGO Network on Indonesia
KAPAL	: Coordination Forum Against Environmental Destruction (<i>Forum Koordinasi Kelompok Anti Pengerusakan Lingkungan</i>)
KAPAK PT IIU	: The Action Committee Concerned with the Impact of PT Inti Indorayon Utama (<i>Komite Aksi Peduli Dampak PT Inti Indorayon Utama</i>)
KSKP	: Peasant Welfare Solidarity Group (<i>Kelompok Solidaritas Kesejahteraan Petani</i>)
KSM	: Voluntary Group for Society (<i>Kelompok Swadaya Masyarakat</i>)
KSPPM	: Study Group for the Development of People's Initiative (<i>Kelompok Studi Pengembangan Inisiatif Rakyat</i>)
KSPH	: Study group for the development of legal awareness
KPA	: Nature Lovers (<i>Kelompok Pecinta Alam</i>)
KPIU	: The Independent Research Group USU (<i>Kelompok Peneliti Independent USU</i>)
LBH	: Legal Aid Institute (<i>Lembaga Bantuan Hukum</i>)
Muhamadiyah	: Modern Islamic Organization
NADI	: Natural Development Research Institute
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
NU	: Traditional Islamic organization (<i>Nahdatul Ulama</i>)
PARBATO	: Toba Batak organization (<i>Partungkuan Batak Toba</i>)
PBHI	: Indonesian Legal Aid and Human Rights Association (<i>Perhimpunan Bantuan Hukum Indonesia</i>)
SRB	: United Voice of the People (<i>Suara Rakyat Bersama</i>)
SP	: Women Solidarity (<i>Solidaritas Perempuan</i>)
YPPDT	: Toba Lake Lovers Foundation (<i>Yayasan Pecinta Pelestarian Danau Toba</i>)
WALHI	: Indonesian Forum on the Environment (<i>Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia</i>)
WWF	: World Wildlife Federation

Indonesian Map



Source: <http://www.seasite.niu.edu/indonesian/indonesian-map/indo-map-fs.htm>

Sumatra Map



Source: <http://www.seasite.niu.edu/indonesian/Indonesian-map/sumatra.htm>

Introduction

The fall of the authoritarian regime of Soeharto in May 1998 made major shifts – from authoritarian to a more democratic – in political structure in Indonesia. The fall of Soeharto provided freedom of speech, a right to demonstrate, and a right to organize. Political elites began to have the courage to criticize government policy if it harmed the people and environment. The press and media were freed from government control and the military retreated from active involvement in political and social issues. It opened a big window of opportunity to the Batak Toba and other groups opposed PT Inti Indorayon Utama (IIU).

In the reformation era, a new era marked by resignation of Soeharto and more democratic in political decision-making process, thousands of the Toba Batak together with their alliances such as students, religious organization, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), ethnic organizations and intellectuals do demonstration again. They went to the streets to stop trucks bringing raw materials to the mill, causing the mill to halt operation. The escalation of violence increased sharply when the security forces tried to break up the action, injuring hundreds protestors and killed two protestors. North Tapanuli and Toba Samosir district police detained hundreds protestors. On the other hand, protestors also fired official and company cars, houses, and shops and beat people who support IIU in response to the police and IIU action.

A number of negotiations, which were offered by the company and facilitated by the local, provincial and central governments were opposed by a large number of the Toba Batak. Rocks were thrown at people who agreed to re-open IIU. This incident occurred on September 11, 1998, when 20 local residents signed an agreement to re-open

the mill. The protestors argued that these few people did not represent the majority of the Toba Batak. In March 1999, President Habibie issued a presidential order to close the mill. It would be re-opened if the government team had finished a full audit of its social and environmental impact. However, this audit never happened and all efforts to run that factory, both of the company and of the government, were opposed by the protestors.

Hence, this thesis tries to answer two questions. First, how did the Toba Batak movement to close the IJU mill develop? Second, what factors made this movement successful? In this thesis, I examine (1) how grievance contribute to the origin and growth of a social movement is influenced by the level of grievance felt by a group of people; (2) how the legacy of the previous protests contribute to opposition groups become used to protest. The protest leaders learn how to organize and manage demonstrations, arrange and implement strategy and tactics and how to identify enemies and supporters of the movement; (3) how the downfall of Soeharto authoritarian government in the middle of 1998 opened the window opportunity for the Toba Batak to mobilize all of components such as the division of elite, the freedom of the press, and freedom of doing demonstration in opposing the mill from 1998 to 2003; (4) how this movement was influenced by the role of brokerages such as NGOs, students, intellectual, local, and religious organizations that united the component of people who oppose the mill; and (5) how the category formation through social sanctions contributed to make the protest movement successful.

Chapter I

The Toba Batak Movement to Oppose PT Inti Indorayon Utama

Indonesia: The Growth of the Pulp and Paper Industry

For two decades from 1980 to 2000, pulp and paper industries in Indonesia experienced rapid expansion. In the late 1980s the pulp and paper industry was able to produce only 606,000 tons of pulp and 1.2 million tons of paper, but by early 2000 production increased tenfold to 6.1 million tons and paper production increased sevenfold to 8.3 million tons in 1988. In terms of export revenue, in 2000 this sector produced US \$3 billion, more than the plywood sector that had long been the biggest contributor to earnings for non-oil products. Therefore it is not surprising if Indonesia is included among the top ten pulp and paper producers in the world.¹

At this time, Indonesia has six existing mills, all of them located on Sumatra. The mills are Indah Kiat Pulp and Paper (IKPP), Riau Andalan Pulp and Paper (RAPP), Tanjung Enim Lestar (TEL), Lontar Papyrus, Inti Indorayon Utama (IIU) and Kertas Kraf Aceh. Ten new mills are being built in Indonesia. Two are located in Riau and Aceh in Sumatra; seven are in Kalimantan and the other is in Papua Barat.

Although there are seven pulp and paper mills, they are owned by four large companies. Asian Pulp and Paper (APP) under Sinar Mas Group owns Indah Kiat and Lontar Papyrus. For two decades, APP expanded and acquired other companies to increase board production capacity in Indonesia. They also invested in board facilities in

¹ See Christopher Barr, *Banking on Sustainability: A Critical Assessment of Structural Adjustment in Indonesia's Forest and Estate Crop Industries* (Jakarta: CIFOR and WWW-International Macroeconomics Program Office, 2002); Human Rights Watch, *Without Remedy: Human Rights Abuse and Indonesia's Pulp and Paper Industry* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2003).

China to a production capacity of 1.8 million tons per year. Therefore APP is the eighth largest paper producer in the world. Asia Pulp Internal Holding Ltd (APRIL) under Raja Garuda Mas Group (RGM), one of the biggest pulp and paper producers in Indonesia, owns RAPP and IIU. APRIL also expanded their pulp and paper investment to China. While not as large as APP, APRIL was the largest producer of pulp in Indonesia.² In addition to APP and APRIL, the Kalimanis Group, which is owned by Bob Hasan, also invested in pulp mills. They control Kertas Kraf Aceh, located in Northern Sumatra. Prayogo Pangestu, together with Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, the daughter of President Soeharto, invested in South Sumatra to build PT TEL, a pulp mill. Japan's Marubeni Corporation and Cellmark of Sweden have a lease on PT TEL pulp production for ten years.³

The rapid growth of the pulp and paper industry was influenced by a number of factors. Principal among these was that in the early 1980s the Indonesian government experienced a financial crisis for the second time since the early 1970s.⁴ This crisis was caused by a decrease in export revenue while imports increased sharply. Revenue from oil, the main export and the biggest contributor to government revenue, declined because

² See Christopher Barr, *Banking on Sustainability: A Critical Assessment of Structural Adjustment in Indonesia's Forest and Estate Crop Industries* (Jakarta: CIFOR and WWW-International Macroeconomics Program Office, 2002; Barr, 2002); Ed Matthew and Jan Willem, *Paper Tiger, Hidden Dragons* (England, Wales & Northern Ireland, Profundo: Friends of The Earth, 2001). In terms of the growth of pulp processing, APP can produce 2.3 million tons per annum up from 410,000 tons. APP also has integrated pulp to paper processing in their mills whereas April has increased pulp processing to 1.1 million tons per annum. APRIL also integrated their pulp to paper production, so in one mill they produce not only pulp but also paper. Kiani produces only pulp.

³ See Larry Lohmann, "Freedom to Plant: Indonesia and Thailand in a Globalizing Pulp and Paper Industry," in *Environmental Change in South-East Asia: Rendering the Human Impact Sustainable*, ed. Michael J.G Parnwell and Raymond Bryant (London: Routledge, 1996); Interview with Inge Altemair, April 28, 2003.

⁴ See Andrew Rosser, *The Politics of Economic Liberalisation in Indonesia: State, Market, and Power*, (England: Curzon, 2001); Hal Hill, "The Economy" in *Indonesia's New Order: The Dynamic of Socio-Economic Transformation*, ed. Hal Hill (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

of the price of oil fell in the international market.⁵ Furthermore, not only did the price of oil fall, it was difficult to predict when the international oil price would become stable again.⁶ Revenue from non-oil products did not cover the negative revenue gap. The Indonesian government had for a decade relied so completely on oil export that it had failed to develop the non-oil sectors. Revenue the Indonesian government received from non-oil products came mostly from log exports, a small portion of the annual budget.

Hence, in the 1980s the Indonesian government announced a new policy to the public with several goals: First, by easing the licensing process, deregulation would expand production of non-oil products, especially those that had a high value added and could absorb a large number of employees, such as the forestry and manufacturing sectors. Second, the Indonesian government provided dispensation for investors in the financial sector interested in founding a bank and lending money to establish a business in Indonesia.⁷

Besides the 1980s financial crisis triggered by falling oil prices in the international market, the pulp and paper industry in Indonesia was driven by government subsidies, both direct and indirect. These government subsidies were the second main factor in promoting the pulp and paper sector in Indonesia.

⁵ See Maman Husein Soemantri, *Oil Revenue, Money, Prices, and Exchange Rate Policies in an Oil Exporting Economy* (Oregon: University Of Oregon, 1988); Andrew MacIntyre, *Business and Politics in Indonesia* (Australia: ASAA & Allen & Unwin, 1992); Hal Hill, *The Indonesian Economy in Crisis: Causes, Consequences and Lessons* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1999); Richard Borsuk, "Reforming Business in Indonesia," in *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos*, ed. Geoff Forrester (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1999).

⁶ See M. Hadi Soesastro, "The Politics of Economy of Deregulation in Indonesia," *Asian Survey* 9: 853-869, 1989.

⁷ *Ibid.* Although the Indonesian government provides a bigger role for the private sector through deregulation, as Soesastro (1989) pointed out, theory and ideology were not clearly thought out in the process of deregulation. Hence, there was an impression that the government deregulated because of necessity, not because they had a comprehensive plan with a future dimension.

As Christopher Barr⁸ noted, one significant reason why the pulp and paper industry saw promise in Indonesia was that the country has a wealth of the raw materials that the industry needs. The government did not oblige the pulp and paper company to plant replacement trees, on the contrary, they were allowed to get their raw material under a Tree Cutting License (*Izin Penebangan Kayu*, IPK), requiring minimal royalty payments. According to Barr, for one cubic meter of hardwood taken from the tropical forest the company paid less than US \$2.50. Furthermore, the pulp and paper company could obtain raw material from Industrial Timber Plantation (*Hutan Tanaman Industri*, HTI) concession sites where the cost was lower than if it had to harvest from its own plantations, based on the rule the HTI concession sites were not supposed to have trees. Moreover, the usual practice was to get the wood from illegal harvesting. Therefore, in the short run the production cost of pulp and paper industries in Indonesia was very low compared to similar industries in North America and Western Europe. However, in the long run a serious problem would develop since there is a gap between the processing capacity and the raw material supply.

To maintain the supply of wood to the mills, the Indonesian government encouraged state and private companies to make pulpwood plantations, providing financial discounts and equity capital. Barr writes:⁹

The Forestry Department subsidizes HTI projects by providing 14 percent of the project's total cost in the form of equity capital and 32.5 percent in the form of a no-interest loan with a repayment period of 10 years. In addition, the plantation company is permitted to draw on loans from DR [Dana Reboisasi or the Government's Reforestation Fund] funds at commercial rates to finance 32.5 percent of the project's expenses.

⁸ See Christopher Barr, *Banking on Sustainability: A Critical Assessment of Structural Adjustment in Indonesia's Forest and Estate Crop Industries* (Jakarta: CIFOR and WWW-International Macroeconomics Program Office, 2002 Barr, 2002).

⁹ *ibid*, p. 23

Furthermore, according to an Ernst & Young audit, there were a number of recipients which manipulated “the portion of projects ...funded by their own capital and overstated the net area to be planted at their HTI sites.”¹⁰

Another form of government subsidy was the provision of soft loans from state banks to pulp and paper companies. But most of the debtors who received money from state banks got it not because their proposals were good but because of the relationship between the business owner and government and bank elites. Moreover, sometimes the debtor did not have to give collateral to the creditor and repayment of the loan was based on negotiations, not the rule of the bank itself.¹¹

The pulp and paper companies also benefited from the Commercial Banking Law of 1988, which allowed anybody to establish a bank. Therefore it was no surprise that the company borrowed from a bank, which took deposits from people. This practice was not dangerous if the bank used correct procedures for evaluating a loan. But the problem was that private banks took out loans that exceeded government regulations.

The mills also got an advantage from “favorable tax laws and accounting procedures.” Barr shows that “producers have benefited from government regulations that allow firms to accelerate depreciation on fixed capital assets for tax purposes and Indonesia tax law permits companies to enjoy the added fiscal benefit of depreciation.”¹²

Pulp and paper companies in Indonesia also got contributions from international financial institutions that provided easy access to loans. US \$12 billion of international

¹⁰ *Ibid* p.24.

¹¹ See Ed Mathew and Jan Willem, *Paper Tiger, Hidden Dragons* (England, Wales & Northern Ireland, Profundo: Friend of the Earth, 2001).

¹² *Ibid* p.29.

loans went to pulp and paper industries both through “direct capital loans” and by “orchestrating bond offerings that tap into North American and European debt markets.”¹³ APP was the biggest pulp and paper industry in Indonesia to receive an international loan and APRIL was the second.¹⁴

Besides international financial access, the development of the pulp and paper industry in Indonesia was influenced by the situation of the “old” producers of pulp and paper. Pulp and paper producing countries like Canada, the USA, Finland and Sweden, were experiencing difficulties in expanding their business at home because they had to spend a large sum of money on new technology in order to meet the conditions of the new environmental laws. For instance, according to Carrere and Lohman,¹⁵ the main pulp and paper producers in North American countries spend 55 percent of their budget on building new mills, while companies in Western European countries spent 26 percent. Second, these companies also had to meet labor demands for higher salaries, and, third, they faced a scarcity of raw materials from domestic sources.

Pulp and paper producers in Northern and Western countries saw a bright prospect economically if they shifted their investment to Southern countries like Indonesia. Indonesia has the third largest tropical forest in the world. It would be able to supply huge amounts of raw materials in the form of wood and the price was very cheap compared to the price in Nordic countries or the West Coast of the USA. Therefore,

¹³ *Ibid* p.31.

¹⁴ International financial institutions were willing to invest their money in pulp and paper industries in Indonesia although they knew these investments had a high risk because there was a loan guarantee provided by Export Credit Agencies (ECA). In practice, ECA will pay the amount of money invested by an international financial institution if the pulp and paper industry cannot repay their loan.

¹⁵ See Ricardo Carrere and Larry Lohmann, *Pulping the South: Industrial Tree Plantations and The World Paper Economy* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd, 1996).

according to Carrere and Lohmann, paper and pulp companies could decrease the variable cost of production by 40 to 70 percent.

Furthermore, in Southern countries like Indonesia there was a very large labor supply, which the industry and farming sector could not absorb. Hence, the labor supply exceeded the demand and, consequently, wages could be kept low. Another attractive factor was that the pulp and paper industry did not have to honor environmental laws as strictly as they had to in their own countries.

On one hand, the competitive advantages of the pulp and paper industry in Indonesia caused rapid growth and enabled companies to compete in the international market. But on the other hand, the competitive advantages which were provided were not maintained. The pulp and paper industry in Indonesia has a number of serious problems that threaten its future sustainability. One problem is that the growth rate of raw material planted by pulp and paper industries is overstated, meaning that the companies' published reports about the size of their HTI does not fit the reality. For instance, one pulp and paper company claimed to have 1000 hectares of HTI but in fact they have just 500 hectares. They exaggerated the area to get money from re-forestation funds.¹⁶

Besides that, HTI are vulnerable to technical problems. As Barr pointed out, "low yields were largely caused by the planting of poor genetic material; inappropriate site preparation; milling in areas with compacted soils; lack of diligence in weed control; less than optimal plantation management once the trees were planted."¹⁷ The trees were susceptible to fire as occurred in 1997. Satellite reports and the investigation of the

¹⁶ See Christopher Barr, *Banking on Sustainability: A Critical Assessment of Structural Adjustment in Indonesia's Forest and Estate Crop Industries* (Jakarta: CIFOR and WWW-International Macroeconomics Program Office, 2002).

¹⁷ *Ibid* p.8.

Indonesia Forum on the Environment (*Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia*, WALHI) showed that some of the fire sites were located in HTI. Furthermore, the pulp and paper companies had to deal with local people whose land was taken by the companies. Social conflict between local people and companies meant the companies had to provide extra resources to solve the problem. The companies were also vulnerable to damage caused by the local population through a variety of protests.

The pulp and paper industries also face a structural problem, that is, “plantation development has lagged well behind pulp processing capacity expansion.”¹⁸ The pulp and paper companies have many debts, from both domestic and international financial institutions. Most of the money did not finance the mills themselves but financed the other interests or businesses of the owners. Therefore, when the economic crisis occurred in 1998 in Indonesia, one of the non-oil sectors shaken to its foundations was the pulp and paper industry.

Christopher Barr’s research, entitled *Profits on Paper: The Political Economy of Fiber, Finance, and Debt in Indonesia’s Pulp and Paper Industries*, revealed that although the pulp and paper industries experienced difficulty in repaying their loans, the financial institutions and the Indonesian government did not try to halt their operation. In fact, pulp and paper companies in Indonesia obtained additional loans from international and domestic financial institutions and the Indonesian government to save the mills. The mills were too big to be closed. The hope was that if the management were changed and export increased, the mills would be able to re-pay their debt.

Barr’s research challenged a number of assumptions, such as that IIU stopped production because they hoped to have a significant reason not to re-pay their debt. In

¹⁸ *Ibid* p. 1.

fact, this mill halted operation purely because of the massive protests of the Toba Batak people from 1988 to the present time. In fact the company could always get new money from other sources that see IIU as able to produce profit.

PT. IIU: The First Established, the First to Fall

President Soeharto announced the establishment of IIU in the Jamuan village of Lhokseumawe Aceh, along with seven pulp and paper companies across Indonesia, in December 1989.¹⁹ This mill was able to produce 165,000 tons of pulp a year and 54,000 tons of rayon a year, a large portion of which would be exported to Europe and Asia and the remainder used domestically.²⁰

Sukanto Tanoto, an Indonesian konglomerat, owned a large number of the shares of this company and international corporations, the public, and a cooperative (*koperasi*) owned the rest. In order to be competitive and make money in the international market, Sukanto Tanoto put IIU under APRIL, which was located in Singapore, while APRIL itself was under RGM, a business umbrella of Sukanto Tanoto.²¹ The process which transformed IIU from a domestic investment company (*Penanaman Modal Dalam Negeri*, PMDN) to a foreign investment company (*Penanaman Modal Asing*, PMA) on May 11 1990, meant that the company could legally raise money from the public.

¹⁹ The others are PT. Kertas Kraft Aceh in Aceh, most share owned by the Indonesia Government and Bob Hasan; PT. Fajar Surya Wisesa in Bekasi West Java; PT. Surya Zig Zag in Kediri East Java; PT. Indah Kiat & Paper Corporation in Perawang Riau; PT. Panca Usahatama Paramita in Tangerang West Java; PT. Surabaya Megabox Ltd in Gresik East Java and PT. Panca Unipa in Tangerang West Java. See *Tempo* 19-23 December 1989; "Pabrik Pulp Indorayon Akan Diresmikan Presiden Soeharto: Proyek Itu Kini Hasilkan Devisa" *Suara Pembaruan*, December 11, 1989.

²⁰ See WALHI and YLBHI, *Perjalanan Secarik Kertas: Suatu Tinjauan Terhadap Pengembangan Industri Pulp dan Kertas di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Walhi dan YLBHI, 1993); Suhardjo Hs, Amran Nasution, and Irwan E. Siregar, "Tim Kontroversi Indorayon" *Tempo*, November 19, 1988; *Tabloid Adil*, October 31, 1998.

²¹ See Ashoka Siahaan, *Bencana Lingkungan di TOBA: Bahan Studi Penyadaraan KSPPM*, (Siborong-Borong: KSPPM, 1993); Silaen Victor, "Indorayon dan Gerakkan Sosial Baru," *Harian Sinar Harapan*, January 10, 2003; Carr Frances, "Indorayon's Last Gasp," *Down to Earth*, November 2000.

However, this change raised a number of questions. First, on April 26, 1983, IIU was listed as a domestic investment company. A Canadian consulting company, Sandwell built the mill in February 1986, and the mill began commercial production in 1989. In order to be listed on the stock exchange, the mill was required to declare a profit over a two-year period. In fact, the mill was in production for just one year. According to Ashoka Siahaan (1993), the mill's profit in the amount of Rp10.7 billion (\$5.3 million) came from the sale of pine wood in 1988. The main reason IIU mobilized a large amount of money from outside resources was because the company planned to build a rayon mill located in the same area as the pulp mill. Early in 1992, IIU started construction of the mill with US \$200 million. They hoped to be in operation by 1993.²²

Kaharuddin Nasution, the Governor of North Sumatra, provided a location permit of 225 hectares of land in Sosor Ladang, a village in the Porsea sub-district, North Tapanuli district in 1984 for the purpose of building the mill.²³ However, from the beginning a number of environmental activists, elites and experts argued that the location was not feasible for a mill that was predicted to produce a large amount of pollution. The location was in a valley; close to settlements and near the Asahan River, the main source of water for a large number of people who live in North Tapanuli. The river also had dams which generated electrical power for North Sumatra.²⁴ In addition Nasution signed

²² See "Gubernur BI Berjanji Teliti: Kemungkinan Manipulasi Kredit PT. Indorayon" *Sinar Pagi*, November 11, 1988; WALHI, "Case Study: Tapasadama Rohanta Menutup Indorayon: The Tale of the Toba-Samosir People's Struggle Against PT Inti Indorayon Utama," June 2003 www.walhi.or.id

²³ In 2000 Sosor Ladang-Porsea is part of Toba Samosir district as new district, division from North Tapanuli district.

²⁴ See "Karyawan PT Inalum Agar Bekerja Sebagaimana Biasa" *Mimbar Umum*, October 21, 1988. Ir. Emmy Hafield M sc, the Director of WALHI, stated that the biggest mistake PT. Inti Indorayon Utama ever made was to choose Sosor Ladang-Porsea as the location of the mill. This location was in a valley. Dr RTM Sutamihardja suggested that the mill should be relocated because the old site was not right, located on the upper river so that the waste endangered the river and the people. Prof. Dr. Otto Soemarwoto, lecturer at Pajajaran University also objected to the IIU location. He discounted the Environmental Impact

permit No. 593/3085/1984 before the company finished fulfilling various environmental requirements such as the Environmental Management Plan (*Rencana Kelola Lingkungan*, RKL), the Environment Monitoring Plan (*Rencana Pemantauan Lingkungan*, RPL), the estimate of the volume of water to be dumped into the Asahan River, the raw material exploitation, and the securing of sloping riverbanks, housing and education.²⁵

Emil Salim, Environmental Minister, along with A.R. Soehoed, Minister of Industry in the Soeharto government, disagreed from the beginning with the location permit given to IIU in Sosor Ladang. He proposed other, more feasible places such as Kuala Langsa, downstream on the Asahan River; Porsea, the capital of Porsea sub-district; Laguboti, close to the Simare River; Balige, close to the Ala River; Tarutung, close to the Batang Toru River; or Kuala Tanjung, close to Tanjung Balai. These locations had better infrastructure than Sosor Ladang i.e., roads to transport raw material from the upper stream of the Asahan River.²⁶ However, even a different location for the mill would not have solved all the problems since the mill applied “old” technology and the “worst” waste management.

Suyono Sasrodarsono, the Minister of Public Works in the Soeharto government, addressed the same concern. He predicted this mill would disturb the continuity of the Siruar, Sigura-gura, and Tangga dams. The mill waste would rust the propellers used to

Analysis Statement (Analisis Dampak Lingkungan, ANDAL) which was carried out by lecturers from the University of North Sumatra (USU) because in the IIU ANDAL there was no data about the negative impact of the change from pine to eucalyptus forest, landslide estimation data, water sheet balance, heavy metal, BOD, air pollution, or social and economic impacts. He withdrew from the team which discussed whether or not IIU was feasible in Sosor Ladang-Porsea. See “Dosa-Dosa Indorayon,” *Kompas*, June 8, 2003.

²⁵ See Governor Degree Number 593/3085 1984 about location and land size for building pulp and rayon mill, PT Inti Indorayon Utama “Dosa-Dosa Indorayon” *Kompas*, June 8, 2003.

²⁶ See “Sejak Semula Emil Tidak Setuju PT IIU Di Hulu Sungai Asahan,” *Suara Pembaruan*, November 9, 1988; *Kompas*, March 7 1999.

turn the water power plant's turbine which belonged to PT Inalum.²⁷ But after B.J. Habibie, the Research and Technology Minister in Soeharto's government, and Soeharto himself insisted the mill be built in Sosor Ladang, three ministers issued a memorandum to permit the company to build their mill in Sosor Ladang with a number of conditions that had to be fulfilled by the company.²⁸

It was a usual practice in Indonesia during the Soeharto regime for a company to get a location permit to build or a bank loan if they had a close relationship with Soeharto. According to George Junus Aditjondro, the reason IIU got the license was because Soeharto and his family were shareholders in the company. Aditjondro revealed that the close relationship between Sukanto Tanoto and Soeharto started in 1977 when Soeharto intervened to permit Sukanto Tanoto's company, RGM, to cut timber in Sekundur Wild Animal Park at the foot of Leuser Mountain. The then General Director of Protection and Preservation of Nature gave the license after Soeharto intervened. But the Forestry Minister asked RGM to re-forest the land that had been cut.²⁹

To supply raw material to the mill, the Indonesian government issued licenses to use the forest. In the short term, the mill could take wood from 86,000 hectares of pine forest under a permit (*surat keputusan*) from the Forestry Minister number 236/KPTS-1V/1984. In the long term, the Indonesian government, through the Forestry Minister

²⁷ See *Kontan*, April 10 2000.

²⁸ See "Tinjauan Berita: PT IIU Profil Pembangunan Sebuah Pabrik Yang Menarik" *Suara Pembaruan*, September 19, 1988; *Kompas*, March 7 1999; *Waspada*, October 13, 1998.

²⁹ See George Junus Aditjondro, "Gurita RGM, Pers dan Kesadaran Palsu," in *Limbah Pers di Danau Toba: Media Pers Menghadapi Gurita Indorayon*, J Anto (Yogyakarta: Kipas and LP3Y, 2001). The Indonesian Government withdrew RGM's license to cut the forest in Sekundur due to pressure by environmental organizations, especially the World Wildlife Federation (WWF). They stated, based on their research, that 15 wild animal species were threatened because of RGM's activities. When RGM proposed to expand their area, Emil Salim had to go to the field to evaluate the feasibility of the project. The result was that Emil Salim as the Environmental Minister did not allow RGM's proposal because it would endanger the wild animal park. See R.B. Cribb, *The Politics of Environmental Protection in Indonesia* (Clayton, Australia: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1988).

allowed the mill to get wood from 269,060 hectares of Forest Concession Rights (*Hak Pengusahaan Hutan*, HPH), according to permit number 493/KPTS-II/1992.³⁰ This HPH concession covered five districts in North Sumatra, as detailed, in the chart below;

Table 1. The HPH concession of IIU (ha)

No	Districts	Size
1.	North Tapanuli	167,943
2.	Simalungun	22,533
3.	South Tapanuli	41,818
4.	Dairi	31,627
5.	Central Tapanuli	5,139
	Total	269,060

Source: PT. Inti Indorayon Utama TBK. “The Material of Hearing with Commission V Indonesia Legislative” September 1998.

When the Indonesian government issued the license to IIU, several match companies, which also needed the pines for their product, together with the head of Simalungun District, J.P. Silitonga, and M. Zaki Azam, Director of Asian Development Bank (ADB), which had financed the Simalungun irrigation, protested. They were concerned because the forest that was included in IIU concession is important for retaining water. IIU did not adequately honor its reforestation agreement with the Indonesian government. According the Ministry of Forestry and Estate Crops in 1999, of the 269,060 Hectares given to the company, only 48,553 were re-planted. This shows

³⁰ See Efendi Panjaitan, “Tapasadama Rohanta Indorayon—Kisah Perjuangan Rakyat Toba-Samosir Sumatera Utara Melawan PT. Inti Indorayon Utama,” in *Memecah Ketakutan Menjadi Kekuatan Kisah-Kisah advokasi di Indonesia*, ed. Dr. Mansour Fakihi (Yogyakarta: INSIST Press, 2002); *Kompas*, October 27, 1998.

that in the long run, if the mill operates again, they will experience serious difficulty in getting raw material.³¹

The strong support from government for IIU came because IIU absorbed a large number of both educated and uneducated employees from the surrounding area and from outside. According to Forum Bona Pasogit, this mill employed 1,600 people in the mill and office and 2,000 people in the forest. The mill also provided significant revenue not only for the central government but also for local and provincial government from export taxes and land use taxes.³² Because of these benefits to the nation and society, it seemed reasonable at the time that the Indonesian government allow a number of pulp and paper companies, including IIU, to apply conventional technology of using chlorine (C₁₂) in their pulp bleaching process although this technology had been proven harmful to the environment and was no longer used in Northern and European countries. Dr. Nyoman Jaya Wistra showed that the conventional technology was dangerous for the environment because the bleaching works by the lignin chlorination process, and some chlorinated organic compounds formed by this process (i.e. dioxin and furan) are toxic. These compounds are difficult to manage within the tolerance levels for the environment and for humans.³³

³¹ See Christopher Barr, *Banking on Sustainability: A Critical Assessment of Structural Adjustment in Indonesia's Forest and Estate Crop Industries* (Jakarta: CIFOR and WWW-International Macroeconomics Program Office, 2002 Barr, 2002).

³² See Forum Bona Pasogit, "Perjuangan Tutup Indorayon dan Perayaan Hari Bumi 2003"; "Pemerintah harus Ganti Ratusan Juta Dollar jika Menutup TPL" *Republika*, November 26, 2002.

³³ See Nyoman Jaya Wistra, "kemampuan Teknologi Pulp dan Kertas Mutakhir Dalam Mewujudkan Suatu Green Industry," in *Prospek dan Tantangan Pengembangan Agribisnis dan Kertas Dalam Era Ekolabeling dan Otonomi Daerah*, ed. Tungkot Sipayung ... [et al.] (Bogor: Pusat Studi Pembangunan, IPB, 2000); Firman Manurung, "Dampak Polusi PT Inti Indorayon Utama," in *Academic Review Terhadap Hasil Audit Labat Anderson Mengenai Dampak Lingkungan PT. Inti Indorayon Utama*, Fasilitator Pusat Studi Pembangunan IPB, ed (Bogor: PSP IPB, 2000).

Because the company stressed economic profit rather such factors as environmentally safe technology, mill location, forest usage, and the impact on the socio-economic lives of the Toba Batak, this mill had a negative impact not only on the environment but also on the Toba Batak who lived around the mill area. These negative impacts, coupled with the legacy of the previous struggle to oppose IIU, the Toba Batak people led massive demonstrations demanding the mill be closed forever. Because of this resistance from the groups that did not want the mill to operate in Sosor Ladang, the Indonesian government closed the mill in 1999. This was the first time a pulp and rayon mill was closed not because of bankruptcy but because of popular pressure.

In this thesis, I propose to answer two questions. First, how did the Toba Batak movement to close the IIU mill develop? Second, what factors made this movement successful?

Theoretical Approach

In this study, I draw from the literature on social movements, particularly the theory of contentious politics developed by Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly (2001),³⁴ to explain the success of the Toba Batak movement to oppose IIU. The theory of contentious politics outlines relevant characteristics of social movements, such as the level of grievance, the legacy of previous protests, changes in the political opportunity structure, the role of brokerage and category formation. In the case of the Toba Batak movement there was a high level of grievance caused by environmental, economic and social problems, a strong legacy of protests, a dramatic change in the

³⁴ See Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

political opportunity structure after the downfall of the authoritarian Soeharto regime, a coalition of groups which tried to unite and educate different elements in society to oppose the mill, and the mobilization of environmental and ethnic issues to attract people to the movement. The theory of contentious politics provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors that made the Toba Batak movement successful in closing the mill.

Earlier literature on social movements develops only one explanation for the social movement phenomenon. For instance, John McCarthy and Mayer Zald (1973) propose resource mobilization as a primary mechanism to explain social movements based on their research on American protest movements.³⁵ Charles Tilly (1985) and Sidney Tarrow (1988) emphasize that changes in political structure will affect the growth and success of a social movement.³⁶ However, these theories were drawn from a particular place and time and could not be applied universally, especially in southern countries. Political process theory applies in Western Europe because of major shifts – from oligarchy to a social democratic consensus – in political structure. Meanwhile, resource mobilization applies well in North America because it explains how protest groups mobilize resources to gain their political goals.³⁷

Contentious political theory synthesizes many factors, which can be used by social movement scholars to explain the success or failure of social movements. This

³⁵ See John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, *The Dynamics of Social Movements: Resources Mobilization, Social Control and Tactics*, (Winthrop Publishers: Cambridge, MA, 1973).

³⁶ See Charles Tilly, "Models and Realities of Popular Collective Action," *Social Research* Vol. 52: 4 (1985); Sidney Tarrow, "National Politics and Collective Action: Recent Theory and Research in Western Europe and United States," *Annual Review of Sociology* 14 (1988).

³⁷ As Joe Foweraker explains, "the United States had no such social democratic shift and the labour movement was less important to national politics. There social movements were explained not by societal changes" but by resource mobilization. See Joe Foweraker, *Theorizing Social Movements* (London, Boulder, Colorado: Pluto Press, 1995), p.2.

approach shows how contributing factors work hand-in-hand to make a social movement. It explains why a social movement in a particular time and place succeeds or fails.

Grievance refers to the way in which the origin and growth of a social movement is influenced by the level of grievance felt by a group of people. In the Toba Batak movement to oppose IIU, this variable is applicable because the mill created environmental damage, economic damage, violence and social problems. It polluted the rivers and underground water needed by the Toba Batak for drinking water, washing and bathing, irrigating crops and fish farming. The mill also polluted the air and land in Porsea. In the dry season, there is not enough source water because the rivers have dried up due to overlogging and the depletion of ground water reservoirs. Due to IIU's exploitation of the natural forest for raw materials for the mill, in the rainy season, the locals have to be wary of landslide and flood threats. For instance, in 1989 a landslide caused by IIU activity cutting wood and moving soil in Bulu Silape killed thirteen people. Lagoon tanks ruptured and a chlorine tank at the mill once polluted the water in the Asahan River and underground water. These accidents created massive panic among the Toba Batak, because they were afraid the chlorine would kill them. In addition, the existence of the mill stimulated prostitution, which violates local culture and religion. This mill also created land conflict between the Toba Batak and the company because IIU milled their eucalyptus trees on Toba Batak land.

The legacy of previous protests is important because it indicates that opposition groups had become used to protesting. The protest leaders learn how to organize and manage demonstrations, arrange and implement strategy and tactics and how to identify enemies and supporters of the movement. In the Toba Batak case, people started to resist

in 1988 when IIU took the land of Sugapa farmers. Demonstrations in the field, in Tarutung (the capital of North Tapanuli District), in Medan (the capital of North Sumatra province) and in Jakarta (the capital of Indonesia) forced the government and IIU to return the land to the Sugapa villagers. The villagers in Silaen protested against IIU because its activities created landslides, which caused serious environmental damage in 1989. The Toba Batak also staged massive demonstrations to protest the rupture of a chlorine tank in 1993. From 1988 into the 1990s, congregations of Toba Batak Protestant Churches (*Huria Kristen Batak Protestan*, HKBP) were mobilized to keep resisting the government and IIU attempts to dismiss Dr. SEA Nababan as head of the HKBP. Hence, in the *reformasi* era, the Toba Batak used the legacy of the previous protests to make an effective movement to oppose IIU.

The political opportunity structure factor refers to the hypothesis that the rise and success of a protest movement is highly dependent on political and civil liberties, divisions within the elite, the role of the military in politics, the public space for political debate, and media freedom. Change in the political structure, such as democratization, can increase the opportunities for the emergence and success of a protest movement. In the Indonesian context, the political change that occurred in 1998 led to an opening of the political opportunity structure. The fall of the authoritarian regime of Soeharto provided freedom of speech, a right to demonstrate, and a right to organize. Political elites began to have the courage to criticize government policy if it harmed the people and environment. The press and media were freed from government control and the military retreated from active involvement in political and social issues.

The role of brokerage is important in making a protest movement successful because it can add to the solidity of movement. A protest movement requires local organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), mass organizations, students, intellectuals, and religious institutions which are able to unite, educate and mobilize many elements in the society. In the Toba Batak movement, at the grassroots level the Toba Batak had the United Voice of the People (*Suara Rakyat Bersama*, SRB) as a local organization. At the NGO level, the Toba Batak movement was supported by a Study Group for the Development of a People's Initiative (*Kelompok Studi Pengembangan Inisiatif Rakyat*, KSPPM), and WALHI (the biggest environmental advocacy organization in Indonesia), as well as students from universities in Medan, intellectuals, Forum Bona Pasogit in Jakarta, the Toba Batak organization in Medan, HKBP and the Catholic church, all of which mobilized their resources to close the mill. They formulated joint action strategies, such as opinion mobilization and alliances and civil disobedience (not to going to school or paying taxes) or demonstrations every Sunday after church services.

The factor of category formation—which refers to the way in which the identity of a social movement and the issues it acts on are framed—also contributes to making the protest movement successful. The actors of a social movement may use ethnic or religious identity or environmental issues to unite people and attract support for the protest movement. They also set up social sanctions to isolate those who do not identify with the frame they establish. In the Toba Batak movement, many protestors who opposed IIU claimed that Toba Batak who did not oppose the mill were no longer Toba Batak. They said that “true” Toba Batak must reject the mill because pollution and other

negative impacts could threaten the life of the Toba Batak. The framing of identity influences who will be engaged in the movement and may cause people to change from supporting to opposing the mill.

Methodology

This thesis is a case study of the Toba Batak³⁸ movement to oppose the operation of PT Inti Indorayon Utama's pulp and rayon mill during the period from 1988 to 2003.³⁹ I will apply only one theory, contentious politic theory, which is popularized by Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly. This theory is well suited to this case in which grievances about pollution and other negative impacts, changes in the political opportunity structure, resource mobilization, brokerage by different groups and organization, and category formation are significant variables in explaining the success of the Toba Batak movement.

In this thesis I apply two methodologies. The first is participant observation.⁴⁰ As I was a WALHI activist from 1997 to 2003, I had many opportunities to observe the Toba Batak movement and to meet and talk with prominent Toba Batak leaders and NGO activists who resisted IIU so that I could identify both the key players—organizations and individuals—in this movement and the general strategies they applied. In 2000 in Palembang, I spoke with Poltak Simanjuntak, former director of the Study Group for the

³⁸ The Toba Batak is a Batak subgroup in North Sumatra. There are four Batak subgroups: Toba Samosir, Dairi, Karo and Mandailing.

³⁹ By using the case study method, this thesis aims to provide a detailed, dense and holistic elaboration of the Batak movement to resist IIU. See David A. Snow and Danny Trom, "The Case Study of Social Movements," in *Methods of Social Movement Research* ed. Bert Klandermans and Suzanne Staggenborg (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

⁴⁰ See Paul Lichterman, "Seeing Structure Happen: Theory-Driven Participant Observation," in *Methods of Social Movement Research* ed. Bert Klandermans and Suzanne Staggenborg (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

Development of a People's Initiative (*Kelompok Studi Pengembangan Inisiatif Rakyat*, KSPPM), and with other KSPPM activists. He conducted pollution training in Palembang, sponsored by Japan NGO Network on Indonesia (JANNI). Through discussion with him, I saw how social sanctions are an effective strategy to create category formation which favors the anti-IIU camp.

I also discussed IIU with Musa Gurning and Aden Manurung, prominent Toba Batak leaders in March 2001 when WALHI South Sumatra, along with such other NGO organizations, such as Natural Development Research Institute (NADI), held an international meeting concerning the pulp and paper industry in Palembang. At this meeting, they explained their strategies to force the government to close IIU. I discussed IIU with Efendi Panjaitan, director of WALHI North Sumatra, and Emmy Hafield, the director of National Executive of WALHI, when WALHI held national meetings, workshops and seminars in Jakarta. I also had the opportunity to witness the Toba Batak demonstrating in Jakarta, and I had a chance to talk to them. Through discussion and observation I saw how the National Executive of WALHI and WALHI North Sumatra worked together, making the movement grow and achieve relative success.

I also conducted participant observations in Spring 2003. This was possible because I received a small grant from Luce Foundation funding to Ohio University to do participant observation in Indonesia. I conducted in-depth interviews as well as observations.⁴¹ There are three questions on which I found only very limited information

⁴¹ See Kathleen M. Blee and Verta Taylor, "Semi-Structured Interviewing in Social Movement," in *Methods of Social Movement Research* ed. Bert Klandermans and Suzanne Staggenborg (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Bert Klandermans, Suzanne Staggenborg, and Sidney Tarrow "Conclusion: Blending Methods and Building Theories in Social Movement Research," in *Methods of Social Movement Research* ed. Bert Klandermans and Suzanne Staggenborg (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

in archival sources and previous participant observations. These questions are: 1) How did changes in the political opportunity structure play a role in this movement?

Furthermore, how was the political opportunity structure used by NGOs, local activists and influential allies among the elite to mobilize support and to succeed in closing the mill? 2) How did the NGOs and local organizations act as brokers in mobilizing and uniting different anti-IIU groups to act together? 3) How did social sanctions reinforce category formation in society and what social sanctions were used to make category formation concrete in the Toba Batak movement?

In Jakarta, I interviewed Emmy Hafield, former director of the National Executive WALHI; Longgena Ginting, the new director of the National Executive WALHI; Nurhidayati, Winoto, Hening Parlan and other National Executive WALHI activists who worked on the UII campaign. I also interviewed Prof. Dr. Tunggul T. Sirait, an environmental expert and legislative member, as well as Prof. Dr. Firman Manurung. I spoke with Martin T. Sirait, the chief of Forum Bona Pasogit, a Batak organization in Jakarta. I met and interviewed Eli Hakim Sitorus, former chief of KSPPM and an activist who followed this struggle from the beginning. I had an opportunity to interview Dodo Sambodo, a former WALHI activist who was actively involved in bringing up the IIU issue in 1988 and who is close to two Soeharto's environment ministers, Emil Salim and Sarwono Kusumaadmadja. Through Sambodo I was able to interview Nabiel Makarim, the Environmental Minister in the Megawati cabinet. I was fortunate in meeting several prominent Toba Batak leaders who fled from Porsea to Jakarta, hiding from the police. They stayed in Jakarta and visited the WALHI office regularly. I discussed with Jansen Sitorus the strategies and the role of each of the NGOs in enlarging this movement.

Through him, I got information and data about their struggle unavailable elsewhere. I also interviewed many Toba Batak activists who stayed in Jakarta, including G. Manurung, whose son died in the struggle against IIU.

I had the opportunity to be involved in many meetings held by the National Executive of WALHI to discuss IIU. I had a chance to ask questions, which helped to answer some questions proposed in this field research. In addition, I was allowed to attend a working meeting between WALHI and Commission VIII of the Indonesian House of Representative in Jakarta. At this meeting, I also was able to identify which political parties supported and which opposed anti-IIU groups along with their arguments. I was able to speak with some legislative members about IIU, and I heard firsthand that some legislative members still recommend that the Indonesian government close IIU.

In Medan, I interviewed Efendi Panjaitan, the former director of WALHI North Sumatra; Erwin Nasution, the current Director of WALHI North Sumatra; and Joko Sitompul. I spoke with students at Nommensen University to explore the role the students played in the movement. I also had a chance to attend some discussions in WALHI North Sumatra about demonstrations against IIU by NGOs in Medan. At this meeting, I met activists and discussed the role of their NGO in this movement.

In the field, I interviewed many villagers. I also interviewed students from elementary through senior high school, who performed acts of civil disobedience by not attending school for a month when the government allowed IIU to return to operation. I also had field interviews with women to learn why they engaged in this movement. I was able to witness how they argued in the forum at the Earth Day demonstration in Sirait

Uruk intersection. I saw that there was no gender boundary, the most important thing was how to close the mill. I interviewed some priests, especially Pastor H. Silaen, who accompanied the Toba Batak against IIU for four years. Further, I met with students from several universities in Medan who stayed in the villages to help the Toba Batak close IIU.

It was my good fortune to watch the peak of the Earth Day celebration in Indonesia at the Sirait Uruk intersection in Porsea. I saw how women, men, and children, old and young, participated in this demonstration. They came from Samosir Island, Porsea Sub-District and other sub-districts in Toba Samosir. Although it was raining, they still came carrying umbrellas. It was fantastic to see hundreds of open umbrellas in the Earth Day demonstration. I saw children march from a village to the demonstration location singing songs telling how bad IIU is for people and the environment. I heard the Catholic bishop of North Sumatra give a strong speech telling the government, IIU and the police to listen to what local people want, the closing of IIU. As bishop, he gave his full support to local people in their struggle to close IIU. On Earth Day, I joined in informal discussions while we had lunch in the homes of local people. In this informal setting, I could hear more about the bishop's motivation and effort to close IIU.

In Parapat, I interviewed Pelemon, a community organizer of KSPPM who lives among local people. From him, I got the latest information about the movement to close IIU. I also had a chance to interview Saur Timuier Sitomorang, the chief of KSPPM. She explained the stages of the struggle to close IIU, how KSPPM was involved and what role KSPPM played in this movement.

The second methodology is archival research to examine events and actors in the Toba Batak movement.⁴² There are three kinds of archival information: newspapers and magazine clippings (local, national and international), studies and audit document reports, and articles and books. I was fortunate to have good connections to WALHI North Sumatra and the National Executive of WALHI because they have a newspaper and magazine clipping service, and they collected external data and information related to IIU and conducted investigations in the field. In Spring 2002, when I started writing “a case study of the Toba Batak movement to oppose PT Inti Indorayon Utama,” a paper for my social movement course with Dr. Michael Malley, they mailed me newspaper and magazine clippings and reports about IIU.⁴³

I am on the WALHI mailing list so I can monitor new developments of the anti-IIU groups because they regularly send the latest field information or chronology of demonstrations and violence when they demonstrate in Porsea, Balige, Tarutung, Medan and Jakarta. Through this mailing list, I monitor NGO press releases in local, national, and especially international media. These press releases contain information about local protests against the police who harass demonstrators. These NGOs also post news in newspapers and magazines on the mailing list so that the users keep informed about current anti-IIU protests.

⁴² See Elisabeth S. Clements and Martin D. Hughes, “Recovering Past Protest: Historical Research on Social Movement,” in *Methods of Social Movement Research* ed. Bert Klandermans and Suzanne Staggenborg (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Bert Klandermans and Suzanne Staggenborg “Introduction: Methods of Social Movement Research,” in *Methods of Social Movement Research* ed. Bert Klandermans and Suzanne Staggenborg (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

⁴³ In Summer, 2002, I asked a friend, Ezki Susanto who visited Athens in Summer 2002, to bring me other documents from WALHI North Sumatra, thus saving of the expense having a large quantity of documents mailed. This was extremely helpful because I could read about events from 1998 to 2002 through newspaper and magazine clippings, both from local and national newspapers and from magazines.

In addition to collecting data and information from the WALHI archives and material from activist friends, I also conducted archival research in the Alden Library's, Southeast Asian collection from Spring 2002 to Summer 2003. I reviewed *Tempo* and several other magazines for stories about IIU. I read books related to my topics – pulp, rayon and paper industries in Indonesia, economic and political analyses of Indonesia, the role of NGOs in Indonesia and the HKBP crisis. I found many references to enrich the theoretical approach applied in this thesis. Ms. Lian The-Mulliner, the librarian in Alden Library's Southeast Asian collection, was extremely helpful. She bought new books about IIU by Indonesians. Hence, I always worked with current books and documents about IIU. I also established communication with Indira Juditka Simbolon, founder and activist of KSPPM, who finished her Ph.D. dissertation at Leiden University on peasant women and access to land.⁴⁴ One of her case studies was the village of Sugapa in North Sumatra. She sent me some of her materials, including her dissertation, which had been published in Dutch. I found that there is no detailed, comprehensive and holistic writing about IIU, using a theoretical approach, especially social movement theory. Other writers only partially discussed this case, focusing on the grievance factor as the main cause of the movement. Therefore, I was motivated to write this thesis to enrich social movement study, especially in Indonesia.

During my field research in Spring 2003, I had an opportunity to copy many old newspapers and magazines clippings, as well as reports by KSPPM, the National Executive of WALHI and WALHI North Sumatra from 1984 to 1998. I found this data very helpful in enriching the chapter on grievance and the legacy of previous protests to close down IIU. KSPPM keeps all old documents about IIU in their library and allowed

⁴⁴ She is now working with the Asian Development Bank.

me access to them. Through these documents, I obtained a more complete picture of events, actors, and strategies.

Organization of Study

This thesis is a study of several factors – grievance, the legacy of previous protests against IIU, political opportunity structure, the role of brokerage and category formation – which caused the movement from the 1990s to present times to close the IIU mill in Sosor Ladang. Chapter One provides a short introduction covering the growth of the pulp and paper industry in Indonesia. I discuss why the Indonesian government focused on pulp and paper products as a chief export commodity. The other important topic in this chapter is the theoretical approach used to examine the Toba Batak movement to oppose IIU. I discuss why I chose contentious politics as an analytic knife. This chapter also describes the methodology used to collect the data to answer the central questions of the thesis.

Chapter II describes the wave of protests from 1998 to February 2003, demanding the mill be closed. In this chapter readers will learn how the Toba Batak launched protest actions against IIU, the efforts of IIU to maintain its mill, the violence that resulted from clashes between police, IIU workers and protestors and among the Toba Batak themselves.

Chapter III discusses two factors, grievance and the legacy of the previous protests, which contributed to the growth of the Toba Batak movement to oppose IIU from 1998 to 2003. This chapter tracks the negative impacts of the IIU mill on the Toba

Batak, including environmental problems (water, land and air pollution, drought, landslides and floods), social conflict (prostitution), and economic problems.

Chapter IV discusses other factors that led to the protest events of 1998 – 2003. I discuss changes in the political opportunity structure as one important factor. I then move to a discussion of the role of brokers, which bridged, educated and united small groups of resisters, so that the movement spread, becoming a solid, massive protest. The last topic of this chapter is category formation.

Chapter V is the conclusion in which I review the factors that caused the Toba Batak movement to succeed. I discuss the factors that caused the early protest of the Toba Batak movement to fail to close the mill, as well as similar protests in Riau, Jambi and South Sumatra. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the narrowing of political opportunity structure in the Megawati administration and the crystallization of resistance of the Toba Batak.

Chapter II

The Rise of the Toba Batak Movement in the Reformation Era

Introduction

This chapter emphasizes chronology of conflict and persistent protests the Toba Batak movement against IIU from 1998 to 2003. In the reformation era – a new era marked by Soeharto’s resignation in 1998 and the emergence of a more democratic political system – the movement became bigger and more intensive so the mill had to stop operating for five years from 1999 to 2003. This chapter will be divided into several parts. In the first part, I describe how the Toba Batak movement against IIU forced the Habibie government to close in 1999 the mill and IIU efforts to maintain the mill. In the second part, I describe the Toba Batak movement to oppose IIU during the presidency of Abdurrahman Wahid. In the last part, I discuss how the movement has fared under the Megawati government.

The Toba Batak Movement against IIU in the Habibie Era

Thousands of the Toba Batak, along with students and NGO activists, under the banner of the Coordination Forum Against Environmental Destruction (*Forum Koordinasi Kelompok Anti Pengerusakan Lingkungan*, KAPAL) demonstrated in front of the Provincial Legislative Council building in Medan on June 8, 1998 after the downfall of Soeharto’s authoritarian regime in May 1998. This was the third large demonstration

of Toba Batak who opposed the operation of IIU in Sosor Ladang.⁴⁵ They had only one message for the government, legislature and company: they wanted the mill closed because of what they saw as its negative impacts: water, land and air pollution, the erosion of the local economy of farming and animal husbandry and drought affecting the people and the environment.⁴⁶

This was the biggest demonstration in opposition to IIU since a similar demonstration in 1993. In 1998 the protestors demanded that the provincial legislature issue a recommendation to the government directing that IIU be ordered to leave Sosor Ladang. The protestors also pressed the legislature to bring Sukanto Tanoto, the majority shareholder of IIU, to the protestors. The protestors said they wanted to speak directly to Tanoto to tell him that a large number of Toba Batak opposed his mill. In addition, they wanted to hear directly from Tanoto whether or not he recognized their complaints.⁴⁷

Although the provincial legislature in Medan could not require the presence of Tanoto, through the chief of Commission D,⁴⁸ Drs. HM Dhien Pangaribuan, along with Drs H Aminullah Purba, the chief of Team A in commission D, they summoned the head

⁴⁵ In April and May 1998, the Toba Batak demonstrated at the district legislative council for the province (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah*, DPRD II), the North Tapanuli district government, and the district military command in Tarutung (*Komando Daerah Distrik Militer*, KODIM). Interview with Efendi Panjaitan, April 20, 2003.

⁴⁶ See Efendi Panjaitan, "Tapasadama Rohanta Indorayon: Kisah Perjuangan Rakyat Toba Samosir Sumatera Utara Melawan PT. Inti Indorayon Utama," in *Memecah Ketakutan Menjadi Kekuatan Kisah-Kisah Advokasi di Indonesia*, ed. Mansour Fakih (Yogyakarta: Insist Press, 2002); "Masyarakat Taput Unjuk Rasa Ke Kantor Gubsu dan DPRDSU Hentikan Kegiatan PT Indorayon" *SIB*, June 9, 1998, p. 1; "Masyarakat Taput Unjuk Rasa ke DPRD dan Kantor Gubsu" *Mimbar Umum*, June 9, 1998, p.7; Sinar Pagi, June 10, 1998. This movement also was triggered by the failure of the Porsea rice harvest which was afflicted with *puso*, a condition in which the rice kernel failed to develop. The Toba Batak argued that this happened because of the IIU's activities that brought pollution through rain and water in the river. Prior to the establishment of the mill, rice was the major economic crop in North Sumatra. See "Ratusan Hektar Tanaman Padi Gagal panen di Porsea" *Waspada*, June 18, 1998, p.7 and "Petani Porsea Gagal Panen" *Waspada*, June 19, 1998, p. 2.

⁴⁷ See "Masyarakat Taput Unjuk Rasa ke Kantor Gubsu dan DPRDSU Hentikan Kegiatan PT Indorayon" *SIB*, June 9, 1998, p. 1; "Unjukrasa ke DPRDSU Soal Pencemaran Lingkungan" *Waspada*, June 9, 1998, p.1 and "PT IIU Penuhi Tuntutan Mahasiswa" *Waspada*, June 10, 1998, p.1; "Operasional PT Indorayon Berhenti" *Kompas*, June 10, 1998, p. 9.

⁴⁸ Commission D is the legislative commission that is responsible for environmental issues.

of the Forestry Department at the provincial level. IIU was represented at the meeting by their public relations officers, Chairudiin Pasaribu, Ir Semion Tarigan and Ir Herbundalin (the latter two were also directors), and Mr David Pile, finance manager. At the meeting the legislature, the Forestry Department and IIU agreed that temporarily logging on Samosir Island would be stopped. The only activity IIU was allowed was to bring in wood that had already been cut.⁴⁹

On that same day, the protestors went also to the governor's office to demand that the mill be closed. The protestors hoped to sway the governor to support their action as the legislature had. However, the protestors were disappointed since they could not meet the governor, nor could he bring Sukanto Tanoto to Medan to meet with the protestors. The governor, represented by assistant II, Drs H Facruddin Lubis, assistant IV, Drs H Rida Amran Siregar, Director of the Bureau of the Environment, Drs H Hakimil Nasution, and the head of Public Relations for the governor's office, Drs H Amri Tambunan, could not make any decision.⁵⁰

Because the protestors were disappointed that they could not meet with Tanoto and the legislature's decision only stopped IIU logging but not the IIU mill operation, they decided to stay the night in the legislative building. The protestors hoped that by the next day they would get more concessions from the provincial government and the

⁴⁹ See "Masyarakat Taput Unjukrasa ke Kantor Gubsu dan DPRDSU" *Medan Pos*, June 9, 1998; "Pengunjukrasa Dari Tiga Kelompok Massa Datangi DPRD Sumut" *Garuda*, June 9, 1998, p.1; "DPRD Sumut Terima Empat Delegasi" *Analisa*, 9 June, 1998, p.1

⁵⁰ See "Masyarakat Taput Unjuk Rasa ke Kantor Gubsu dan DPRDSU Hentikan Kegiatan PT Indorayon" *SIB*, June 9, 1998, p.1; "PT IIU Hentikan Kegiatan Operasional" *Bukit Barisan*, June 10, 1998, p.8; "Operasional PT Indorayon Berhenti" *Kompas*, June 9, 1998, p. 9.

legislature. However, this did not happen, so the protestors gave an ultimatum to the provincial government and legislature as well as IIU to close the mill by June 11, 1998.⁵¹

This protest got the attention of the legislative members in Jakarta. Through commission V, the house of representatives asked Panangian Siregar, the Minister of the Environment in the Habibie government, to evaluate a number of projects and industries that harmed people and the environment. One was IIU. The result of the meeting between the Minister of the Environment and commission V was a recommendation that IIU stop their operation in Sosor Ladang. Siregar argued that the mill had serious negative impacts on the environment and there had been no effort to resolve the problems.⁵² Panangian Siregar acknowledged that IIU would lose income and a large number of workers would lose their jobs, but he argued that these costs were not comparable with the cost to millions of people negatively impacted by the mill. A House of Representative member in Jakarta, AP Siregar, supported Panangian Siregar's statement, saying "it was the right time to make the decision to close the mill because the 'strong men' who protected it were no longer in power."⁵³

⁵¹ See "Masyarakat Taput Unjuk Rasa ke Kantor Gubsu dan DPRDSU Hentikan Kegiatan PT Indorayon" *SIB*, June 9, 1998, p.1; "Sejak 8 Juni 1998: PT IIU Hentikan Penebangan Kayu di Pulau Samosir" *Analisa*, June 10, 1998, p.1; "PT IIU Sepakat Hentikan Kegiatan Operasional" *Suara Pembaruan*, June 10, 1998; "Dua Gelombang Unjukrasa Padati Kantor Gubsu dan DPRDSU PT IIU Hentikan Kegiatan" *Medan Pos*, June 10, 1998, p.1. In this action, Effendi Panjaitan pointed out that the protestors from Samosir Island where the IIU took most of their raw materials, far from the mill location, insisted the mill had to be closed, while protestors from Porsea, Lumban Julu and Silaen sub-districts, much closer to the mill, insisted the mill should operate but should fix the problems. This was because they were fearful of the mill workers' anger. See "Tapasadama Rohanta Indorayon: Kisah Perjuangan Rakyat Toba Samosir Sumatera Utara Melawan PT. Inti Indorayon Utama," in *Memecah Ketakutan Menjadi Kekuatan Kisah-Kisah Advokasi di Indonesia*, ed. Mansour Fakhri (Yogyakarta: Insist Press, 2002), p. 372.

⁵² See "Akibat Hutan Rusak dan Sungai Kering Warga Minta PT IIU Hentikan Kegiatan di Pulau Samosir" *Suara Pembaruan*, June 9, 1998, p.5.

⁵³ See "Menneg LH: Hentikan Kegiatan Indorayon" *SIB*, June 16, 1998 and "Tiga Kelompok Unjuk Rasa ke DPRD Sumut Masyarakat Porsea Unjuk Rasa Menolak Penutupan IIU" *SIB*, June 18, 1998, p.1; "Akibat Hutan Rusak dan Sungai Kering Warga Minta PT IIU Hentikan Kegiatan di Pulau Samosir" *Suara Pembaruan*, June 9 1998, p. 5 and "Proyek Yang Melanggar Ketentuan LH Agar Ditinjau Kembali" *Suara Pembaruan*, June 16 1998, p. 1; "DPR dan Menneg LH Sepakat Tutup PT IIU" *Kompas*, June 16, 1998, p.8. On the other hand, Rahadi Ramelan, the minister of trade and industry, in the Habibie government, said

Although the government, the provincial legislature and IIU agreed to stop logging in Sosor Ladang, the protestors continued to press their demands. They blockaded some vital streets used by IIU trucks in hauling the wood. This action was triggered by a number of demonstrations by IIU workers and the Toba Batak who supported the mill. From Sunday, June, 22 to Tuesday, June 24, 1998, Toba Batak from Lumbanjulu, Laguboti, Silaen and Porsea sub-districts, women and men, young and old, even children, marched to the Sirait Urut intersection, Village Patane I-Porsea, to halt the trucks. A large number of the Toba Batak in Balige did the same.⁵⁴

The blockade of the main street connecting Tarutung to Medan not only prevented IIU trucks from passing but also halted private and public vehicles. Therefore, the district police pressed to have the blockade lifted. However, the protestors refused to remove the blockade. In the turmoil that occurred on Monday night, one demonstrator was injured and a car was destroyed. This action motivated some provincial legislators from Medan to meet with the protestors in Sirait Uruk intersection to determine the reason the protestors were halting the trucks. The result of their assessment was that the mill should stop logging on Samosir Island but should be allowed to operate.⁵⁵

that it was not a simple matter to close the mill since foreigners were among the shareholders. He said that the mill had had an environmental impact analysis (EIA) and the Environmental Minister had signed the EIA document. Therefore, the government had to have a strong reason to close the mill. The Trade and Industry Ministry, through Ir Sujata, General Director of Agriculture and Forestry, sent a letter to the head of the Trade and Industry Department in Medan directing formation of a team to collect data about the impact of the mill. This idea also was the result of a meeting between Rahadi Ramelan and Commission V. This team would be made up of by General Director of Agriculture and Forestry, the head of the Trade and Industry Department in Medan; the provincial government of North Sumatra; IIU; NGO; and the local leaders. See "Pemerintah Didesak Awasi Lebih Ketat Pabrik Pulp Memperindag: Penghentian PT IIU Tidak Bisa Sembarangan" *Suara Pembaruan*, June 18, 1998, p. 5.

⁵⁴ See "Truk-Truk Indorayon Dihadang Masyarakat di Tapanuli Utara" *SIB*, June 25, 1998, p.9; "Truk-Truk PT. IIU Dihadang" *Kompas*, June 24, 1998, p.8.

⁵⁵ See "Karyawan Indorayon Porsea Gagalakan Mahasiswa Masuk ke Kompleks PT IIU" *SIB*, June 27, 1998, p.1.

The day the blockade was dispersed by the district police, dozens of students demonstrated at the mill location. Most of them came from Porsea and studied in universities in Medan. By loudspeaker the protestors demanded the mill be closed permanently. They also tried to enter the mill but did not succeed because a large number of IIU workers blocked them. The protestors then returned to their villages.⁵⁶

In the same month, thousands of students from universities in Medan, along with the Toba Batak, demonstrated again on June 29, 1988. This time their target was the IIU main office in the Uniland Plaza. Their message was still the same. They demanded that IIU be closed because of the impact of the mill operations and logging on the Toba Batak and the environment. Again they asked to meet with Sukanto Tanoto. This action at the IIU main office was short-lived because a group celebrating the Muslim day of Maulid Nabi asked the protestors to move and Sukanto Tanoto rejected a meeting with them.⁵⁷ Next the protestors marched to the governor's office where they were met by the Vice Governor of North Sumatra, H. Abd Wahab Dalimunte SH, and assistants I and III, Drs Sahala Tampubolon and Drs Amansyah. The protestors demanded that the provincial government withdraw IIU's license and that IIU pay compensation to the Toba Batak, rehabilitate the environment damaged by their activities, be responsible for their workers, and shift their forest concession to agribusiness. Dallimunte stated that the provincial government did not have authority to withdraw IIU's license. He explained that this

⁵⁶ See "Kapolres Taput Kepada Pengunjuk Rasa: Kehadiran Aparat Keamanan Bukan Membuka Jalan ke IIU" *Analisa*, 22 June, 1998, p.8; "5 Instansi Tingkat Sumut Sepakat: Pabrik PT IIU Jalan Terus Perambahan Hutan di P. Samosir Dihentikan Untuk Sementara" *Waspada*, June, 30 1998, p. 5. Although the blockade action was over generally, in some places, such as Tambunan village, the protestors still tried to hold the main street with barrels and chairs. See "Karyawan Indorayon Porsea Gagalakan Mahasiswa Masuk Ke Kompleks PT IIU" *SIB*, June 27, 1998, p.3.

⁵⁷ See "Unjuk Rasa ke Uniland Kewenangan Menutup PT IIU Bukan Pada Pemda Sumut" *Mimbar Umum*, June 30, 1998, p.1; "Pengunjukrasa Dari Tiga Kelompok Massa Serbu Uniland Toko-Toko Tutup" *Garuda*, June 29, 1998, p. 7.

authority rested with the central government in Jakarta. This explanation did not make the protestors happy. They threatened to take action in Porsea if the provincial government did not pay attention to their demands.⁵⁸ The pressure of protestors on the government to take action against IIU was successful. President Habibie asked Rizal Nurdin, the Governor of North Sumatra, to examine the costs and benefits of IIU in Sosor Ladang. He directed that if the mill had more negative impacts than positive ones, it should be closed.⁵⁹

However, the provincial government, based on preliminary research conducted by the Trade and Industry Department with five villages as the sample, determined that the mill was fit to operate again. They examined the environmental impact analysis documents of IIU and stated that the level of pollution from the mill was tolerable. The Toba Batak agreed to allow the mill to operate.⁶⁰

However, WALHI North Sumatra opposed the conclusion reached by the provincial government. WALHI North Sumatra argued that the research conducted by the provincial government was designed to give support to IIU. No consideration was given to how IIU had harmed the Toba Batak and the environment from the 1980s to the 1990s. Furthermore, WALHI North Sumatra criticized the way the research was conducted. They said that the provincial government could not make a proper decision if they only interviewed a few local people and observed the mill for a couple of hours. Therefore,

⁵⁸ See "Massa Unjuk Rasa ke gedung Uniland dan Kantor Gubsu" *SIB*, June 30, 1998, p.3; "Ribuan Mahasiswa Desak Pemdasa Cabut Izin PT IIU" *Medan Pos*, June 30, 1998, p.1.

⁵⁹ See "Presiden Habibie Terima Gubsu T. Rizal Nurdin, Presiden: Jika Merugikan Masyarakat, PT IIU Ditutup Saja" *SIB*, July 2, 1998, p.1.

⁶⁰ See "Deperindagsu Bentuk Tim Meneliti PT IIU" *SIB*, July 4, 1998, p.1; "Pro-Kontra Masih Mewarnai PT. IIU" *Garuda*, July 1, 1998, p.4.

WALHI North Sumatra demanded that the provincial government re-evaluate its statement and conduct a more holistic examination of the case.⁶¹

In the field, thousands of the Toba Batak protesting the presence of IIU again blockaded the main street used by IIU's trucks. The previous blockade in June had temporarily halted IIU operations.⁶² The protestors said they would take down the blockade if the government closed the mill. The district police with some sub-district and military officials in North Tapanuli planned a special operation to clear the street. On Monday night, July 20, thousands of police and military descended upon the location where the protestors manned the blockade. According to Musa Gurning, the police said the reason was to normalize the street so that the IIU trucks could pass again.⁶³

The police and military not only cleared the blockade, they also pressed the protestors to stay at home and not go outside. The protestors pelted the police with rocks. To disperse the demonstrators police used tear gas and fired blank bullets into the air. Violence occurred when the police chased protestors, even going into houses, beating people and destroying some motorbikes belonging to Toba Batak. For instance, Tumpul Tambunan, a protestor, was caught and beaten in front of people. In retaliation, protestors

⁶¹ See Press Release WALHI North Sumatra, June 30, 1998; "Hentikan Pernyataan Yang Meresahkan" *Waspada*, July 2, 1998, p. 4; "Hentikan Pernyataan pemerintah Yang Meresahkan" *Medan Pos*, June 2, 1998, p. 3.

⁶² The official government report stated that IIU's operation stopped from June 21, 1998. This statement was delivered by Hamzah Haz, Minister of Investment in Habibie government. See "Penghentian Operasi PT Indorayon Dilaporkan ke Presiden" *SIB*, July 16, 1998, p.1. Representatives of the district government, the Forum of Taput People Care Medan (*Forum Kepedulian Masyarakat Taput Medan*), the Independent Researcher Group USU (*Kelompok Peneliti Independent USU*), Forum of Peace Reformation Supporters (*Forum Pendukung Reformasi Damai*), NGOs, IIU and the Toba Batak from Laguboti, Tambunan Balige and Tarutung met to discuss the new situation in North Tapanuli regarding the protest of local people toward IIU. They agreed that IIU should stop temporarily to avoid horizontal and vertical conflict. See "Operasional PT IIU di Porsea Dihentikan Sementara" *SIB*, July 9 1998, p.3.

⁶³ According to *Medan Pos*, the clearing of the blockade was done by the police and military personnel in preparation for the arrival of members from the Supreme Advisory Council (*Dewan Pertimbangan Agung*, DPA) in North Tapanuli. See "Akibat Peristiwa Sirait Uruk, Porsea Walhi Sampaikan Protes ke Pangdam I/BB" *Medan Pos*, July 25 1998, p.1.

who returned to Lumban Gurning village burned four cars belonging to IIU and destroyed a house belonging to M. Situmorang in Patane village I-Porsea.⁶⁴ Violent conflicts between the police and military and protestors continued the next day, Tuesday, July 21, 1998. Porsea city was deserted. No one was brave enough to go outside. They feared being questioned by the police. They were also afraid that violence might break out again. For two days, there was no activity in Porsea city, and the district police patrolled the city.⁶⁵

The repressive approach of the military and police in dealing with the protests was strongly criticized. The National Executive of WALHI in Jakarta protested in a press release that it was past the time when the government could simply use the security apparatus to repress protests. WALHI argued that the government should understand the blockade action as a demonstration that the Toba Batak did not want the mill to operate and a counterargument to the government position that the mill provided benefits to many Toba Batak. WALHI demanded that the military and the police let the Toba Batak feel secure and allow the problem to be resolved in a democratic way.⁶⁶

Aden Manurung, the chief of Sigala-Gala Pangkalan village; Samuel H Tambunan; Nuraini Tambun; and Musa Gurning, representing the protestors, brought a list of complaints to National Commission on Human Rights (*Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia*, KOMNAS HAM) in Jakarta, providing evidence of intimidation, torture and damage to private homes by the police and military. They handed over a statement that was signed by 24 chiefs of villages in Porsea sub-district. They asked KOMNAS HAM to

⁶⁴ See "1.000 Pasukan ABRI Disiagakan ke Taput Kasus Indorayon: Kerusuhan di Porsea Massa dengan Petugas Bentrok" *SIB*, July 22, 1998, p.1; "Akibat Peristiwa Sirait Uruk, Porsea Walhi Sampaikan Protes ke Pangdam I/BB" *Medan Pos*, July 25, 1998, p.1.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p.1

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p.1

investigate the incident and to ensure that such attacks on demonstrators would not happen again.⁶⁷

The Supreme Advisory Council of the government set up a team to investigate the incident composed of Lieutenant General (retired) Tarub, Lieutenant General (retired) Suparjo; Major General (retired) Pamuji; and H. Aziddin, SE. They questioned both the Toba Batak who protested against IIU and supporters of IIU. The result of the investigation was to be presented to President Habibie so he could make an informed decision about the case. The team concluded the violence occurred because of miscommunication between the IIU management and the Toba Batak. The Toba Batak did not accept the information coming from IIU and IIU did not accept the information coming from the Toba Batak. The recommendation of the committee was that IIU should pay more attention to the Toba Batak and the environment.⁶⁸ Forum Bona Pasogit criticized this recommendation, saying that it was an old tactic to talk about miscommunication and ignore the negative impact of the mill on people and the environment.⁶⁹

The Sinta Mardongan Foundation

T. Rizal Nurdin, the Governor of North Sumatra tried to use “Toba Batak leaders” to forge an agreement so the mill could operate again. The problem, as Amani Parotua pointed out, was that IIU’s problems did not affect only a few individuals but they affected a large number of the Toba Batak. Therefore, the Governor and IIU must

⁶⁷ See “Utusan Warga Porsea mengadu ke Komnas HAM Soal Indorayon” *SIB*, July 30, 1998.

⁶⁸ See *Waspada*, July 24, 1994

⁶⁹ See “Barumuli Diundang Untuk Melihat Indorayon” *Suara Pembaruan*, August 5, 1998, p.3

negotiate with Toba Batak leaders who would truly represent the Toba Batak and not just leaders who would seek their own benefit.⁷⁰

The Sinta Mardongan Foundation, a local organization created by IIU, represented the Toba Batak in the meeting called by the Governor, while IIU appointed Dr Per R Haugen, Commissar, Ir Herbun Darmin, Director, and Charles Muthalib Sembiring, and Agustinus Hutajulu, as legal advisers to represent the company. Questions arose as to whether Sinta Mardongan was representative enough, although they claimed through Osman Napitupulu, the head of the Sinta Mardongan Foundation, that the foundation represented the Toba Batak leaders.⁷¹

The first meeting was held in Medan, but this meeting did not produce an agreement among the Toba Batak leaders. Each stakeholder asked the Governor to postpone the signing process until they reviewed the agreement with their constituents. The commandant of the District Military Command mediated this meeting. The Governor said that the signing ceremony ending the conflict would be held publicly in Porsea and would be witnessed by the commandant of the District Military Command as mediator, the head of North Tapanuli district Drs TMH Sinaga, the commandant of the North Sumatra Military Command, the commandant of the North Sumatra Police, and the governor.⁷²

Six days after the meeting, the Sinta Mardongan Foundation signed the agreement for the Toba Batak and IIU.⁷³ The agreement stated that IIU could begin to operate again

⁷⁰ See “Pemdasu Diminta Hati-Hati Tangani Masalah Indorayon” *Analisa*, August 27, 1998, p3; “Pemdasu Diminta Selektif Tangani Kausus Indorayon” *Medan Pos*, August 27, 1998, p.1.

⁷¹ See “Masyarakat Porsea Nyaris Bentrok Dengan Staf PT IIU dikantor Gubsu” *SIB*, August 26, 1998, p.1

⁷² See “Masyarakat Taput dan PT IIU Setuju Tanda Tangani Kesepakatan” *Garuda*, August 26, 1998, p.1

⁷³ The people acting for the Sinta Mardongan foundation were Usman Napitupulu, Togar Tambunan, Elvis Sitorus, R Doloksaribu, Drs Junjung Pangaribuan, Unggul Tambunan, Manahara Napitupulu, MU Hutagaol, Darwin Nababan, Tigor Napitupulu, Torang Lumbantobing, Horas Sitorus, Ray Sinambela SH,

under certain conditions. IIU was to change the chemical compound that caused the pollution. IIU was also expected to stimulate the local economy by helping to establish home industries with pulp and rayon as raw material. In addition, IIU should employ a large number of Toba Batak in the mill.⁷⁴ IIU promised to replace the chlorine with the less polluting chlorine dioxide, which was allowed by the government. IIU also promised to maintain the forest in their concession, repair local housing and streets, and be audited by an independent auditor.⁷⁵

Yet, as Amani Parotua predicted, the agreement invited much criticism and protest from Toba Batak who still insisted the mill had to be closed down. On the same day the agreement was signed, hundreds of young people, NGO activists, and students, went to the Department of Industry and Trade in Jakarta to meet with Rahardi Ramelan, the Minister of Trade and Industry, to demand he withdraw IIU's license. These protestors from the Communication Forum of Youth Generation North Sumatra (*Forum Komunikasi Generasi Muda Sumatera Utara*, FKGMSU) and the Action Committee of Impact Care PT Inti Indorayon Utama (*Komite Aksi Peduli Dampak PT Inti Indorayon*

H Arifin Sibuea, Parsaoran Aruan, Drs Imran Nasution, H Tambun, Manahan Lato and Timbul Tobing. The agreement was also signed by the head of North Tapanuli district, Drs TMH Sinaga, the commandant of Military District 0210/TU, M Harianjaya, District Attorney Siagian SH, the chief of district police, Tri Otoy, and the commandant of Korem 023/KS Colonel Military Hariyanto Rahman. T. Rizal Nurdin and other officials, both civilian and military, witnessed the signing. See "Kesepakatan Dengan Masyarakat Ditandatangani, PT IIU beroperasi Kembali" *SIB*, September 1, 1998, p.1; "PT Indorayon Beroperasi Kembali" *Kompas*, September 2, 1998.

⁷⁴ See "Kakanwil Depperindagsu: PT Indorayon Layak Diteruskan" *SIB*, August 27, 1998, p.11. Effendi Panjaitan, Director of WALHI North Sumatra, opposed WALHI being involved in the team. He felt it would be better if WALHI were outside so WALHI could monitor the results. WALHI North Sumatra did not believe the team would work fairly although Governor T. Rizal Nurdin guaranteed the team would be neutral. Nurdin told the team that any result was acceptable, even if the mill should be closed. See "Tim Yang Menangani Indorayon Tidak Akan Berpihak Kalau Lebih Banyak Baiknya Jalan Terus, Sebaliknya Jika Lebih Banyak Jeleknya Tutup Saja" *SIB*, August 1, 1998, p. 1.

⁷⁵ See "PT Indorayon Beroperasi Kembali" *Kompas*, September 2, 1998.

Utama, KAPAK PT IIU)⁷⁶ also demanded that the central government pull military personnel out of Porsea. In addition, they insisted IIU had to be responsible for the pollution and human rights violations and should pay compensation.⁷⁷

The protests also came from Dr Maruli HTT Pardede of the Central Leadership Board of the Indonesia National Party (*Partai Nasionalis Indonesia*, PNI). He threatened to mobilize thousands of people and bring Molotov cocktails to shut down the mill if the government took no action. This protest was in response to the agreement made by the Sinta Mardongan Foundation as representatives of the Toba Batak. The Legal Aid Institute of Medan argued that the Sinta Mardongan Foundation was not a credible representative of the Toba Batak because the sentiments they brought to the bargaining table were not those of the Toba Batak. The protestors suspected there was engineering by IIU to push through an agreement. The Legal Aid Institute of Medan stated the agreement between the Sinta Mardongan Foundation and IIU was not legal.⁷⁸ Effendi Panjaitan of WALHI North Sumatra also argued that the agreement was made just to accommodate IIU interests. Panjaitan suggested that the Sinta Mardongan Foundation

⁷⁶ The FKGMSU and KAPAK PT IIU consisted of Communication Forum of Youth Porsea (*Forum Komunikasi Muda/I Porsea Sekitarnya Bandung*) in Bandung; The Youth Organization Balige (*Ikatan Muda Mudi Balige Bandung*) in Bandung; The Youth Organization Silindung in Bandung (*Ikatan Muda/I Silindung Bandung*); The Youth Family Parapat in Bandung (*Ikatan Keluarga Muda/I Parapat Bandung*), Student Family of North Sumatra Politeknik ITB (*Ikatan Keluarga Mahasiswa Sumatera Utara Politeknik ITB*); Reconciliation and Reformation Committee HKBP (*Komite Rekonsiliasi and Reformasi HKBP*); The Youth Christian Movement Indonesia (*Gerakan Muda Kristen Indonesia*); The Youth Christian Generation Movement Indonesia in Bandung; The Youth Christian Movement in Bandung (*Gerakan Mahasiswa Kristen Indonesia Bandung*). See “Kesepakatan Dengan Masyarakat Ditandatangani, PT IIU beroperasi Kembali” *SIB*, 1 September, 1998, p. 1.

⁷⁷ See “Kesepakatan Dengan Masyarakat Ditandatangani, PT IIU beroperasi Kembali” *SIB*, 1 September, 1998, p.1; “Tokoh Masyarakat Taput Sepakat: Operasional PT.IIU Tergantung Pemerintah” *Waspada*, September 2, 1998, p. 5.

⁷⁸ See “Ketua FKLHI Dr. Maruli: Bila Indorayon Tidak Tutup Ribuan Massa Bersenjata Bom Molotov Akan Bertindak” *Medan Pos*, September 3, 1998, p1; “Pemerintah Harus Segera Tutup Indorayon” *Waspada*, September 5, 1998, p.5; “Jika Pemerintah Tidak Segera Mengambil Tindakan Massa PPSI, PNI dan FKKPI Akan Turun Ke Taput Menghentikan Kegiatan PT Indorayon” *SIB*, September 6, 1998, p. 1; “Ketua Umum DPP-PSSI Dr Maruli Pardede: PT Indorayon Harus Tutup” *Inti Jaya*, September 27, 1998, p. 1.

made the agreement because it wanted economic access to IIU. Since the Sinta Mardongan Foundation did not have a real mandate from the Toba Batak, the conflict in Porsea could not be resolved in this way. Hence the government should dismiss the agreement and close the mill until there was an agreement between Toba Batak who actually were the victims of IIU and the company.⁷⁹

Toba Batak who were opposed to the agreement not only complained that the Sinta Mardongan Foundation had signed the agreement letter without their permission, they also ran amuck. They destroyed four trucks, and hundreds of protestors went to the houses of Usman Napitupulu and the other signers, driving people out their houses and shouting that the signers were traitors. The same thing happened in Tambunan village, where houses were destroyed and a car belonging to one of the agreement signers was burned. The protestors also halted a number of trucks bringing gas to the mill. This action met with resistance from the police brigade that guarded the mill and a violent conflict broke out. Many people were wounded and the police arrested others. In a press release Thomas Manurung, the chairman of Forum Bona Pasogit, said that the police had destroyed a house and three cars belonging to Musa Gurning when they pursued the crowds that ran to Gurning's house. Bullets belonging to the police were found inside the house.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ See "WALHI Sumut Menilai: Kesepakatan PT. IIU Dengan Warga Taput Memiliki Ketidakbeneran" *Waspada*, September 4, 1998, p.8; "Kesepakatan Lembaga Sinta Mardongan – PT IIU Timbulkan Reaksi Dari LSM" *SIB*, September 5, 1998, p.1; "Direktur WALHI Sumut: Kesepakatan Lembaga SM dengan PT IIU terlalu tergesa-gesa" *Tabloid Aneka Minggu*, September 16, 1998, p.9. Effendi Panjaitan said that the first step to prepare for negotiation was an audit of IIU that would be released to the public. Later on WALHI North Sumatra totally refused the idea of an audit when suggested both by the government and IIU. I believe that this shift in WALHI's position was due to the fact that at the grass roots level the Toba Batak did not believe that the auditor would work fairly. See "WALHI Sumut Menilai: Kesepakatan PT. IIU Dengan Warga Taput Memiliki Ketidakbeneran" *Waspada*, September 4, 1998, p. 8.

⁸⁰ See "Pengoperasian Indorayon Kembali Digugat Penduduk" *Kompas*, September 3, 1998, p.8; Kesepakatan Lembaga Sinta Mardongan – PT IIU Timbulkan Reaksi Dari LSM" *SIB*, September 5, 1998,

Dozens of young people from the Care Action Committee of North Tapanuli demonstrated at the district legislature in Tarutung. They protested that the Sinta Mardongan Foundation had represented the Toba Batak when the foundation was not well known among the Toba Batak. Drs SFM Situmorang, the speaker of the district legislative council of North Tapanuli, Sabam Simanjuntak, Aloan Pardede, and Ricardo Marpaung of the Legislature also said that they had never heard of the Sinta Mardongan Foundation and did not view this foundation as a credible representative of the Toba Batak in negotiations with IIU.⁸¹

Victims of the police violence asked the Legal Aid Institute of Medan to bring their case to court because some of them had not even joined in the demonstration. Those victims were Rauli Br. Manurung, Kelly Br. Sibarani, Sahata Manik, Edison Manurung, Lausa Butar-Butar, and Sotan Butar-Butar. Sahata Manik gave testimony that he was dragged from his house by the police and hit with a gun. Edison Manurung was arrested when he wanted to see his friend, who was detained by the police in Porsea. He stated, “they released me and asked me to go but suddenly some the police stopped my car and hit me with guns and kicked me in the street.”⁸² The victims reported this attack to the

p. 1; “Masyarakat Taput Tolak MOU Dengan PT Indorayon” *Suara Pembaruan*, September 6, 1998, p. 11; *Mimbar Umum*, September 10, 1998; *Tabloid Adil*, September 16, 1998.

⁸¹ See “Kesepakatan Lembaga Sinta Mardongan – PT IIU Timbulkan Reaksi Dari LSM” *SIB*, September 5, 1998, p. 1; “WALHI Sumut Menilai: Kesepakatan PT. IIU Dengan Warga Taput Memiliki Ketidakbeneran” *Waspada*, September 4, 1998, p.8. In Jakarta Forum Bona Pasogit demonstrated at the Supreme Advisory Council office, accompanied by the traditional music of Batak “*Gondang Batak*.” Hundreds of professional people, custom leaders, actors and actresses, students, NGO activists, such as Martin Sirait, Galumbang Sitinjak, Edison Manurung SH, Edward Pesta Sirait, Charles Bonar Sirait, Ir Payaman Simangunsong, Drs Bakso Napitupulu, Pdt. T Napitupulu, and Thomas Manurung, wearing traditional Toba Batak clothing. They demanded that the Supreme Advisory Council recommend the government close down the mill because the mill had more negative than positive impact on the people and environment. They stated that they represented the large number of Toba Batak who opposed the mill. See “Forum Bona Pasogit Unjuk Rasa ke Kantor DPA Diiringi Gondang Batak Tuntut PT IIU di Porsea Ditutup” *SIB*, September 10, 1998, p. 12.

⁸² Musa Gurning made his statement at the Legal Aid Institute of Medan and asked this institution to give him protection since there was a rumor that the police would catch and shoot him. In fact he had told the

military police in Medan in hope that their case could be processed legally.⁸³

Because of the protests, the Governor of North Sumatra, T. Rizal Nurdin, said he would re-evaluate the agreement between IIU and the Sinta Mardongan Foundation. Nurdin came to Porsea with members of Forum Bona Pasogit to meet the protestors and hear directly what the Toba Batak wanted. To thousands of the Toba Batak who attended the meeting, Nurdin said that if the facts led to a conclusion that the mill had to be closed, he would consider it seriously. However, he pointed out, he did not have the authority to decide whether the mill could operate or not. This was a decision of the central government. He could only report to the central government. He recommended that the Toba Batak rethink their demand to close the mill since the mill management had promised to change their ways.⁸⁴

In a clarification letter, the Sinta Mardongan Foundation explained that the agreement did not allow the mill to operate again and it demanded that IIU accept responsibility for their actions both at the mill and their concession. They said that they did not want to undo the agreement to close the mill because whoever did so “would be

protestors over the phone that it was not the right strategy to fight the military apparatus. See “Dituduh Ikut Unjuk Rasa Ke PT IIU Tujuh Warga Taput Korban Penganiayaan Beri Kuasa ke LBH” *Waspada*, September 8, 1998.

⁸³ See “Buntut Kasus Kerusuhan Porsea 7 Korban Laras Senjata Oknum ABRI Mengungsi ke Medan” *Mimbar Umum*, September 8, 1998; “Dituduh Ikut Unjuk Rasa Ke PT IIU Tujuh Warga Taput Korban Penganiayaan Beri Kuasa ke LBH” *Waspada*, September 8, 1998; “Korban Penganiayaan di Porsea Mengadu ke POM-DAM I/BB” *Mimbar Umum*, September 10, 1998; “Empat Korban Penganiayaan Mengadu ke Pomdam” *Medan Pos*, September 10, 1998, p. 8.

⁸⁴ See “Gubsu di Porsea Minta Masyarakat Tidak Emosional Soal Indorayon” *SIB*, September 12, 1998, p. 1 and “Gubsu: Terbaik Bagi Masyarakat Terbaik Bagi Kita Semua” *SIB*, September 13, 1998, p. 12. In the meeting between Forum Bona Pasogit and the governor, six points were agreed to in order to resolve the conflict in the short time: 1) IIU had to stop their activity. The mill should not receive raw material or ship their product outside; 2) the Sinta Mardongan Foundation was not the right organization to act on behalf of the Toba Batak to negotiate with IIU or the government; 3) the police would release Toba Batak leaders who had been detained; 4) the number of police in Porsea should be reduced; (They also agreed that the police personnel should not walk into the villages because it frightened the people.) 5) an independent auditor should audit the mill and Forum Bona Pasogit agreed to send their expert; 6) the Toba Batak should not resort to violence in their protests. See “Gubsu T Rizal Nurdin PT Indorayon Status Quo, Kesepakatan Dengan Tokoh Masyarakat Akan Ditinjau Ulang” *SIB*, September 8, 1998, p. 1.

so cursed by God that even the Devil would never forgive them.” They said they did not claim to be representatives of Toba Batak leaders; they only represented Toba Batak who had joined the Sinta Mardongan Foundation. Yet, the public relations department of IIU stated that in the meeting Sinta Mardongan Foundation claimed that they were acting on behalf of the Toba Batak.⁸⁵ The letter of clarification was released to prevent rioting by Toba Batak who opposed the agreement.

Although the governor agreed to stop the mill temporarily, the wave of protests did not die down. On October 23, 1998, hundreds of students from the Christian University of ST. Thomas marched to the governor’s office. They demanded that the mill be closed forever.⁸⁶ They said IIU should pay compensation to the Toba Batak and mill employees and also pay for damage to the environment. In the governor’s office, Drs Hakimil Nasution, Director of the provincial Environment Department, met with the students and told them that they did not have authority to decide the mill’s fate.

Escalation of the Protests

For a second time in the Habibie era, thousands of Toba Batak, 30 buses and 20 trucks from the eight sub-districts in North Tapanuli, went to the provincial legislature to demand that the mill be closed on November 19, 1998. This time the provincial

⁸⁵ See *SIB*, September 7, 1998. Also see “Sekitar Perjanjian Yang Akan Ditinjau Ulang PT IIU Sambut Baik Kebijaksanaan Gubsu” *SIB*, September 10, 1998, p. 1.

⁸⁶ Drs. Gandhi D Tambunan of the district government in Tarutung said that the independent auditor would work quickly. The audit team consisted of government representatives, NGOs and experts. He hoped that the Toba Batak would help by giving them as much information as they could because the law prohibited closing the mill without strong reasons. The chief of the district police in North Tapanuli stated trucks would bring the raw materials to the mill from 08.00 to 18.00 WIB because the audit could not be conducted if the mill was not running. See “Muspida Taput Serukan Masyarakat Jangan Menghalangi Tim Audit PT Indorayon Lakukan Tugasnya” *SIB*, October 27, 1998, p.1; “Audit PT Indorayon Perlu Segera Dilakukan” *Suara Pembaruan*, October 29, 1998, p.5; “Selama Audit PT IIU Truk Pengangkutan Bahan Baku Hanya Bisa Beroperasi 08.00 – 18.00 WIB” *Analisa*, November 20, 1998, p. 5; “Kapolres Taput Letkol Tri Utoyo Selama Audit, Truk Pengangkutan Bahan Baku PT IIU Hanya Bisa Beroperasi 08.00 – 18.00” *Panji Demokrasi*, November 1998.

legislative members answered the protestors' demand in the affirmative. After several hours of negotiations, H.M Iskak, the speaker of the provincial legislature, promised to send a letter to President Habibie stating that the provincial legislature demanded the mill be closed. Copies of the letter also would be sent to the Toba Batak through Jomang Up Sitorus, the Toba Batak representative in the negotiations. Hearing this statement, thousands of protestors cheered. This was the first time the provincial legislature had accepted the protestors' demands.

When the demonstrators marched to the governor's office, they were welcomed by thousands of students who were already there.⁸⁷ This demonstration was said to be the largest in Medan since the demonstrations in May 1998 when the students⁸⁸ and people forced Soeharto to step down. Addressing the protestors, Governor T. Rizal Nurdin stated that he supported their demand to close the mill and promised to send a letter to President Habibie asking him to consider closing the mill. Nurdin declared that he was the governor of the people and therefore he had to take the side of the people.⁸⁹ However, Nurdin's statement and that of the provincial legislative council differed somewhat. Nurdin still hoped the protestors would accept the mill on the condition that IIU changed its ways.

⁸⁷ See "Selama Audit PT IIU Truk Pengangkutan Bahan Baku Hanya Bisa Beroperasi 08.00 – 18.00 WIB" *Analisa*, November 20, 1998, p.5; SIB, November 20, 1998; "DPRD Sumut Dukung PT IIU Ditutup" *Kompas*, November 20, 1998, p.11; "DPRD Sumut Setuju PT IIU Ditutup" *Bisnis Indonesia*, November 23, 1998.

⁸⁸ *Perjuangan* noted that the students from St. Thomas University, HKBP Nomensen University, North Sumatra University, and Student Smart Forum were the most important groups in swelling the crowd of protestors. See "Korban Tragedi Indorayon: Target Kami Belum Berhasil" *Harian Perjuangan*, December 1, 1998, p. 3.

⁸⁹ See "Setelah Gubernur DPRD Sumut Juga Dukung Indorayon Ditutup" *Harian Perjuangan*, November 20, 1998; "Warga Taput Protes DPRD Setuju Indorayon Ditutup" *Sinar Medan*, November 23, 1998; "Ribuan Mahasiswa, Warga Taput dan Korban Penembakkan Petugas Datangi Kantor Gubsu" *Waspada*, November 20, 1998, p.2; "Porsea Berangsur Aman 7 Warga Tertembak, 11 Kendaraan Dibakar Dikawasan Porsea" *Harian Perjuangan*, November 25, 1998, p. 1.

The peaceful situation did not last long in Porsea. Thousands of Toba Batak ran amuck when they heard that police guarding IIU trucks shot a young man. According to Sahat Butar-Butar, a villager, this incident occurred when several youths were playing volleyball, and their ball went into the street just as some IIU trucks were passing. The trucks stopped, the volleyball players asked to have the ball returned, and the police assumed that the youths were trying to stop the trucks and shot warning shots into the air. One of the bullets hit Butar-Butar. That afternoon thousands of protestors took action to stop the IIU trucks and burn them. According to *Perjuangan*, five trucks were destroyed, two were partially burned and eight were damaged. The protestors marched to Porsea and also destroyed houses which they said belonged to the “traitors.”⁹⁰ *Perjuangan* reported that the mobs burned 23 houses, 11 vehicles (motorbikes and cars) and 13 IIU trucks.⁹¹

The rioting stopped that night after police, military and civilian officials persuaded the mobs to stop their actions. But, the next day, November 23, 1998, protestors came together again in even greater numbers in Sirait Uruk intersection with the intent of destroying the mill. They burned seven IIU workers’ houses, but the police, soldiers, and IIU workers successfully guarded the mill. When the crowd approached the

⁹⁰ The houses belonged to Deling Sirait, R Napitupulu, Liter Situmorang, B Sitorus, and O Ambarita (she owned two of the houses), all of whom were IIU workers. The mobs also destroyed houses belonging to Bernad Situmorang and Drs W Siregar, former sub-district heads of Porsea, M Situmorang, the chief of Patane Village, H Arifin Sibuea, chief of Patane III Village, and Latus Sirait, as well as two shops belonging to R Dolok Saribu, a medical shop belonging to Usman Napitupulu, a restaurant belonging to Chairuddin Nasution, houses belonging to Dr Sirait Berlin and Berlin Simanjuntak, an office of Ida Natio belonging to Jaulin Simanjuntak and Maruahal Napitupulu, and a house belonging to Tigor Napitupulu. See “Porsea Berangsur Aman 7 Warga tertembak, 11 Kendaraan Dibakar Dikawasan Porsea” *Harian Perjuangan*, November 25, 1998, p. 1.

⁹¹ See “Karena Oknum Brimob Tembak Warga Saat Main Volly, Ribuan Warga Porsea Mengamuk dan Membakar Tujuh Kendaraan Indorayon” *Medan Pos*, November 23, 1998, p.1; “Masyarakat Tap. Utara Mengamuk 13 Unit Truk Indorayon Dibakar dan Dirusak” *Harian Perjuangan*, November 23, 1998, p.1; SIB, November 23, 1998.

mill, the police fired tear gas and rubber bullets. Seven demonstrators were wounded and 79 demonstrators, 11 of whom were women, were detained.⁹²

WALHI North Sumatra predicted there would be trouble if the government allowed the mill to operate, even if only for an “audit” because at the grassroots level the Toba Batak had not yet accepted the agreement. Furthermore, the police overreacted in facing the protestors. They were not supposed to use real bullets. The national newspaper *Kompas* supported WALHI North Sumatra’s analysis, stating this incident occurred because the government did not make the right decision in this conflict.⁹³

The repressive approach of the police did not lessen the wave of protests against IIU. On Thursday, November 26, 1998, thousands of the Toba Batak, including students from some Medan universities, demonstrated again. They demanded the release of the 79 protestors detained during the riot in front of the mill a couple of days earlier. This demonstration ended in chaos again after the protestors sought revenge for actions against them. The police wounded a student, 50 protestors required hospital treatment,⁹⁴ and the

⁹² See Waspada, November 24, 1998; “Kerusuhan di Porsea Taput Tujuh Warga Diberondong Dua Petugas Cidera” *Mimbar Umum*, November 24, 1998; “Four Hurt in Factory Protest” *Jakarta Post*, November 24, 1998, p.2; “Ada LSM Mendalangi Kerusuhan di Porsea 7 Tertembak, 79 Orang Ditahan” *SIB*, November 24, 1998; “Perumahan Karyawan IIU Dibakar 3 Penduduk Porsea Tertembak” *Suara Pembaruan*, November 25, 1998, p. 1.

⁹³ See “13 Truk PT Indorayon di Bakar” *Suara Pembaruan*, November 24, 1998, p.3; “Kerusuhan di Porsea, Empat Warga Tertembak” *Kompas*, November 24, 1998, p.1; “Kasus Kerusuhan di PT Indorayon LSM Sumut Sesalkan Penggunaan Peluru Tajam” *Republika*, November 25, 1998, p. 7. Prof Dr Tunggul K Sirait, Edison Manurung SH, Martin Sirait and Leo Nababan of Forum Bona Pasogit stated that this incident occurred because IIU insisted upon opening the mill and the government allowed it. The forum pressed the government to consider closing down the mill to stop the conflict. See “Penembakan di Porsea Dilaporkan ke Presiden” *Sinar Pagi*, November 26, 1998, p. 1; “Kerusuhan di Porsea Taprut Tujuh Warga Diberondong Dua Petugas Cidera” *Mimbar Umum*, November 24, 1998. The chief of the district police said that the mill had to operate and if there were more mob actions, the police would act with greater firmness. See “Ada LSM Mendalangi Kerusuhan di Porsea 7 Tertembak, 79 Orang Ditahan” *SIB*, November 25, 1998, p. 1.

⁹⁴ See “Mahasiswa tetap Dukung Masyarakat Menuntut PT IIU Ditutup” *Harian Perjuangan*, November 30, 1998, p.1.

police detained 124 protestors. According to *Waspada* there were 35 students and 30 other people about whom there was no information (whether they were missing).⁹⁵

Lieutenant Colonel Drs Amrin Karim, the chief of district police in Tarutung, announced that dozens of demonstrators had been released, although 16 were still detained. He added that violence could have been avoided if the students and the Toba Batak acknowledged that there had been “provocateurs” in the crowd. The chief of police was referring to SRB, WALHI, KSPPM, and student activists. However, 31 NGOs protested the police violence that resulted in dozens of demonstrators being wounded and called for a government investigation into who fired on the demonstrators. WALHI North Sumatra said that the police had fired real bullets, one of which had been removed from Kasman Manurung’s body. They insisted that the only way to avoid future violence was to close the mill and told the government not to blame provocateurs for turning the demonstration into bloody chaos.⁹⁶

Students from the North Sumatra Forum of Student Action met the head of North Tapanuli district, Drs TMH Sinaga, to seek the release of detainees. They demanded that the protestors be released immediately, court action be taken against the shooters, and that the IIU mill be closed down. They threatened massive demonstrations if these demands were not met. Sinaga protested that he did not have the authority to meet these demands, but he said that he would discuss the demands with the police department.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ See “Student Clash With Tarutung Police” *The Jakarta Post*, November 27, 1998, p.2; “Warga Bentrok Dengan Aparat di Tarutung, Seorang Mahasiswa Tertembak, 30 Dirawat” *Waspada*, November 27, 1998, p. 1.

⁹⁶ Police charged that the violence was prompted by an NGO in Parapat. See “Anggota Komnas HAM Mayjen (retired) Samsudin Terjadi pelanggaran HAM Pada Kerusuhan di Porsea” *SIB*, November 28, 1998.

⁹⁷ See “124 Warga Masyarakat Ditahan, 35 Mahasiswa dan 30 Warga Hilang” *Waspada*, November 28, 1998, p.1; “Tuntutan Mahasiswa Kepada Bupati Tapanuli Utara” *Kompas*, November 28, 1998, p. 8.

The tension in Porsea increased when it was learned that Ir Panuju Manurung⁹⁸ had died in hospital. He was the first victim to fall in the mill-protests. According to WALHI North Sumatra, Manurung had joined the mass demonstration at the mill location. He was injured when he ran away to avoid police pursuit but stopped to help some older women (*Inang-Inang*), who were being harassed by the police. Manurung told the police “Do not torment them. If they did not exist you would not be born.” The police grabbed him and beat him. He was then taken to the mill, instead of the police station. Jonni Manurung testified that IIU employees tortured him and others, including Panuju Manurung. He said that the police had used Panuju Manurung’s body to extinguish their cigarettes. In the late afternoon, the police moved the injured to the police station under tight guard.⁹⁹ The police had not allowed Panuju Manurung to be visited in hospital. According to the WALHI North Sumatra, Manurung died because he was not treated for injuries inflicted on him by the police and IIU workers. Gustaf Manurung said that Panuju Manurung had also been tortured while he was in the hospital.¹⁰⁰

The Toba Batak protestors adopted the death of Panuju Manurung as a symbol of their struggle. Flowers from the Toba Batak were sent to Panuju Manurung’s house, but the Manurung family rejected the flowers from the police and government to show that

⁹⁸ Manurung had received his BS from Satya Wacana University in Solo. According to WALHI North Sumatra he was had also fone to Japan as an honor student. Then he returned to his village to help improve the quality of life. See “Mahasiswa tetap Dukung Masyarakat Menuntut PT IIU Ditutup” *Harian Perjuangan*, November 30, 1998, p. 1.

⁹⁹ See “Mahasiswa Tetap Dukung Masyarakat Menuntut PT IIU Ditutup” *Harian Perjuangan*, November 30, 1998, p.1; “Tuntutan Mahasiswa Kepada Bupati Tapanuli Utara” *Kompas*, November 28, 1998, p.2; “Tragedi Tarutung Berdarah” *Gatra*, December 5, 1998, p. 42.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Gustaf Manurung, April 28, 2003; “Mahasiswa Tetap Dukung Masyarakat Menuntut PT IIU Ditutup” *Harian Perjuangan*, November 30, 1998, p.1; *Waspada*, November 29, 1998; “Semangat Panuju Manurung tetap Berkobar diPorsea” *Suara Pembaruan*, December 3, 1998.

they blamed the police for his death. At his funeral, thousands of the Toba Batak promised to continue the action to close down IIU.¹⁰¹

The bloody tragedy in Porsea provoked protests from students in Medan. On Human Rights Day, dozens of demonstrators who were nature lovers demanded that IIU be closed down because the company destroyed the forest. They pressed the government and military and police commanders in Medan to investigate human rights violations that occurred in Porsea. WALHI North Sumatra issued a press release on Human Rights Day saying that this was the time to resolve human rights violations, especially the Panuju Manurung case.¹⁰²

The Resistance to “Total Audit”

Although the protests continued, Drs H. Hakimil Nasution speaking for the provincial government on December 10, 1998 determined that the mill could be opened again so that a “total audit” could be conducted. This referred to an evaluation of the environmental, social, cultural and economic impacts of IIU’s operations. The problem was that neither the provincial nor central government had appointed an auditor. According to *Perjuangan*, the Trade and Industry Department in Medan said it had appointed an audit team. Effendi Panjaitan of WALHI North Sumatra said that the total

¹⁰¹ See “Mahasiswa Tetap Dukung Masyarakat Menuntut PT IIU Ditutup” *Harian Perjuangan*, November 30, 1998, p.1; “Semangat Panuju Manurung Tetap Berkobar di Porsea” *Suara Pembaruan*, December 3, 1998.

¹⁰² See *Waspada*, December 10, 1998; “Pengunjukrasa: Tutup PT IIU” *Berita Sore*, December 11, 1998, p.2 and “WALHI Sumut: Usut kematian Panuju Manurung” *Berita Sore*, December 11, 1998, p.2 ; “Menyambut Hari HAM Internasional ke 50 WALHI Sumut Minta Pemerintah Merespon Tuntutan Reformasi Rakyat” *Analisa*, December 12, 1998, p. 3. National Commission of Human Rights Members i.e., BN Marbun SH; General Mayor (Retired) Drs Kusparmono Ishsan SH, MM, MBA; and General Mayor (Retired) Syamsudin stated that human rights were violated both by the military and by the protestors. See “Anggota Komnas HAM Berkunjung ke Taput pelanggaran 4 HAM Sekaligus terhadap Warga Porsea Tidak Dapat Ditolerir” *SIB*, December 13, 1998, p. 1.

audit would work only if the Toba Batak accepted the concept and the team were independent.¹⁰³

Uncertainty about the legal basis under which IIU operated fueled the conflict. IIU argued that there was no legal order to close the mill. The mill had only been closed temporarily to accommodate the Toba Bataks' demand, so it was still legal if the mill started to operate again. On the other hand, the government and legislature promised that the mill would be not open if the Toba Batak did not agree. Some of the protestors who wanted the mill shut down, including some priests, used motorbikes and cars to parade, starting from Porsea and moving to Balige, Silaen, and Lumban Julu sub-districts, pressing the government to close down the mill. Because of this action, members of the Provincial Legislature and IIU met to discuss the legal basis of IIU operations. They decided a total audit was the only way to resolve IIU's conflict with the Toba Batak. However, they did not have a clear idea how to reduce grassroots opposition to the audit mechanism.¹⁰⁴

Based on research by Prof Dr Ing K Tunggul Sirait, an environmental expert, the Toba Lake Lovers Foundation recommended to President Habibie that the mill be closed.¹⁰⁵ Their statement specifically opposed the use of a total audit to decide whether

¹⁰³ See "Korban Tragedi Indorayon: Target Kami Belum Berhasil" *Harian Perjuangan*, December 1, 1998, p. 3. Student protestors had proposed that Green Peace be involved in the audit team if there was to be an audit. See "Seratusan Mahasiswa Unika Unjuk Rasa ke Kantor Gubsu, Tuntut Indorayon Tutup" *SIB*, October 25, 1998, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ See Suara Pembaruan, December 29, 1998. At Panuju Manurung's grave hundreds of Toba Batak, led by Aden Manurung and Priest Silaen, committed to closing down the mill. They met to pray for Manurung and used the occasion to build the fighting spirit to oppose IIU. They then paraded in the streets of North Tapanuli. See "Ziarah Tabur Bunga ke Makam IR Panuju Manurung" *Harian Perjuangan*, December 29, 1998, p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ Other experts that involved with the team were; Prof Dr M Daud Silalahi SH, expert on environmental law; Prof Dr Firman Manurung, an expert on chemical technology; Prof Dr Midian Sirait, an expert on chemical plants; Dr Med Hot Asi Napitupulu, an expert medical; Dr Ir Parulutan Manurung, an expert on air mapping; Dr Payaman Simanjuntak, an expert on labor; Dr Sontan Sirait spPA, an expert on anatomic pathology; Dr Ir Tugu Manurung MS, an expert on forestry; Dr Ir Djamester A Simarmata, an expert on

or not the mill could operate. They argued that operation of the mill was not feasible in terms of location, technology and the sustainability of raw material. The “win-win” solution that they proposed was to relocate the mill to some place that supported its presence with adequate raw material.¹⁰⁶

In the field, the Toba Batak in Tambunan village halted trucks that hauled the wood to the mill on March 11, 1999. They damaged the mirrors of two trucks and cars and attacked the drivers and passengers in the vehicles, sending the victims, Bahrin Damanik, Panguluan Sitanggang, Janner Arintonang, and Karbinton Munthe, to the hospital. In another location three employees of IIU were killed: Saut Sitanggang, Suhendri Sitorus and Patuan Sitorus. There had been rumours that IIU workers planned to attack the protestors, so when these workers came to the village they were beaten to death.¹⁰⁷

Wave after wave of protest by the Toba Batak who opposed the total audit turned into a riot when thousands of the Toba Batak tried to halt IIU trucks that were guarded by police on March 18, 1999. The police in Toba Samosir launched the Cemara IV operation to guard trucks hauling raw material for audit interest. The riot was triggered by police shots hitting a taxi driver. In response, a mob burned tires in the street and threw rocks at the police. To disperse them the police fired hundreds of rubber bullets into the crowd. Balige, the capital city of the new district, Toba Samosir, became a ghost town because

macro economy; Ir Lajiman Damanik M Eng and Ir SM Dolok Saribu, experts on the environment; Drs Foster Gultom, an expert on economy; and Edison Manurung, as liaison officer.

¹⁰⁶ See Perjuangan, February 18, 1999.

¹⁰⁷ See Waspada, March 12, 1999. Hutapea, Deputy of the North Tapanuli Region Police, found the people who killed were IIU workers. There were suspects, such as Aden Manurung and two of his sons, but the police did not have enough evidence to arrest them. See “Kasus Pembunuhan Tiga Warga Porsea Aden Waktu Itu Ada Ngomong ...” *Radar*, September 24, 1999.

people were afraid to go out. Some people were shot and had to be treated in the hospital.¹⁰⁸

Increased police presence in Balige failed to halt the rioting. Protests against the shootings and detention of people in police custody continued. Protestors burned tires on Juara Monang Bridge and at the HKBP hospital intersection. Major B Hutapea, deputy of North Tapanuli police, and First Lieutenant A Samosir, Chief of the Balige City Police, stated that they had questioned 20 people and detained four people.¹⁰⁹

President Habibie stated for the second time on March 19, 1999 that IIU had to stop their operations because the Toba Batak did not want the mill in Sosor Ladang. He delivered this statement in front of Governor T. Rizal Nurdin and the Toba Lake Lovers Foundation activists. But for the second time the Indonesian government did not issue a legal order directing IIU to stop its operations until some agreement was reached.¹¹⁰

Counteraction of IIU

Facing pressure from the Toba Batak, NGOs, church institutions, students and intellectuals, as well as the government and the Legislature, IIU still did not give up and let the mill close. Various elements, including workers, the Toba Batak who benefited from the mill, government at both local and national levels and some parliament members were insistant that the mill could operate by changing components in the production process so that the environment was not harmed and by changing its approach to the Toba Batak.

¹⁰⁸ See "Balige Rusuh" *Waspada*, March 19, 1999, p.1.

¹⁰⁹ See "Balige Mencekam, 4 kena tembak dan kena Popor Dirawat di RSU" *SIB*, March 19, 1999; "Polisi Amankan Empat Tersangka Perusuh Balige" *Waspada*, March 21, 1999, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ See *Waspada*, March 20, 1999; *Dobrak*, March 24, 1999.

On June 17, 1998, dozens of the Toba Batak from Porsea demonstrated in support of IIU at the provincial legislature in Medan in reaction to previous Toba Batak oritests against the mill. They told M Dhien Panagaribuan, the Chief of Commission D, that the mill provided a benefit to the Toba Batak and they criticized Panangian Siregar, who said that the best solution was for IIU to move from Sosor Ladang. They argued that Siregar did not understand that technology could solve the problems faced by the mill. The provincial legislative members said that they would pass on the view of the mill supporters to the provincial government.¹¹¹

The wave of demonstrations defending the mill's presence in Sosor Ladang continued. Six hundred IIU workers acting on behalf 7,500 others went to the provincial legislature for the first time in the reformation era. They demanded that the provincial legislature not recommend closing the mill because a large number of workers would lose their jobs. Dhien Pangaribuan from the provincial legislature said that a committee from the legislature would come to the mill with NGOs to observe the real situation in the field.¹¹²

Herbun Darlin, a director of IIU, invited NGO activists to attend a meeting in Uniland Plaza in Medan to give suggestions on how to improve the production process in IIU, reducing negative impacts on the environment, and suggestions on improving IIU's relation with people in communities around the mill. However, Efendi Panjaitan argued that this was only a trick by IIU to divide the movement, so this initiative was not received well by the activists. Parlin Simanihuruk, coordinator of the Alliance of North

¹¹¹ See "Tiga Kelompok Unjuk Rasa ke DPRD Sumut Masyarakat Porsea Unjuk Rasa Menolak Penutupan IIU" *SIB* 18, 1998, p.1; "Memperindag: Penghentian PT IIU Tidak Bisa Sembarangan" *Suara Pembaruan*, June 18, 1998, p. 5.

¹¹² See "Karyawan PT IIU Unjuk Rasa Ke DPRD Sumut" *Suara Pembaruan*, June 21, 1998, p. 5.

Sumatra People Power for Reformation (*Aliansi Gerakkan Rakyat Sumatera Utara untuk Reformasi*, AGRESU) insisted that IIU should ask the Toba Batak instead of the activists.¹¹³

Hasudungan Limbong, Thomas Handoko, Ranjo Napitupulu, Rindu Sinaga, Waliman, and Syarifudin, representatives of the IIU workers, went to the National Commission on Human Rights in Jakarta to demand that it become involved in the case. They reported that IIU workers were being terrorized by threats of torture and that some had had bad experiences facing the protestors. They insisted the Commission on Human Rights investigated this accusation so that they could have peaceful working conditions. The workers' representatives said that they did not oppose demonstrations against the mill, but they objected to the violence of protestors. In Jakarta, the representatives of IIU employees also went the National Executive WALHI office to demand that WALHI get information from both sides of the conflict.¹¹⁴

The peak of the IIU workers protest wave occurred when thousands demonstrated for six days at the governor's office in Medan. Wives and children came to support their husbands or fathers. They pointed out how many people would lose their jobs if the mill closed down. The children played musical instruments in order to counter the view that children were becoming idiots because of the pollution. However, T Rizal Nurdin could not promise the workers that the mill would begin to operate immediately. He said that the best way to resolve the conflict was to conduct a total audit work in the field. He insisted that he did not have authority to make a decision about the mill. However, he

¹¹³ See "Undangan Indorayon Lihat Kondisi" *Dobrak*, July 7, 1998, p. 8.

¹¹⁴ See "Enam Karyawan PT IIU Minta Perlindungan" *Suara Pembaruan*, August 3, 1998, p.10; "6000 Karyawan Protes Aksi Kekerasan" *Medan Pos*, August 2, 1998, p.1; *Waspada*, August 1, 1998.

allowed the workers to join an inter-departmental meeting to discuss the fate of the mill.¹¹⁵

Hundreds of workers also protested at PT Inalum, an aluminum mill. They accused this company of supporting the actions opposing IIU by providing vehicles, facilities and funding. They also argued that the decreasing water in Toba Lake was caused not only by the IIU activities but Inalum contributed to the drop in water level. Inalum countered that they had not supported the demonstrations against IIU and had never said that IIU caused a decrease of the water in Toba Lake.¹¹⁶

IIU workers also went to the American Embassy to get support from the labor attaché. They went to PARBATO, a Toba Batak organization in Medan, to persuade them to reject the demand that the mill be closed, and they organized against the demonstrators who tried to attack the mill. This created a horizontal conflict. To get the support of the Toba Batak, IIU put some the Toba Batak, especially from Porsea sub-district, in top management positions.

The Toba Batak Movement against IIU in the Gus Dur Era

The inauguration of Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) as the new president of Indonesia on October 20, 1999 did not make the wave of mill closure protests disappear, although most Indonesians knew that the new government was far more democratic than the government of Habibie. This was proved when 10,000 the Toba Batak went to the

¹¹⁵ See “Ribuan Karyawan PT IIU Kembali ke Porsea dan Seratusan Bertahan di Kantor Gubsu” *SIB*, October 21, 1998, p.1; “Gubsu Buang Badan” *Waspada*, October 20, 1998, p.1 and “Pelajar Yayasan Bona Pasogit Unjuk Rasa ke Kantor Gubsu” *Waspada*, October 21, 1998, p.1; “Anak dan Istri Karyawan PT IIU Bertahan di Kantor Gubernur Sumut” *Suara Pembaruan*, October 21, 1998, p.3.

¹¹⁶ See Perjuangan, December 18, 1999; “PT Inalum Tolak Bersaing Dengan PT IIU” *Kompas*, March 19, 1999, p. 1.

Porsea terminal to meet with Dr Sonny Keraf, the Environmental Minister in the Gus Dur government on December 12, 1999.¹¹⁷ In addition to wanting to celebrate the election of Gus Dur (with Mewagati as Vice President), Keraf wanted to see the size and strength of the Toba Batak resistance to IIU. The Toba Batak used this opportunity to show the government that it was not true that only a small group of people opposed the mill.¹¹⁸ At this meeting, the Toba Batak pressed Keraf to close the mill because of its negative impact on the Toba Batak and the environment. Keraf said that he agreed in principle with the demand to close the mill because people could not be ignored for the sake of income, but in order to make the right decision, the government had to do a total audit to be used as the basis for that decision.¹¹⁹

In March 2000, five hundred Toba Batak with NGO activists, and students went to the provincial legislature. This time they faced new provincial legislative members who had just been elected in a democratic general election. The protestors wanted to witness the plenary meeting that discussed the future of IIU. The legislatures were to hear reports from departments in the North Sumatra provincial government. Ir Igor Hutagalong, chief of the district Impact Management Agency of North Sumatra, stated that the research conducted by his Department showed IIU should be closed down. The

¹¹⁷ Newspapers reporting the situation differed on the numbers. *Mimbar Umum*, for instance, said 7,500 people attended the great meeting in Porsea terminal. I quote this figure from *Suara Pembaruan*. According to Effendi Panjaitan the Toba Batak numbered 10,000 in the great meeting. See "Meneg LH Sonny Keraf Yakin Rakyat Toba Samosir Tidak Menolak Industri" *Mimbar Umum*, December 4, 1999, p.1; "Menneg LH: Rakyat Tidak Boleh Dikorbankan Demi Cerita Devisa" *Suara Pembaruan*, December 13, 1999, p.3. Interview with Efendi Panjaitan, April 21, 2003.

¹¹⁸ See "Menneg LH: Rakyat Tidak Boleh Dikorbankan Demi Cerita Devisa" *Suara Pembaruan*, December 13, 1999, p.3; *Mimbar Umum*, December 13, 1999. See "Menteri LH: Nasib PT IIU Tergantung Hasil Audit Total" *Analisa*, December 14, 1999; "Menneg LH Yakin Rakyat Toba Samosir Tidak Anti Industri" *Barisan Baru*, December 13, 1999. In a working meeting between Sonny Keraf with Commission VIII members of House of Representative that dealt with environmental issues in Jakarta concluded that government should not license IIU because the mill had caused many problems for the Toba Batak and environment. See "DPR Rekomendasikan Pemerintah Cabut Izin PT Indorayon" *Berita Sore*, November 23, 1999, p1.

mill caused a decrease in quantity and quality of flora and fauna both at the mill and in the forest concession area. Ir Darori of the Forest Department of North Sumatra explained that the drought affecting Toba Lake could not be separated from IIU logging. In addition, IIU negatively affected the farming productivity of the Toba Batak.

However, in a democratic era different departments quite often have different opinions. This occurred in the plenary meeting where J Hutapea, chief of the Department of Food Plants insisted that the IIU mill should be opened despite negative impacts on the environment because of the impact of closing the mill on the workers.¹²⁰ Hutapea's argument outraged people attending the plenary meeting, who demanded he stop his speech. This annoyed other people in the room so the plenary meeting was disrupted. Anticipating chaos, the provincial legislature adjourned the plenary meeting. HM Yunus, the Speaker of the Provincial Legislature, said that the provincial legislature should form a special team to evaluate the mill performance. The special team set up by the legislature consisted of five people from Struggle Indonesian Democratic Party (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan*, PDIP); three from Functionals Groups (*Golongan Karya*, Golkar); two from United Development Party (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, PPP); one from the military; and one from the United Faction. This team was to collect information from all sides, including the NGOs.

The new Trade and Industry Minister, Luhut Panjaitan, who replaced Jusuf Kalla, supported the Toba Batak's opposition to IIU. Panjaitan said that the mill should be closed if it caused more negative than positive impacts. Emmy Hafield, speaking for WALHI in Jakarta, said that Panjaitan's statement showed that he understood the

¹²⁰ See "Pro Kontra Indorayon di DPRDSU" *Berita Sore*, March 13, 2000, p.1; "J Hutapea Pejabat Dinas Pertanian Dipaksa Turun Dari Mimbar" *Patriot*, March 14, 2000.

reformasi spirit. In the Gus Dur government there were now two ministers who were committed to closing the mill, Luhut Panjaitan and Sonny Keraf.¹²¹

However, following a government meeting on IIU's future there was a change in the government position.¹²² Sonny Keraf read a statement saying that at a government meeting on May 10, 2000, it was decided that IIU could operate their mill for pulp production but production of rayon at the mill would be stopped because it was rayon production that caused serious environmental damage.¹²³

Nabiel Makarim, an environmental expert, criticized this decision, arguing that the government policy was not transparent and not based on field research. The NGOs and other environmental experts also challenged this decision. Mas Achmad Santosa, an environmental law expert, said that the government arguments did not address criminal actions committed by the mill in the past. Furthermore, the government had not developed a comprehensive plan for solving the problems at IIU. The decision to open the mill for pulp production was reactive and temporary. The National Executive of WALHI in Jakarta predicted that the Toba Batak would be angry about the inconsistency of the government's policy on IIU. They warned that the government would be responsible if the Toba Batak run amuck.¹²⁴

¹²¹ *Analisa*, April 30, 2000.

¹²² Vice President Megawati participated in this meeting.

¹²³ See "Diharapkan Bukan Final Keputusan Pemerintah Soal PT IIU" *Kompas* May 15, 2000, p. 10. In my view, the government changed its policy due to international pressure and threats from investors to withdraw investment from Indonesia. Dr Todung Mulya Lubis SH, acting for IIU, said that the company would take their case to the international arbitrator in New York. See "IIU Batal Ajukan Indonesia ke Arbitrase Internasional" *Radar Medan*, June 14, 2000, p.9.

¹²⁴ See "Keputusan Pemerintah Soal IIU Tidak Memuaskan" *Kompas*, May 19, 2000, p.10; "Walhi Sesalkan Sikap Pemerintah Atas Kasus Inti Indorayon Utama" *Patriot*, May 2000, p.5; *Suara Pembaruan*, May 17, 2000. In Tarutung, Ephorus and HKBP Minister Dr JR Hutahuruk also warned the government not to make a confused decision on IIU. The government should listen to the people because those who lived near the mill felt its negative impacts directly, so the government should support the people's voice. See *Analisa*, June 22, 2003.

In Porsea, the Toba Batak reinstituted night patrols along the street to the IIU mill location and halted vehicles going to the mill. The police moved to stop this action and arrested 13 people from the patrols. These arrests reopened the conflict. The next day thousands of the Toba Batak came together at the Porsea police station to demand the release of the detainees. Second Lieutenant Charles Go of the Porsea police stated that the suspects arrested and detained by the district police could not be released.¹²⁵ The protestors then blockaded the Asahan River Bridge, halting hundreds of vehicles. They set up barrels and burned tires, driving the Porsea police to try to disburse the demonstrators by firing blanks into the air. The protestors ignored this warning and threw rocks at the police, so the police fired rubber bullets directly into the crowd. This resulted in the death of Hermanto Sitorus, a high school senior, and the hospitalization of two people.¹²⁶

The death of Hermanto Sitorus triggered rioting for the first time during the Gus Dur presidency. The protestors burned 13 houses owned by IIU sympathizers in villages in Porsea and Balige. The riot made Porsea city a wasteland. The people were afraid to go out, and shops were closed in fear of another riot. The police, along with military personnel, tried to persuade the protestors not to congregate. They also guarded the road from Asahan River to IIU mill in anticipation of renewed rioting.¹²⁷

At the funeral procession for Hermanto Sitorus, the crowds filled the streets of Porsea. Along the entire route, there were signs saying “Close Indorayon” and “Only one

¹²⁵ See *Analisa*, June 22, 2000; *Berita Sore*, June 22, 2000; *P. Demokrasi*, June 2000; *Sumatra*, June 22, 2000.

¹²⁶ See *Mimbar Umum*, June 23, 2000; *Suara Pembaruan*, June 22, 2000; *Medan Pos*, June 24, 2000.

¹²⁷ See “Warga Porsea Banyak Yang Mengungsi” *Suara Pembaruan*, June 25, 2000, p.13; “Porsea dan Balige kembali Mencekam” *Garuda*, June 23, 2000, p. 1. Also see “Lagi, Lima Rumah Dibakar Massa” *Mimbar Umum*, June 23, 2000, p. 1.

message – Oppose Indorayon.” Every house in Porsea had a flag at half-mast as a sign of respect for Hermanto Sitorus’ bravery in facing the police.¹²⁸ The funeral procession halted where Hermato had died to honor him.

The situation in Porsea was very tense. The streets were deserted and there was a large police and military presence. According to *Suara Pembaruan*, an entire village emptied because hundreds of Toba Batak went elsewhere for safety. Nevertheless, thousands of senior high school students organized a demonstration at the Balige district police office to demand that the police find who was responsible for shooting Sitorus. Lieutenant Colonel Drs Ishak Robinson Sampe said that the police regretted the accident and they would try to find the person who shot Sitorus, although he believed that the police had followed the correct procedure, firing rubber bullets instead of live ammunition.¹²⁹

T Rizal Nurdin, Governor of North Sumatra, together with Lieutenant Colonel Iskak, the chief of district police North Tapanuli, claimed that external actors caused this riot. Based on a preliminary investigation, they accused the Voice of People United (*Suara Rakyat Bersama*, SRB) of being the instigators. WALHI North Sumatra, Toba Batak leaders and environmental experts responded to these statements by saying that blaming external actors did not solve the problem. They argued that the trouble was caused by inconsistency in the government’s policy and that the government failed to see

¹²⁸ See “Rumah Pendukung PT IIU Dibakar” *Suara Pembaruan*, June 23, 2000, p. 4.

¹²⁹ See “Jenazah hermanto Diarak Ribuan Pelayat” *Harian Perjuangan*, June 25, 2000, p.1; “Warga Porsea Banyak Yang Mengungsi” *Suara Pembaruan*, June 25, 2000, p. 13. The police denied that they tortured two protestors who were detained for investigation purposes. This statement was issued after dozens of people along with high ranking officials in Toba Samosir wanted to make sure that the suspects were safe. See “Polisi Dituduh Siksa Tersangka Pembakar Rumah” *Waspada*, June 26, 2000, p. 2.

how strongly the Toba Batak opposed the mill so that they were ready to die fighting to have it closed down.¹³⁰

The Toba Batak and their supporters from both NGOs and political leaders in Medan kept pressing the government and Legislature to close the mill. They went to the Provincial Legislature wearing traditional Toba Batak clothing accompanied by traditional music (*margondang*). They gave a sword (*halasan*) to the Governor and also to the Speaker of the Provincial Legislature as a symbol that the Toba Batak recognized them as leaders and hoped they would stand on the side of the people, rather than support IIU. Prof Dr Bungaran A Simanjuntak, an anthropologist, explained that the sword was a sign that the Toba Batak were ready to face whomever and were not afraid to be killed in their struggle. However, the government, through Governor Nurdin, insisted that closing the rayon factory and reopening only the pulp factory was the best solution. The governor said that he hoped the Toba Batak would accept this solution. This statement meant that the conflict would continue. The Toba Batak said they had become nauseated (*magigi*), but the government still wanted to open the pulp mill.¹³¹

In Jakarta, a small number of people calling themselves the Young Generation of Porsea and Surrounding Area (*Genarasi Muda Porsea dan Sekitarnya*, GMPS) demonstrated in front of Hotel Indonesia. They demanded the government close the mill and create a peaceful situation in the grassroots level. They also used the Toba Batak symbols, such as traditional clothing and traditional music to attract attention.¹³²

¹³⁰ See "Orang Luar Picu Kerusuhan di Porsea" *Waspada*, June 27, 2000, p.2 and "Rakyat Toba Samosir rela Mati Jika PT IIU Tidak Segera Ditutup" *Waspada*, June 29, 2000, p.8; "Dalang Kerusuhan Berdarah Porsea Sudah Diketahui" *Analisa*, June 27, 2000, p. 9.

¹³¹ See "Operasional Indorayon Lihat Kondisi" *Express*, July 15, 2000, p.1; "Indorayon Harus Ditutup" *Kompas*, July 27, 2000, p.10; "Hanya Satu Kata, Lawan Indorayon" *Radar Medan*, July 27, 2000, p.5; "Operasional Kembali PT IIU tergantung Kondisi Lapangan" July 15,2000, p.1.

¹³² See "Aktivis Porsea di Jakarta desak Indorayon Tutup" *Radar Medan*, August 18, 2000, p. 2.

The Toba Batak also pressed the government to close the mill in a series of forums initiated by the provincial government in order to solve the conflict. At a forum in Jakarta, following-up on a forum in Medan, they posed three questions to an IIU consultant. The Toba Batak's team of experts asked if any pulp industries elsewhere in the world were located in the upper reaches of a river, whether there was any factory close to people's houses or located in a valley. The IIU consultant could not answer. The Toba Batak expert team also asked if IIU could identify a pulp mill similar to the IIU mill in Porsea. And they asked why IIU had constructed a tunnel connecting the mill to the Asahan River. According to Prof Dr Ir. J.M. Sitanggang MS, the room became silent as people waited for the IIU consultant to answer, but there was no answer. IIU and the government could not provide a clear argument that the mill was safe for people and the environment.¹³³

Twenty representatives of the Toba Batak in Toba Samosir with Sonny Keraf responded to the government with a statement saying that the government should close the mill if it did not want to see both vertical and horizontal conflict erupt again. They questioned the government's commitment to its claim that the government belonged to the people in the *reformasi* era. They warned that the Toba Batak at the grassroots level would fight if the government insisted on reopening the mill. However, dialog after dialog, the government did not make a plan for what would happen after the mill closed down but concentrated how to reopen it again.¹³⁴

IIU changed the name of the Porsea mill to PT Toba Pulp Lestari (TPL), but this did not win the sympathy of the Toba Batak. Thousands of Toba Batak continued to

¹³³ See "Soal PT IIU, Parbato Ajukan Tiga Pertanyaan" *Analisa*, September 7, 2000, p.3.

¹³⁴ See "Warga Porsea Menolak Pembukaan kembali PT IIU" *Republika*, October 5, 2000.

demonstrate at the governor's office and the provincial legislature to protest the government policy of reopening the mill and to question the new name for the mill. One poster read, "Close Toba Pulp Lestari or we'll burn it." Dr Ir Alexander Manurung stated that most people who supported the mill gave a dishonest explanation the technology used at the mill. Since IIU technology was not good for the environment, the government should at least re-locate the mill.¹³⁵

Resistance to the New IIU Paradigm

The Toba Samosir district government opened the year of 2001 with an educational campaign supporting the central government policy of May 10, 2000, which would allow IIU to reopen the mill.¹³⁶ They called a meeting of the village heads in Toba Samosir at which Sahala Tampubolon, the head of Toba Samosir district, guaranteed that IIU would not pollute the environment and if it did, he promised he would close the mill immediately. Tampubolon asked village headmen to support the central government policy allowing IIU to carry on their activities in Sosor Ladang.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Thirty-seven NGOs issued press releases that they could not accept the governor's decision of November 2, 2000, to reopen the mill. They argued for the two years that the mill in Sosor Ladang had been closed, the Toba Batak had clear, fresh air, farming improved, animal and fish husbandry improved and the life situation was peaceful. Effendi Panjaitan further argued that the Toba Batak in Porsea, Silaen, Uluan and Kumban Julu sub-districts did not support the governor's decision. See "Gubernur Izinkan PT IIU Operasikan Pabrik pulp" *Kompas*, November, 2000, p.10; "Ganti Nama, Warga Porsea Tetap Tolak" *Majalah Proklamasi*, November 30, 2000, p. 32.

¹³⁶ On January 8, 2001, hundreds of the Toba Batak demonstrated in the Sirait Urak intersection to halt the vehicle of Luhut B. Panjaitan, the Minister of Trade and Industry, along with other vehicles going to Medan. In front of hundreds of Toba Batak, Panjaitan stated that IIU was not operating yet. He explained that the mill could operate if the Toba Batak agreed. See "Memperindag Dihadang pengunjung rasa di Sirait Urak Porsea" *Analisa*, January 10, 2001, p.5; "Izin Operasional Indorayon Belum Ada" *Kompas*, January 10, 2001, p. 10.

¹³⁷ See "Memperindag Dihadang pengunjung rasa di Sirait Urak Porsea" *Analisa*, January 10, 2001, p.5; "Jika Dipaksakan Akan Berjatuh Lagi WALHI Sumut Nilai Sosialisasi Reoperasional PT.TPL Gagal" *Sinar Medan*, January 23, 2001.

On January 25, 2001, the district government called a second meeting of Toba Batak traditional leaders, religious leaders, and educational leaders. The outcome of this meeting was that people would allow the mill to be reopened with conditions. For instance, the company would not be allowed to log in Toba Samosir, there would be zero pollution, and funds would be provided to the Toba Batak. However, IIU said it was impossible to meet these demands. In general, the audience concluded that nothing had changed in IIU's approach to the problems. Thus, people like Musa Gurning did not want to give IIU a chance to prove they had changed. He said that IIU could not guarantee that their equipment was environmental friendly, and the Toba Batak had not recovered from the trauma caused by IIU's actions in the past.¹³⁸

WALHI North Sumatra argued that the government campaign to win support for reopening the mill, which had started in December 2000, had gone on long enough. But the Toba Batak still did not accept the decision to reopen the mill because they did not want a recurrence of the negative effects they had previously experienced. WALHI said that if the government and IIU wanted to avoid conflict, they should not push this campaign. Musa Gurning, the chief of SRB challenged Sahala Tampubolon's statement that SRB had agreed that the mill be reopened.¹³⁹ In fact, villages in Silamosik, Nagatimbul and Sihiong rejected reopening the mill.¹⁴⁰

The media war between the district government and the Toba Batak demanding the mill be closed heated up when Sahala Tampubolon attacked WALHI North Sumatra

¹³⁸ See "Jika Dipaksakan Akan Berjatuh Lagi WALHI Sumut Nilai Sosialisasi Reoperasional PT.TPL Gagal" *Sinar Medan*, January 23, 2001.

¹³⁹ Manurung, Sitorus, Sirait and Butar-Butar and leaders of SRB.

¹⁴⁰ See "Bupati Tobasa Dukung PT TPL" *Sinar Medan*, January 16, 2001, p.1 and "Jika Dipaksakan Akan Berjatuh Lagi WALHI Sumut Nilai sosialisasi Reoperasional PT. TPL Gagal" *Sinar Medan*, January 31, 2001; "Surat Pernyataan WALHI Sumut" *Senior*, January 27, 2001, p. 6.

and SRB for their criticism of the campaign to get people to accept reopening the mill. Tampubolon argued that the campaign to get people to understand the reasons why the government allowed the mill to reopen was appropriate and there should be no time limit on it. He accused the two NGOs of being provocateurs. This led to further protests, and the NGOs threatened to take him to court if he did not make a clarification.¹⁴¹

Tampubolon then modified his accusation that WALHI North Sumatra and SRB were provocateurs and acknowledged that the movement opposing IIU was from the Toba Batak.

At their first congress in HKBP church Sirait Uruk, SRB reiterated their opposition to reopening the mill and the campaign to gain support for the government policy. They argued that Tampubolon would be responsible if both vertical and horizontal conflict occurred in Porsea.¹⁴² They also pointed out that the Toba Batak experienced a tremendous change after IIU closed down.

The wave of protests from the Toba Batak and NGOs increased when IIU and the governor asked the police to protect IIU when it started operate the mill on March 31, 2001.¹⁴³ Thousands of Toba Batak, together with WALHI North Sumatra, demonstrated at the district legislature. They insisted that the district legislature and the district government support their demand that the IIU mill be closed. Furthermore, they produced

¹⁴¹ See “Bupati Toba Samosir Ingatkan SRB dan WALHI Sumut Hentikan Aksi Provokasi terhadap Masyarakat Tolak PT TPL” *SIB*, January 25, 2001, p.1; “Bupati Tobasa: Jangan-Jangan Mereka Itu Provokator” *Mimbar Umum*, January 25, 2001, p.1; “Bupati Tobasa Mengaku Tak pernah Memaksakan Agar Toba Pulp Lestari Dibuka Juga Bantah Berita Bahwa WALHI dan SRB Provokator” *Harian Perjuangan*, January 26, 2001, p. 1.

¹⁴² See *Harian Perjuangan*, February 5, 2001.

¹⁴³ The Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (*Komisi Untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Kekerasan*, KONTRAS), sent a letter to the governor of North Sumatra and the chief of provincial police asking them not to provide security for IIU to reopen the mill because the Toba Batak had not yet accepted that the mill be reopened. See *Perjuangan*, March 24, 2001.

100,000 signatures on a white banner demanding the mill be closed down as proof of the Toba Batak determination to oppose the mill.¹⁴⁴

In Medan eight students from North Sumatra and St. Thomas University demonstrated with a two-week hunger strike. They hoped this action would attract the attention of the media and force the government to pay attention to what the Toba Batak wanted.¹⁴⁵ Two professors and three doctors—Prof Dr Bungaran Antonious, Prof Dr JM Sitanggang, Dr Ir Alexander Manurung, Dr Ir Farel Napitupulu and Dr Ir Sabam Malau—issued a statement saying that mill location and the technology used by IIU was not suitable (and the mill should not reopen).¹⁴⁶

The peak of the protests occurred outside the HKBP church Lumban Huluan on March 31, 2001, when 55,000 Toba Batak from 182 villages in six sub-districts in Toba Samosir held a meeting to oppose IIU and the campaign in support of the mill by the district government. The Toba Batak used traditional symbols and music to attract people to join the protest. The participants were men and women, students at every level, and children. The institutions and individuals that supported this movement gave speeches regarding the politics of closing the mill and the environmental issue associated with the mill. Prof Dr Ing K Tunggul Sirait, a member of the Legislature, and Emmy Hafield said that the government should be consistent about closing the mill and listen more to the

¹⁴⁴ See “Ribuan Warga Tobasa Pawai Tolak Toba Lestari” *Harian Perjuangan*, March 23, 2001, p.1; “Kapolres Taput Minta: Warga Toba Samosir Sikapai TPL Dengan Akal Sehat” *Analisa*, January 27, 2001, p.5; “Warga Unjuk Rasa Soal Indorayon” *Kompas*, March 24, 2001, p.19.

¹⁴⁵ See “Mahasiswa Unika St. Thomas: Tutup PT Pulp Indorayon” *Analog*, January 24, 2001, p.2.

¹⁴⁶ See “Dua Profesor dan Tiga Doktor Asal Tobasa Tolak PT. TPL” *Waspada*, March 26, 2001, p.8. Dozens of students calling themselves “Sumatara Utara Corruption Watch” demonstrated in the provincial legislative council building demanding closure of IIU. They timed their action to coincide with the provincial legislature’s meeting with the governor to discuss the annual budget of the province. See “Masyarakat Tobasa Tolak Indorayon?” *Mediator*, March 13, 2001, p.3.

Toba Batak than to IIU.¹⁴⁷ They criticized the IIU campaign to win support as being full of mistakes. They argued that the mill could reopen only if the Toba Batak at the grassroots agreed. They said that government waffling caused unrest and showed that the government had not changed the way they made policy, that is, it still ignored the voice of the people. Again they collected signatures on a long white banner. The Toba Batak also set up street banners in Balige and Porsea saying “There is only one message: Close Indorayon.”¹⁴⁸ Because of this huge demonstration, the plan of IIU and government to operate the mill failed again. T Rizal Nuridin admitted that the campaign to win support for reopening the mill had failed. The security apparatus could not guarantee that the mill could safely operate. Therefore, he accepted that the mill should be closed until all sides agreed.¹⁴⁹

Under the Gus Dur presidency, from November 1999, to June 2001, all efforts to reopen the mill failed although both IIU and the government tried everything from dialog to repressive approaches. Every effort to open the mill met with resistance from the Toba Batak and the groups that supported their movement.¹⁵⁰

IIU: All Efforts and All Failures

During the Gus Dur presidency, the efforts of IIU to restore trust by the Toba Batak at the grassroots level and by groups who opposed them were very intensive

¹⁴⁷ See “Puluhan Ribu warga Tobasa Kumpul di Porsea Tolak PT. TPL” *Mimbar Umum*, April 1, 2001, p.1; “Pernyataan Menteri Lingkungan Hidup Dinilai Usik Kenyamanan Warga Tobasa” *Radar Nauli*, June 28, 2001, p.3; “Ribuan Warga Tuntut PT IIU Ditutup” *Suara Pembaruan*, April 1, 2001, p. 15.

¹⁴⁸ See “Ribuan Warga Tuntut PT IIU Ditutup” *Suara Pembaruan*, April 1, 2001, p.15; “Ribuan Warga Tobasa Anti PT. TPL Kumpul di Porsea” *Waspada*, April 1, 2001, p.2; “Puluhan Ribu Warga Toba Kumpul di Porsea Hanya Satu Kata: Tutup... Indorayon” *Harian Perjuangan*, April 1, 2001, p.1.

¹⁴⁹ See “Didemo Ribuan Warga Indorayon Batal Beroperasi” *Kompas*, April 1, 2001, p. 2; “Gubsu Akui Sosialisasi Indorayon Tak Mantap” *Radar Medan*, April 4, 2001, p. 5.

¹⁵⁰ See “IIU Harus Tutup Total” *Kompas*, June 28, 2001, p. 1.

compared to what occurred during the Habibie presidency. In the Habibie era, IIU used their employees to push the government and to oppose the Toba Batak; in the Gus Dur era, IIU emphasized dialog and sought support from the government at the local, provincial and national levels to resist the Toba Batak movement to close the mill.

They took the initiative of changing the name of the company to PT Toba Pulp Lestari. One of the IIU commissioners apologized to the Toba Batak, admitting that mistakes had been made and promising not to make the same errors if they were allowed to operate again. IIU offered to give one percent of the mill profit to the Toba Batak. They proposed establishing a “Toba Foundation” if the Toba Batak accepted the idea.

IIU also used intellectuals to legitimate their claim that the mill operations would not harm people and the environment. With the Institute of Agriculture Bogor, IIU held a seminar on the new paradigm of IIU operations. Many academic participants were involved, including Prof Dr Bungaran Saragih, the Minister of Agriculture in the Gus Dur government. Saragih was one of the IIU “spokespersons” who tried hard to convince people to accept IIU with a new paradigm.

The government played an important role in supporting the mill. For instance, the government organized meetings of experts to explore how IIU could reopen the mill. My study showed that the government always pointed out that IIU made a significant contribution to the local and provincial economy. This income became more significant after the central government gave autonomy to the province and the district with its own yearly income. Therefore, it was not surprising that the district government campaigned to have people accept the mill.

In the media, IIU always tried to depict the NGO activists, intellectuals, and the Toba Batak who lived outside North Tapanuli as provocateurs. They hoped in this way to create opposition to the activists in the grassroots. They also invited diplomats to the mill location to show that the mill was important to foreign investment. They used international arbitration as a weapon to press the Indonesia government to support the mill. To a significant extent this was successful in preventing the government from closing the mill down. The recommendation of the Minister of the Environment and of Commission VIII of the House of Representatives was rejected at a cabinet meeting led by Megawati after IIU threatened to bring the case to international arbitration.

The Toba Batak Movement against IIU in the Megawati Era

IIU did not operate for almost four years because of protests from the Toba Batak and their supporters. The Megawati government, through the Minister of Manpower and Transmigration, Jacob Nua Wea, wanted to reopen the mill. To this end, Nua Wea formed Team -11 plus, led by Drs S. Leo Batubara, the coordinator of the Indonesian Press and Broadcasting Society to promote the plan to the district and provincial governments, which they hoped would support the operation of the mill with security personnel.¹⁵¹

Nua Wea and Batubara argued that the mill closing was illegal and international arbitrators would decide against the Indonesian government because the mill was closed without an audit process to determine whether or not it caused negative impacts. If the mill was shut down without the audit process, the Indonesian government would be liable for compensation in the amount of \$600 million dollars, and foreign investors would

¹⁵¹ See “Pemerintah Harus Ganti Ratusan Juta Dollar Jika Menutup TPL” *Republika*, November 26, 2002

avoid investing their money in Indonesia. Finally, the government pointed out that the mill would absorb many employees and provide local income.¹⁵²

Still the Toba Batak, together with NGOs, priests, students and environmental experts, said no to the government plan reopen the mill. The Toba Batak again began patrolling to halt IIU trucks if they transported raw material to the mill location. On November 17, 2002, thousands of the Toba Batak came together in the Siraituruk intersection to demonstrate. Hearing that Nua Wea was coming to Sosor Ladang, they paraded in Balige city in dozens of vehicles asking people to oppose the Megawati plan to reopen the mill. Although Nua Wea canceled the trip, the chief of district police in Balige deployed police, one truckload of soldiers and three trucks of mobile police brigade. On November 21, 2002, the police sent two more trucks of the mobile brigade to Porsea in anticipation of large demonstrations.¹⁵³

When the mobile brigade banned the sounding of church bells (a signal calling people to demonstrate), the Toba Batak demonstrated at the Porsea sub-district office to protest and demanded that the Chief of Porsea Sub-district support their demand that the mill be closed. Trouble started when people, disappointed with the answer of the police chief, threw rocks at the police office. The security guard fired into the crowd of protestors. Dozens of protestors were wounded, and the police detained 18 people.¹⁵⁴ The police said that the detainees were accused of a criminal action because they had destroyed the sub-district office. The police violently dispersed the crowd that had

¹⁵² See Kompas, November 2, 2002; “Pemerintah Harus Ganti Ratusan Juta Dollar Jika Menutup TPL” *Republika*, November 26, 2002.

¹⁵³ See WALHI North Sumatra Investigation Report, November 21, 2002.

¹⁵⁴ They are Pdt. Miduk Sirait; Pdt. Sarma Siregar; Musa Gurning; Benget Manurung; Elman Ambarita; Mangala Sirait; Nai Panahatan; Aden Sitorus; Rio Dolok Saribu; A. Sudung Manurung; M. Marpaung; Aces Sitorus; Leo Nainggolan.

gathered, cause panic among people trying to avoid them. Even though people fled to school buildings and churches, the police kept hunting for them.¹⁵⁵

When Nua Wea¹⁵⁶ and other high-ranking government officers came to Balige on November 11, 2002, to promote the government plan to re-open the mill, thousands of the Toba Batak demonstrated in Siraituruk intersection to demand that the government cancel the plan to reopen the mill. The crowd moved to HKBP church in Paleraja, Tarutung to force HKBP church to give protection.¹⁵⁷

Cudgeling, shooting, detension and intimidation of demonstrators by the police was criticized by legislative members and NGOs. Prof Dr Ing K Tunggul Sirait, a member of the legislature, and Johnson Panjaitan SH, the General Secretary of the Indonesian Legal Aid Organization (*Persatuan Bantuan Hukum Indonesia*, PBHI), protested the police response to the demonstrators. They said that the police should not detain protestors because they were not terrorists, only people criticizing government policy. Therefore, the police should release detainees. Panjaitan and Sirait said they would bring the case to court where it could be decided if the police had followed proper procedure in detaining Toba Batak leaders. They also planned to report the case to the chief of police in Jakarta and the Minister Coordinator of Security, Politics and Social Affairs. They claimed that police had tortured detainees in the cells and legal procedures had not been followed, such as a warrant letter when people were detained.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ See Liputan 6 SCTV, December 12, 2002; WALHI North Sumatra Investigation Report, November 21, 2002.

¹⁵⁶ Nua Wea stated that only a small number of people rejected IIU, most of people in the grassroots agree with re-opening the mill. Therefore, there was no reason for the government to postpone opening PT TPL. See *Suara Pembaruan*, December 2, 2002.

¹⁵⁷ See *Suara Pembaruan*, December 3, 2002.

¹⁵⁸ See *Waspada*, November 2, 2002.

Seven NGOs in Medan sent a letter to the police department and the Indonesian government stating their objection to the detention of Toba Batak and the plan for opening the mill. They argued that this case would never have happened if the government had understood the people's hopes at the grassroots level. Therefore, in addition to releasing those detained by the police, they demanded that the government take responsibility for the violence. At the local level, they urged people not to be provoked by anyone who wanted to create anarchy.¹⁵⁹

To press the provincial legislature and the provincial government in Medan into responding to this case, hundreds of the Toba Batak, students, and NGO activists demonstrated at the provincial legislature. They insisted that the police release people in police custody. They insisted that in order to save the environment, stop the pollution and avoid conflict with the people, the government should cancel plans to re-open the mill. Although provincial legislative members supported the people's movement opposing the government plan to re-open the mill, they did not succeed in influencing the government and police department to change their policy and some people were kept in detention.¹⁶⁰

In Jakarta hundreds of NGO activists, together with the Toba Batak demonstrated in front of Hotel Indonesia. They insisted the Indonesian government should re-evaluate the plan to reopen the mill. After the mill had been closed, the environmental problems cleared up and there was no contention among the Toba Batak. The NGO activists, led by WALHI, went to the presidential palace to demonstrate, hoping Megawati would change her mind. The NGO coalition also met with Nabel Makarim, the Minister of Environment in the Megawati government, to explain to him why the Toba Batak were

¹⁵⁹ See the Letter of Together Statement of NGO in Indonesia, November 22, 2002.

¹⁶⁰ See *Detik.Com*, December 12, 2002; Investigation Report of WALHI North Sumatra, 2002.

not yet ready to accept the government plan. They said that the latest seminar held by WALHI and Forum Bona Pasogit showed that the mill location in Sosorladang- Porsea was not suitable. The NGO coalition met with the National Commission on Human Rights to ask that the repressive security presence in Porsea be reduced. They demanded the commission investigate human rights violations by police. They hoped that investigation by commission would lead the police to release “suspects” and bring this case to court.

Although the civil society components have not yet succeeded in influencing the Megawati administration to close the pulp mill which have operated again since February 2003, through their actions they have provided a clear message to the government that violence on a large scale is possible. I do not think the Toba Batak movement opposing IIU will stop. The protests will continue until the government changes its policy in large and small action scale by using direct and indirect actions. They have fought to close the mill from 1988 until now.

Chapter III

Grievances and the Legacy of the Previous Protests

Introduction

This chapter focuses on two factors, grievances and the legacy of the previous protests, which continue to drive the Toba Batak movement to oppose IIU. The first part of the chapter describes the grievances that motivated the Toba Batak to protest against the mill in Sosor Ladang. In the second part of the chapter, the ways in which the Toba Batak fought against the mill in the earlier years (1988-1993) is described. This resistance took various forms: the Sugapa old women (*Inang-Inang*) movement, the Bulu Silape movement, the WALHI campaign to use the law against IIU, the Ompu Debata Raja Pasaribu episode, protests over the rupture of a chlorine tank at the IIU Mill, and the conflict over leadership of HKBP. In these protests the Toba Batak learned how to plan and carry out demonstrations. They learned effective strategies and tactics to resist the Indonesian government, the police and IIU and how to identify enemies and friends in the campaign against IIU.

Grievances

The negative impact of IIU's operations in Sosor Ladang can be divided in two general categories. The first is the effect of the mill and logging on the environment – water and air pollution and landslides. Second is the effect of the mill operations on Toba Batak society – the impact on the local economy, the undermining of social values, and health problems.

Water Pollution

Pulp and rayon industries like IIU create water pollution if the water and chemical compounds used for the bleaching process are discarded into a river. If the mill does not have adequate waste technology processing or fails to fully use waste processing technology because of increased production costs, the waste will seriously pollute the river. According to a World Bank report (1980), “Environmental Considerations in the Pulp and Paper Industry,” the wastewater from a pulp and rayon mill can affect BOD (Biochemical Oxygen Demand), COD (Chemical Oxygen Demand), pH, toxicity, taste, smell, color, foam and release a number of chemical compounds that persist in the polluted water.

Increasing the BOD level will decrease the soluble oxygen content needed by fish and other aquatic life.¹⁶¹ Ginting et al. showed that in Porsea there were two sources that cause an increase in BOD. The first was organic waste of the Toba Batak and the second came from the effect of disentanglement of chemical organic compounds, i.e. sugar substances, resin, grease, acid, and lignin of pulp and rayon mills. Solid matter such as wood fiber and dark also causes increasing of BOD value. This solid matter threatens aquatic life because it decreases light penetration, thereby adversely effecting phytoplankton, zooplankton, heterotopy, benthos and small-fish populations, which are

¹⁶¹ See Ginting ... [at al.], *Penelitian Base Line dan Perkiraan Andal Pada Lokasi Pabrik Pulp/Rayon PT Inti Indorayon Utama di Kecamatan Porsea, Tapanuli Utara* (Medan: Lembaga Penelitian USU, 1985); Edison Effendi Sihombing, “Evaluasi Hasil Analisa Air Buangan dan Gas Emisi PT Inti Indorayon Utama Berdasarkan Data Labat Anderson,” in *Academic Review Terhadap Hasil Audit Labat Anderson Mengenai Dampak Lingkungan PT. Inti Indorayon Utama, Fasilitator Pusat Studi Pembangunan IPB* (Bogor: PSP IPB, 2000); LABAT-Anderson, *Final Audit Findings: Environmental, Safety, and Health Audit of Pulp Mill, Rayon Plant, and Forestry Operations* (Jakarta: LABAT Anderson, 1996).

the main food source for a number of local fish like *jurung*, *mas* and *asa-asa*.¹⁶² The decline of the water quality at the mill waste-dumping site in the in the Asahan River and in Toba Lake could be seen in the “blooming” of the blue-green algae. This situation was dangerous for people who used the water for drinking because the algae produces mycosis toxin that in low concentrations over a long period can cause cancer.¹⁶³

According to research conducted by WALHI and the Public Health Faculty of the University of Indonesia (*Fakultas Kesehatan Masyarakat Universitas Indonesia*, FKMUI), although this “algae bloom” was a side effect of domestic waste and farming waste containing fertilizer residue, industrial waste was the greatest cause. Because there is no industry except IIU in the area, it is virtually certain that industrial waste produced by the mill was the chief cause of the algae bloom.

In addition to regular dumping of waste into the river, the IIU operation contributed to pollution of the Asahan River and Toba Lake in other ways. In August 1988, the artificial containment lagoon for liquid waste ruptured and the waste flowed into Asahan River and on to Toba Lake. Andrew Dodd, co-presenter of public radio’s national environmental and peace programme noted that 375,000 cubic meters of waste were emptied into the Asahan River. This accident contributed heavily to the pollution level of the Asahan River.¹⁶⁴ According to Ashoka Siahaan, thousands of dead fish

¹⁶² In addition, the organic waste trapped by sediment undergoes anaerobic processes raising the pH to a level fatal to fish and threatening all organisms in the water and making the water unusable for irrigation. See Firman Manurung, “Dampak Polusi PT Inti Indorayon Utama” in *Academic Review Terhadap Hasil Audit Labat Anderson Mengenai Dampak Lingkungan PT. Inti Indorayon Utama*, Fasilitator Pusat Studi Pembangunan IPB (Bogor: PSP IPB, 2000).

¹⁶³ See Abdur Rahman ... [at al.], *Dampak Pencemaran Lingkungan Terhadap Status Kesehatan Masyarakat di Porsea dan Sekitarnya*, (Jakarta: Fakultas Kesehatan UI dan WALHI, 1998).

¹⁶⁴ See Andrew Dodd, “The Porsea Pulp Mill Debacle,” *Inside Indonesia*, No 19 July 1989; Suhardjo Hs, Amran Nasution and Irwan E. Siregar “Tim Kontroversi Indorayon” *Tempo*, November 19, 1989; In *Tempo*, Nery Sihotang stated, “The river water was thick, sticky and made me itch. After I used that water I got the skin diseases. The same thing happened to Dedy, a three-month-old baby, after his mother bathed

floated to the surface of the Asahan River, subjecting people who lived along the river to a putrid smell, especially when there was wind from Toba Lake. The Toba Batak using the river water developed skin diseases.

A similar accident occurred in 1994. A large amount of contaminated waste was dumped into the Asahan River destroying 12 houses and the rice crop that was almost ready to be harvested. According to Labat Anderson, there was a strong indication that the river was polluted. Samples collected from the river showed that the pH had changed and a number of chemical compounds such as BOD and COD had entered the river.¹⁶⁵

According to *Tempo* and an investigation conducted by members of the provincial legislature, the waste tank was not built to government standards. Its walls were 30 cm - thick concrete as required for a tank 15 m x 25 m in size. The problem was that the waste tank did not have a concrete base. It was built directly on the ground, which was compacted, according to PT Multi Quatron and PT Tri Patra, the contractor and consultant which made the lagoon. Therefore, rain could erode the earth under the tank and the unsupported weight of the waste would rupture the tank.¹⁶⁶

The latest research, conducted by WALHI and FKMUI in 1998, provided additional proof that the mill had polluted the Asahan River. Based on measurement of the water quality in six monitoring spots, 15 results out of 29 items on the control chart showed significant change at Siruar village.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, from the 15 results

him using water from the river.” There were 70 families who did not want to use that water again. See *Tempo*, September 24, 1988; “Temuan di Danau Buatan PT IIU Dilaporkan Ke Gubernur Sumut” *Suara Pembaruan*, September 16, 1988; “Laporan Kunjungan Kerja Komisi V DPR PT IIU Disarankan Lebih Manunggal Dengan Rakyat” *Suara Pembaruan*, November 17, 1988.

¹⁶⁵ Interview with Firman Manurung, April 16, 2003.

¹⁶⁶ See *Majalah Tempo*, April 24-02 1994.

¹⁶⁷ Thirteen villages were monitoring locations in their research. They are Siregar; Sigaoal; Marom; Sibuntuan; Jonggimanulus; Narumundu; Parparean; Martalitali; Tapak Proyek; Sosor Ladang; Monitoring IIU; Siruar; and Parhitean village. The 15 results on the control chart are DHL, TDS, TSS, Color, turbidity,

significant for Siruar village, in 12 cases the parameters exceeded the capacity of the water in the Asahan River to recover naturally. The data indicated that the pollution burden has changed the Asahan River ecosystem drastically. This was one of the reasons for the rapid decline of plankton, nekton, benthos, and fish in the river and why the water was unfit for use for drinking, bathing and washing.¹⁶⁸

Air Pollution

In addition to water pollution, IIU also caused serious air pollution in Porsea. This occurred because in pulp production sulfide compounds emerge from the disentangling process through decomposition. One of these compounds, H₂S, is a cause of eye irritation.¹⁶⁹ Inhalation of this gas will disturb the respiratory septum and can cause lung edema. Moreover, under certain circumstances this gas can be absorbed into the bloodstream through the lungs, causing the victim first to gasp and then to nearly stop breathing. Because this gas disturbs the respiratory system it will cause a decrease of oxidative metabolism so that the body's oxygen needs are not met, and in critical conditions it will kill human beings. This is due to a disturbance of the central nervous system. The foul odor, under certain conditions, also adversely affects the olfactory ability of human beings creating a loss of the ability to detect threats to their body.¹⁷⁰

N-nitrite, N-ammonia, Chloride, free chlorine, sulfide, sulfa, zinc, Aluminum and Ca See Abdur Rahman ... [et al.], *Dampak Pencemaran Lingkungan Terhadap Status Kesehatan Masyarakat di Porsea dan Sekitarnya*, (Jakarta: Fakultas Kesehatan UI dan WALHI, 1998).

¹⁶⁸ See Abdur Rahman ... [et al.], *Dampak Pencemaran Lingkungan Terhadap Status Kesehatan Masyarakat di Porsea dan Sekitarnya*, (Jakarta: Fakultas Kesehatan UI dan WALHI, 1998).

¹⁶⁹ See Firman Manurung, "The Impact of a Pulp and Rayon Factory on the Environment of Lake Toba and the People of the Region" Unpublished Report, January 28, 2001.

¹⁷⁰ See "Bau Busuk Dari Pabrik IIU Di Porsea Belum Tertanggulangi" *Suara Pembaruan*, June 14, 1991; Abdur Rahman ... [et al.] 1998; *Garuda*, November 19, 1998.

Quite often people are just disturbed by the putrid stench of H₂S, and such health effects as eye irritation, lung edema and fatigue are not seen as a serious threat.

Siahaan noted that at least 500 people who lived near the IIU mill complained because every day they had to inhale the stench from the production process of the mill. Investigation by a local legislature member found that the stench could be detected within a 20 Kilometer radius. According to the Toba Batak, the worst smell occurred at night and with high winds it even penetrated the house.¹⁷¹

In addition, on November 5, 1993, the rupture of a tank containing 200 kilograms of chlorine, shocked people living near the mill. An IIU employee was injured in the accident and died before he reached the hospital. Three other IIU employees were rendered unconscious after the chlorine tank began to leak.¹⁷² This accident created panic among the Toba Batak and IIU employees. According to a government officer in Porsea, the chlorine leak could spread over a 60 kilometer radius. Therefore, a large number of people fled their homes. Some parents simply entrusted their children to busses that passed their houses; some hid them in closets. In Lumban Batu people who were waiting for the bodies of those who had died, left their homes to save their lives. Many people moved temporarily to Prapat, Pematang Siantar, Siborong-borong, Tarutung and Medan. Schools were closed and farming was halted. Livestock sales plummeted because buyers feared the cattle had been contaminated.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Interview with villagers, May 6, 2003. Local people also stated that sometimes the noxious odor could be smelled in Balige, some 30 Km from the mill.

¹⁷² See *Majalah Tempo*, 24-02 April 1994.

¹⁷³ See KSPPM Investigation Report, Unpublished Report; "Tangki Gas PT IIU Bocor, Ribuan Mengungsi" *Kompas*, November 6, 1993; KSPPM Report, "Petaka di Tapanuli Utara Karena Ulah PT Inti Indorayon Utama" December, 1993.

The latest research conducted by WALHI and FKMUI supports the conclusion that IUU operations cause air pollution. The cause of the putrid aroma has been identified and quantified. Based on two sample locations, Narumonda and Jonggi Manulus villages, the H_2S exceeded levels set by the Indonesian government. In Narumonda village, H_2S was $56.34 \mu\text{g}/\text{M}^3$ and in Jonggi Manulus village H_2S was $47.01 \mu\text{g}/\text{M}^3$, while the quality standard of ambient air was $41.70 \mu\text{g}/\text{M}^3$, and the quality standard of the smell level was $27,81 \mu\text{g}/\text{M}^3$. Research also showed that eye irritation was caused by H_2S and SO_2 . In Narumonda village, the concentration of SO_2 ($1474.9\text{-}2592.6 \mu\text{g}/\text{M}^3$) was higher than the quality standard established by the Indonesia government ($26.18 \mu\text{g}/\text{M}^3$), although the level of pollution differed depending on the location. For instance, in Sigaol village the concentration of H_2S and SO_2 was lower than the governmental standard.¹⁷⁴

Drought, Landslide, and Flood

The forest absorbs rainfall and maintains the water cycle. Not all of the rain that falls to the earth can be absorbed by the forest canopy. Much of it reaches the ground to be taken up through tree roots or runs off superficially. Plants use the water to help them process their food through photosynthesis so that the water goes back to the atmosphere and water that is not used by the plants will “reach the underground water table and circulate internally toward water courses and springs and the rest evaporate.”¹⁷⁵

Carrere and Lohmann¹⁷⁶ explain:

¹⁷⁴ See Abdur Rahman ... [et al.], *Dampak Pencemaran Lingkungan Terhadap Status Kesehatan Masyarakat di Porsea dan Sekitarnya*, (Jakarta: Fakultas Kesehatan UI dan WALHI, 1998); WALHI, *Buku Panduan Bahan Berbahaya dan Beracun* (Jakarta: WALHI, 1997).

¹⁷⁵ See Ricardo Carrere and Larry Lohmann, *Pulping the South: Industrial Tree Plantations and The World Paper Economy*, (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd, 1996).

¹⁷⁶ Ibid p.64.

In ecosystems which have not been radically modified recently, the naturally-occurring vegetation possesses characteristics which ensure long-term balance in the water cycle. The morphology and physiology of the component species of the local ecosystems tend to be adapted to make most efficient use of available rainfall.

A radical change in an ecosystem will affect the water cycle.

Radical changes in the ecosystem have occurred in North, Central and South Tapanuli, Simalungun, and Dairi where IJU gets its raw material. The result of logging has been drought in those districts. Effendi Panjaitan, Director of WALHI North Sumatra, pointed out that since the mill began to log the forest for raw material, 84 rivers, both large and small, experienced drought.¹⁷⁷ This occurred because the forest that functioned to absorb rainfall and maintain the water cycle was gone. For example, the protected forest in Sibatuloting was cleared; the hardwood was sold and the softwood was used in the mill.¹⁷⁸

In addition to drought, a great many large and small landslides have occurred.¹⁷⁹ At the end of November 1989, the local residents in Silape sub-village, Sianipar village, and Silaen sub-district experienced a massive landslide that buried 13 people.¹⁸⁰ It also destroyed five traditional houses that were over one hundred years old, 30 hectares of

¹⁷⁷ See Panji Masyarakat Dec 2, 1998).

¹⁷⁸ See *Suara Pembaruan*, September 11, 1998; *Mimbar Umum*, June 9, 1998. A number of civil society organizations and government reports said that the main cause of drought in these areas was deforestation. They include (1) RAWIL Balige, a Catholic organization, (2) 2000 village chiefs in Toba Samosir, (3) WALHI, (4) district and provincial parliaments, (5) National Government, (6) priests.

¹⁷⁹ According to local people, in every rainy season they have to face landslides on a small scale. The landslides affected people's psychology. They worry that the small-scale landslides might occur on a large scale. Interview with villagers, April 20, 2003.

¹⁸⁰ See "Tanah Longsor di Silape Taput Bukan sekedar Bencana Alam" *SIB*, December 14, 1989; "Bukan Sekedar Bencana Alam" *Suara Pembaruan*, December 14, 1989.

sawah and six hectares of irrigated agricultural fields. People had to flee to their relatives' houses and experienced lack of food and basic materials.¹⁸¹

The Silape villagers argued that the accident was not a "regular natural disaster" but a "natural disaster which was caused." Local people pointed out that IIU caused the landslide by their activities of scraping the land and hauling thousands of tons of earth to Tampean hills to make a flat area on both sides of the road to Bulusilape village so that IIU trucks and bulldozers could be parked. In addition, starting in 1987, earth was excavated to build a 20 Kilometer. road from Parsoboran to Hanbinsaran, the location of eucalyptus.¹⁸²

The North Sumatra Department of Mining and Energy supported the local residents' argument that the landslides were caused by IIU's activity. Based on investigation at the location, they reported that there were several factors which caused the landslide, such as the angle of the steep slope cut into the mountain, which was almost 90 degrees; the vibration of the trucks which delivered the wood; and the clearing of trees from the hill, which was so bare that there were no tree roots to bind the soil. However, a few days later, Sudomo, the Coordinating Minister of Politics and Security in Medan, stated that the landslide was not caused by IIU's activities. He explained that the landslide was natural because the land characteristically tended to be weak so that hard

¹⁸¹ See "Korban Longsor Bulusilape Terkatung-katung: Tidak Terima Bantuan Lagi Dari Panitia" *Waspada*, December 16, 1989.

¹⁸² See "Tanah Longsor di Bulusilape Malapetaka Yang 'Diundang'" *Waspada*, December 7 1989; *Suara Pembaruan*, December 14 1989; "Penduduk Bulu Silape Tetap Tuding PT IIU Penyebab Bencana Longsor" *Suara pembaruan*, December 24, 1989; Monaris Simangunsong and Sarluhut Napitupulu "Maut Merenggut di Bukit Tampean" *Tempo*, December 16, 1989.

rain stimulated a landslide. This was weak argument because there had not been a history of landslides in the area before IIU constructed a road.¹⁸³

The Negative Impact on the Local Economy

A large number of people who lived near the mill were farmers, who grew rice and vegetables and raised pigs. This was possible because there was sufficient rainfall and the land was not steep. Based on the data from the B.B. Gabe Siborong-borong rainfall observation station, the annual rate of rainfall was 2.098 mm in 1984. The area also had a large number of small rivers and the Asahan River. The rivers provided a livelihood for local people who were fishermen or used the rivers for fish farming.¹⁸⁴

The Toba Batak were not prepared to change their mode of production from agriculture¹⁸⁵ and to become laborers in the IIU mill. Most people living near the mill had little education, while the mill offered mostly high-skill jobs. Only people who had high school diplomas or university degrees could get jobs. The Toba Batak were hired only for maintenance (housekeeping and cooking) in the households of mill personnel, security, and transportation, which offered low wages compared to high-skill jobs at the mill. In addition local people had no opportunity to provide services, such as building housing, contracting for transportation, and mini markets for the mill employees. The main food

¹⁸³ WALHI research showed that the landslide in Bulusilape was caused by IIU activities. This was one of the main reasons WALHI brought this case to the court. See “Rudini Tentang Bencana Longsor di Tapanuli” *Suara Pembaruan*, December 29, 1989; “Dari Soal Partisipasi, Lapangan Golf Sampai Tanah Longsor di Tapanuli” *Suara Pembaruan*, December 15, 1989.

¹⁸⁴ See Ginting ... [et al.], *Penelitian Base Line dan Perkiraan Andal Pada Lokasi Pabrik Pulp/Rayon PT Inti Indorayon Utama di Kecamatan Porsea, Tapanuli Utara* (Medan: Lembaga Penelitian USU, 1985)

¹⁸⁵ In general, the Toba Batak have passed their rice fields down from generation to generation. This form of life is part of their culture. Even if they had non-agriculture jobs, they still cultivated their land. Interview with villagers, April 20, 2003.

needs of mill employees were met by distant wholesalers rather than from local produce.¹⁸⁶

IIU operations led to a decline in the local economy through pollution of the water and air and the destruction of the forest which caused landslides and floods. This environmental damage threatened the continuity of the local mode of production. For instance, Oppu Si Marsigap Boru, a Toba Batak who lives in Bulu Silape, Silaen sub-district, stated that before IIU came they could harvest the rice on their land and sell it to support their family and educate their children.¹⁸⁷ After the mill began operation, production declined. In Panribuan sub-district, the villagers stated that 3000 hectares could not be cultivated because of lack of water.¹⁸⁸

Similar misfortune affected the fishermen. The Asahan River had been a main economic resource but it no longer provided a living for local residents. According to a survey conducted by KSPPM among hundreds of fishermen in a number of villages, only one or two families relied on fish caught in the river since the pollution had killed most of the fish. Even those who could catch fish could not sell them in the market because people feared the fish were contaminated. The Toba Batak could no longer follow their custom of cultivating gold fish (*ikan emas*) in their rice field after they harvested the rice. This fish was not only an economic resource it had cultural value. Every big event – birth, death, marriage, and the rice harvest – was celebrated by serving gold fish.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ See “Penebangan Hutan Pinus Berdasarkan Izin Dephut” *Kompas*, November 3, 1988; *Medan Pos*, July 22, 1998; *SIB*, June 9, 1998.

¹⁸⁷ In the sawah, there was one rice harvest a year. Planting usually occurred in December, and the harvest would typically yield 4.5 tones a hectare. On dry land the Batak planted ladang rice, ubi kayu, bananas, and pineapple. Interview with villagers, April 21, 2003.

¹⁸⁸ See “Tiga Ribu Hektar Sawah Di Simalungun Kekurangan Air” *Kompas*, October 21, 1988; “PT IIU Gali Batu Tanpa Izin Pemda” *Suara Merdeka*, October 10, 1988.

¹⁸⁹ See TIM PAKAR YPDT, *Dampak Operasi PT Inti Indorayon Utama terhadap Lingkungan Danau Toba*, (Jakarta: YPDT, 1999).

People also had to replace their roofs more often than usual because the exhaust from the mill stack resulted in acid rain, which destroyed roofs made from zinc. In one village roofs on 17 houses were destroyed. Churches and other buildings also had zinc roofs. A number of people moved in with relatives because they could not afford to fix their roof. People claimed that their roofs lasted a long time before the mill came.¹⁹⁰

IIU trucks damaged the roads in North Tapanuli. Though IIU contributed to road repair, they only covered ten percent of the total cost to the government. The cost of road repair offset income received from IIU. In addition, the transportation industry which used land transportation was adversely affected.¹⁹¹

Negative Impact on Society

The presence of the mill directly or indirectly attracted people to Porsea. A large number of people from outside Porsea worked for IIU. This stimulated both legal and illegal business in the area. For instance, my observations from 1997 through 2001, in South Sumatra, Jambi, and Riau, showed that oil palm plantations, logging companies, and pulp and paper industries were associated with houses of prostitution established nearby. Local residents interpreted this as an affront to their religious teachings and culture. Businesses selling alcohol compounded the problem. This created tension

¹⁹⁰ Interview with villagers, April 21, 2003; PARBOTO's investigation showed that plantation fruit such as mangos no longer brought a profit. Before the mill operated, local people sold their mangos to Java but after the mill opened, they said that the harvest declined and sometimes failed. See Alexander Manurung ... [et al.], *Dampak Berdirinya PT IIU Terhadap Lingkungan Sekitarnya Terutama Tapanuli Utara*, (Medan: PARBATO, 1998).

¹⁹¹ See "Berdasarkan Kunker DPRD Sumut 240 Km Jalan Rusak Akibat Truk PT IIU" *Mimbar Umum*, August 7, 1993.

between the people who provided those businesses and the Toba Batak who wanted to stop them.¹⁹²

Before the mill was built in Sosor Ladang, the villages in the area were not crowded. Interaction between villagers and outsiders was not frequent. Restaurants and shops provided for the needs of the Toba Batak. Once the mill began operation the situation changed. According to Panjaitan, “there were 500 trucks hauling the wood through the streets of villages—Balige Laguboti, Lumban Julu and Porsea sub-district—close to the mill.”¹⁹³ This stimulated people, mostly from Medan or Java, to open restaurants and local houses of prostitution.¹⁹⁴

People in the villages close to the mill were devout Muslims and Christians. Prostitution is prohibited in their religious teachings, and they feared the new houses of prostitution would be a bad influence on local culture, particularly children. Therefore local ministers, priests and imams who were worried about moral degradation supported the anti-IIU movement.¹⁹⁵

The Toba Batak also became aware of the gap between themselves and IIU employees who got high salaries and housing complete with electricity, cable television, and water. The mill employees did not have to worry about consuming water from the polluted river. The employees’ water came from the upper river where there was no pollution, and they bought their food from the commissary established by IIU inside the housing area.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² See Alexander Manurung ... [et al.] *Dampak Berdirinya PT IIU Terhadap Lingkungan Sekitarnya Terutama Tapanuli Utara*, (Medan: PARBATO, 1998); Interview with villagers, April 20, 2003.

¹⁹³ Interview with villagers, April 21, 2003.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with villagers, April 20, 2003.

¹⁹⁵ Interview with Efendi Panjaitan, April 22, 2003.

¹⁹⁶ Interview with villagers, April 20, 2003.

Finally, the rotten-egg stench produced by the mill so polluted the air that people said they could not concentrate when observing religious rituals in the churches and mosques.¹⁹⁷

Negative Impact on Health

People who lived near the mill said that they quite often had problems with their health.¹⁹⁸ The health complaints of local residents were supported by research conducted by WALHI and FKMUI. Samples of the water and air were taken in villages close to the mill and from the river where the mill dumped its waste. Other samples were taken from villages far from the mill i.e., in downstream Asahan River, Lake Toba and from the upper Asahan River, above the place where mill waste was dumped. Comparison of the samples showed a significant difference between the water in villages close to the mill and those far from it.

A large number of women who lived near the mill and the waste dumping location experienced the following symptoms and health problems:¹⁹⁹

1. Skin: reddish—colored skin
2. Respiratory tract: dry throat, shortness of breath, loss of voice, and a cold with yellow and green nasal mucus.
3. Digestive tract: women quite often experienced queasiness
4. Eyes: women experienced eye irritation: the color of the eyes was reddish, they saw small spots, their eyes watered, and their vision was blurred.
5. The syaraf symptom: dizziness and optic sparkles like fireflies.

¹⁹⁷ Interview with villagers, April 21, 2003.

¹⁹⁸ See KSPPM, *Sejarah Perjuangan Rakyat: Kronologi Aksi Perjuangan Rakyat Melawan PT Inti Indorayon Utama Sejak Tahun 1988-1989* (Siborong-Borong: KSPPM); Edy RF Simatupang, *Proyek Inti Indorayon dan Dampaknya Bagi Masyarakat*, (Siborong-Borong: KSPPM, 1989).

¹⁹⁹ See Abdur Rahman ... [et al.], *Dampak Pencemaran Lingkungan Terhadap Status Kesehatan Masyarakat di Porsea dan Sekitarnya*, (Jakarta: Fakultas Kesehatan UI dan WALHI, 1998).

In villages located away from the mill the rate of women experiencing those symptoms and similar health problems was very low. If they reported these kinds of ailments, the source was not from mill pollution but from other sources.

The researchers also collected data on health problems of children living close to and far from the mill location. The survey found a number of health problems in children living near the mill.²⁰⁰

1. Skin: itchy skin, reddish-colored skin and small runny sores
2. Respiratory tract: colds with whitish nasal mucus.
3. Digestion: nausea and loss of appetite.

Children living far from the mill location were not found to exhibit the same health problems as the children who lived close to the mill.

Negative Impact on Biodiversity

IIU with a forest concession of 269,000 hectares represented a significant threat that species of flora and fauna, whose function for human beings and the environment was not yet known, might be lost.²⁰¹ Over-logging of the natural forest is the main factor in the loss of mill and animal life in four districts providing raw material for the mill. Local hunters often saw the Sumatran tiger or its tracks before the mill operation began, but such signs are no longer found. The Sumatran tiger is protected both by the Indonesian government and by international law because their population has decreased sharply. The same thing has occurred with bird species and a number of animals that local people usually hunt i.e., deer, wild pig and mouse deer.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ *Ibid* p.57.

²⁰¹ See WALHI and YLBHI, *Perjalanan Secarik Kertas: Suatu Tinjauan Terhadap Pengembangan Industri Pulp dan Kertas di Indonesia*, (Jakarta: WALHI dan YLBHI, 1992); *Suara Pembaruan*, October 29, 1998.

²⁰² Interview with Alfred Sitorus, July 12, 2003.

Furthermore, because of over-logging a large number of rattan species, herbs, ginseng, and wild orchids are gone. In addition to their function in balancing the ecosystem, these plants contributed to the local economy. Rattan was used by local people to make trays and plaited mats. The herbs were used in traditional medicines to heal ailments of local people before resorting to the hospital.²⁰³

The Legacy of the Previous Protests

The negative impacts of IIU mill activities on the Toba Batak and the environment triggered protests by the Toba Batak. This section will examine the previous protests from the Sugapa Movement of 1988 to the conflict over leadership of HKBP in the 1990s.

The Sugapa Old Women (*Inang-Inang*) Movement

Sugapa village is located in the Silaen sub-district, about five kilometers from Silaen, the sub-district capital and 78 kilometers from Medan, the capital city of North Sumatra. This village has only 62 families (300 people). Most of them live in a traditional clan house. According to Indira Juditka Simbolon, “They are members of the Barimbing clan, descendants of King Sodomdom Barimbing, who was believed to be the person who established the village.”²⁰⁴

The villagers cultivated rice in wet rice field and on dry land they cultivated glutinous rice and fruit trees. This constituted the main economic livelihood of the local

²⁰³ Interview with villagers, April 20, 2003.

²⁰⁴ See Indira Juditka Simbolon, *Peasant Women and Access to Land: Customary Law, State Law and Gender-Based Ideology The Case of the Toba-Batak* (Wageningen: Landbouw Universiteit Wageningen, 1998) p. 234-5. Simbolon pointed out that Raja Sidomdom Barimbing’s descendants are divided into four lineages: *Ompu* Sipala Tua Paduahon, *Ompu* Silitonga, Pagar Batu and Raja Maruhur. There are also some in-dwelling clans, or *boru*, for instance Naipospos, Sianipar, and Manurung.” Ibid, p. 234-5.

people. There were two forms of property rights – individual land which was used to cultivate wet rice, glutinous rice and fruit trees, and communal land, which was used for livestock, such as water buffalo. The communal land (*barimbing*) of the Sugapa people covered 52 hectares. For generations this land had provided sufficient income not only for people who owned buffalo but also for people who owned no livestock but could make a living by looking after somebody else's animals. The communal land supported grass for grazing. In addition, the communal land had trees so that people could collect firewood, fruit from the forest to sell in the traditional market, or herbs that have an economic value in the market. The forest provided abundant food for wild animals so that they did not disturb the people's farms and gardens. Therefore the communal land was very important.²⁰⁵

The Sugapa people's protest was triggered by IIU's action of planting eucalyptus on the communal land. According to IIU, the Barimbing communal land was included in the concession given to the company by the Indonesian government. According to the Forestry Act (Law No.5/1967), all forest land in Indonesia belongs to the State. This law appears to apply to communal forest land. However, Agrarian Act No. 5/1960, says that communal forest land belonged to local people, so there is a legal ambiguity in land rights. The people of Sugapa did not have a property certificate that could be used as legal basis to establish clear boundaries and their right to communal forest land. IIU insisted that they could plant trees on Barimbing communal land since they had received permission from the village head in March 1987. Moreover the company showed that

²⁰⁵ See Edy RF Simatupang, *Proyek Inti Indorayon dan Dampaknya Bagi Masyarakat*, (Siborong-Borong: KSPPM, 1989).

they had paid compensation (*pago-pago*)²⁰⁶ to people who had the right to Barimbing communal forestland through the village and sub-district head. But the village head had not consulted all of the people who lived in the village and had rights to the communal land. Simbolon²⁰⁷ explained:

there was no open process of land transfer right from the beginning. For many of [the villagers] it was not very clear what kind of land transfer had been made by the village head: 'is the land sold, rented, borrowed or is it freely granted and for how long?' Only later was it found out that the right to use the land was granted by the village head to the company for 15 years.

Furthermore, the village head had forged the signatures of villagers on the agreement granting the communal forest land to the company.²⁰⁸ People who disagreed with the land transfer addressed a petition to local authorities, asking the local government to cancel the agreement of land transfer. This was the first action of local people opposing the company, but the local authorities did not respond seriously to it. This caused local people "to lose their patience and decide to take the necessary action to stop the company activities."²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ According to Siahaan, an agreement by *pago-pagot* had to involve the entire clan in arriving at a consensus on the *Marga* rights while the village head only functioned as a witness. Furthermore *pago-pago* does not consider the amount of money, more important is whether the compensation is proper or not. For instance the local people argued that the proper compensation was Rp 1.25 per m², when in fact, the land price is Rp.1000 per m². Local people also felt alienated because the communal forest land helped them to maintain their ties with their ancestors. See Ashoka Siahaan, *Bencana Lingkungan di Toba: Bahan Studi Penyadaraan KSPPM* (Siborong-Borong: KSPPM, 1993).

²⁰⁷ See Indira Juditka Simbolon, *Peasant Women and Access to Land: Customary Law, State Law and Gender-Based Ideology The Case of the Toba-Batak* (Wageningen: Landbouw Universiteit Wageningen, 1998), p. 237; Liz Chidley and David Potter, *NGOS and Environmental Policy in Indonesia* (England: The Open University, 1997).

²⁰⁸ See Edy RF Simatupang, *Proyek Inti Indorayon dan Dampaknya Bagi Masyarakat*, (Siborong-Borong: KSPPM, 1989).

²⁰⁹ See Indira Juditka Simbolon, *Peasant Women and Access to Land: Customary Law, State Law and Gender-Based Ideology The Case of the Toba-Batak* (Wageningen: Landbouw Universiteit Wageningen, 1998), p. 238; Potter, David, "Democratisation and the Environment: NGOS and Deforestation Policies in India (Karnataka) and Indonesia (North Sumatra)," *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* XXXIV: 89-37 (1996).

When the company workers ignored the warning to stop the planting activity, the villagers, led by the older women, pulled out the young eucalyptus trees that had been planted on the disputed communal forest land. Because of this action the sub-district and village heads, the local military commander (*Komando Resort Militer*, Koramil) and company representatives came to the village and warned the villagers they were breaking the law.

The warning from the local authorities and the company representatives did not deter the Sugapa peasant women from pulling out the young eucalyptus on the disputed land. The women also went to the district legislature in Tarutung, the capital of North Tapanuli, to protest that the sub-district officials had ignored their appeal. At a meeting with three district legislature members, they insisted that the company was illegally planting trees on Barimbing communal forest land. They asked that the company to leave the land, because villagers had never agreed to the transfer of the land. The legislature members promised to come to Sugapa village to see for themselves what the situation was. They asked the women not to pull out the young eucalyptus trees until they could visit the village and solve the problem. But the Sugapa women pulled out the trees and planted maize on the land. The district legislature members saw this when they came to the village.

According to Simbolon, there were many meetings between the Sugapa villagers and the local authorities, military officers and company representatives aimed at resolving the dispute. The government officials, the military officers and company representatives insisted that their perspective was correct and the Sugapa peasants had to accept it. They tried to persuade the villagers to reconcile with the company by pointing

to the signatures of Sugapa men on the letter which said “that the village head’s authority over the communal land was relinquished, and that the Sugapa people were ready to deliberate with the company.”²¹⁰ Although their husbands had signed this letter, the Sugapa women did not consider it legitimate because they had not been involved in making the decision. They went to the district legislature so that the government would know that they did not accept the agreement to transfer communal land to IIU. However, the district legislature insisted that payment of compensation to the villagers was the final solution. Since the company had paid compensation to the village head, the problem lay with the village head, not the company.²¹¹

The Sugapa protest escalated when IIU workers along with the village head, announced that whoever allowed their cattle to enter the young eucalyptus tree plantation would be fined Rp 5,000. The local people objected that it was very difficult to find grass and they had always allowed their livestock to graze freely in the communal forest. Tempers were strained when company workers harassed three Sugapa women in February 1989. Simbolon reports:²¹²

Some Sugapa women became so furious that they lost their temper and boldly uprooted the young Eucalyptus trees planted on the communal land.²¹³ “We were very angry that they took our land and then harassed our women” they [the old women] complained.

²¹⁰ *Ibid* p. 239.

²¹¹ See KSPPM, “Sejarah Perjuangan Rakyat Kronologi Aksi Perjuangan Rakyat Melawan PT Inti Indorayon Utama Sejak Tahun 1988-1998” Unpublished Report .

²¹² See Indira Juditka Simbolon, *Peasant Women and Access to Land: Customary Law, State Law and Gender-Based Ideology: The Case of the Toba-Batak* (Wageningen: Landbouw Universiteit Wageningen, 1998), p. 239.

²¹³ SIB News, based on an IIU report, stated that “62,000 young Eucalyptus trees were destroyed on 22 March 1988; four hectares on 15 September 1988; 10 hectares on April 1989. IIU said that trees had also been destroyed on 2-3 June 1988 and 8 September 1988.” See Indira Juditka Simbolon, *Peasant Women and Access to Land: Customary Law, State Law and Gender-Based Ideology The Case of the Toba-Batak* (Wageningen: Landbouw Universiteit Wageningen, 1998), p. 239.

The company reported the incident to the local police on April 14, 1989, and the Silaen police arrested ten Sugapa women.²¹⁴

In December 1989 the police and attorneys finished the investigation of the Sugapa women who had uprooted IIU's eucalyptus trees. They brought the case to Tarutung district court. The women used this event to present their issue to the public, both through the media and by petition. Before the court hearing began, the women defendants and their relatives sang religious songs with lyrics supporting their resistance.²¹⁵ They wanted to show the public that they had been abused by the system. They also sent a petition to the governor of North Sumatra asking him to release them and to return their land. They sent the same petition to the sub-district, district and provincial police offices, Tarutung legislature, and the president of Indonesia. They invited journalists to their meeting with the governor and legislative members in Medan, where they demand the protection of the law. They asked local and national newspapers to cover the story from their side in order to give the public balanced information.²¹⁶ Nevertheless, in February 1990 the district court in Tarutung sentenced them to six months in jail. Later "the high court in Medan reduced their sentence to three months in jail with six months probation."²¹⁷

Because of the women's campaign more and more people criticized IIU. As a result, in April 1990 IIU returned the communal forest land to the Sugapa people.

²¹⁴ Interview with Efendi Panjaitan, April 21, 2003; See Edy RF Simatupang, *Proyek Inti Indorayon dan Dampaknya Bagi Masyarakat*, (Siborong-Borong: KSPPM, 1989).

²¹⁵ See Indira Juditka Simbolon, *Peasant Women and Access to Land: Customary Law, State Law and Gender-Based Ideology The Case of the Toba-Batak* (Wageningen: Landbouw Universiteit Wageningen, 1998), p. 240.

²¹⁶ See "18 Penduduk Silaen Minta Perlindungan Hukum Pada Gubernur Sumut" *Sinar Pagi*, December 18, 1989; "18 Orang Penduduk Silaen Minta Perlindungan Hukum di Kantor Gubsu dan DPRDSU" *Mimbar Umum*, December 17, 1989.

²¹⁷ See "Pengadilan Tinggi Medan Hukum 3 Bulan Penjara: 10 Nenek Pararikamis Akan Temui Menteri & DPR RI, Adukan Nasib" *Sinar Pagi*, May 12, 1990.

Moreover, they returned 1,600 hectares of land claimed as communal forest land by other villages.²¹⁸ However, IIU asked that eucalyptus trees be planted on their communal forest land, arguing that the villagers could profit by selling the wood to IIU. The district head of North Tapanuli supported this proposal. He argued that the Nucleus Estate and Smallholder System (NESS) was the best system to be applied when communal forestland was needed by IIU to assure that the mill had sufficient raw materials.

The Sugapa people opposed the conditions in the proposal of the company and government for returning the communal land. Simbolon explains:

The Sugapa people rejected the condition put on them though it was said under the NESS [Nuclear Estate and Smallholder System] local people would not lose the rights to their land but would also be able to participate in cultivating eucalyptus. . . . [But] the NESS forces local people to enter into monopsonic trade patterns, completely dependent upon the consumer's market where the price is always determined by the buyer.²¹⁹

The Sugapa people met in Jakarta in 1990 with a number of high-ranking Indonesian officials, including Rudini, the Home Affairs Minister, to ask that the condition that eucalyptus be planted be waived. This meeting got a lot of news coverage in both local and national media, strengthening the villagers' position in facing IIU and government. Finally, after six long years of struggle the Sugapa people regained their communal forestland without conditions.²²⁰

²¹⁸ See "Petunjuk Mendagri Kepada Bupati Taput: Kasus Sugapa dan Bulu Silape Harus Diselesaikan Secara Persuasif" *SIB*, May 28, 1990; *Suara Pembaruan* April 28 1990.

²¹⁹ See Indira Juditka Simbolon, *Peasant Women and Access to Land: Customary Law, State Law and Gender-Based Ideology: The Case of the Toba-Batak* (Wageningen: Landbouw Universiteit Wageningen, 1998), p. 241.

²²⁰ In addition, the Sugapa women villagers demanded from the central government and IIU compensation in the amount of Rp. 168.750.000 because they could not use their land for three years. See "PT Indorayon Diminta Bayar Ganti Rugi Rp. 168 Juta" *SIB*, May 27, 1990; "Kunjungan Ibu-Ibu Desa Sugapa kepada Mendagri Tidak Pengaruhi PT Indorayon Go Public: Tanah Mereka Sudah Dikembalikan dihadapan Bupati, Belum Diketahui?" *SIB*, May 24, 1990.

The Bulu Silape Movement: Barricading IIU Trucks

Bulu Silape is a village seven kilometers from Silaen sub-district, surrounded by mountains and hills. The inhabitants lived by subsistence agriculture, planting wet rice field and fruit trees. In order to prevent environmental disasters such as floods and landslides, for generations they have not allowed people to make another road that cut into the mountain.²²¹ Therefore when IIU planned to cut a road through the mountains and hills near the village, the Toba Batak in Bulu Silape protested. They claimed that the road excavation would cause landslides and would damage the crops they needed to support their families. They said as they were farmers, they could do nothing without land.²²²

IIU rejected the protest and, supported by the local government, the local police and the Indonesian military, insisted the road be built. IIU said it would pay compensation to people whose land was taken for the project. Local people maintained their resistance by blocking construction of the road.²²³ Boni Sianipar is a villager who was detained by the military, who took him to Medan without showing an arrest warrant. The arresting officers identified themselves as being from the Special Intelligence Force (*Pasukan Khusus Intelijen*). He was kept in a dark room in the jail for fourteen days and not allowed to see anyone. However much the local people endured such repressive

²²¹ Interview with villagers, April 20, 2003.

²²² See Efendi Panjaitan "Tapasadama Rohanta Menutup Indorayon – Kisah Perjuangan Rakyat Toba-Samosir Sumatera Utara Melawan PT. Inti Indorayon Utama" in *Memecah Ketakutan Menjadi Kekuatan Kisah-Kisah Advokasi di Indonesia*, (Yogyakarta: Insist Press, 2002).

²²³ See Edy RF Simatupang, "Buntut Longsornya Bukit Yang Dikeruk: Perusahaan PT Indorayon Dihimbau Memberikan Ganti Rugi dan Truk Mereka Dilarang Lewat Bulu Silape" unpublished report, KSPPM.

action from the company representatives and the security apparatus, they continued to protest against the road.²²⁴

IIU, supported by the Silaen sub-district head, insisted that payment of compensation for the land was the way to resolve the situation. They offered to pay Rp100/meter for land and Rp10, 000/tree for trees 80 or more years old. *Ompu Si Luat* Sianipar explained that he did not accept the company proposal because “if I did, I would end up renting my farm land and it would affect my income.”²²⁵

Because IIU’s position was strong, the road was finally built and very shortly thereafter, on November 25, 1989 a massive landslide occurred in the village, claiming 13 lives and causing extensive property damage (See “Drought, Landslide and Flood” in this chapter). This tragedy caused the local people to renew their protests against IIU, and it made the Indonesian government re-evaluate IIU activities in the area.²²⁶

People in nearby villages barricaded roads close to the hills with logs to halt all IIU trucks because they did not want landslides to happen in their villages. *Ompu Timbul* Sianipar said, “So long as IIU trucks kept using the roads, the villagers kept barricading them. The villagers preferred to die defending their area against IIU trucks bringing land from the hills, rather than die from landslides.”²²⁷ The peak of barricade action occurred when 25 women closed the road used by IIU trucks. They erected a tent which covered the entire road. The road was blockaded not only for IIU trucks but also for other

²²⁴ See Efendi Panjaitan, “Tapasadama Rohanta Menutup Indorayon – Kisah Perjuangan Rakyat Toba-Samosir Sumatera Utara Melawan PT. Inti Indorayon Utama,” in *Memecah Ketakutan Menjadi Kekuatan Kisah-Kisah Advokasi di Indonesia*, (Yogyakarta: Insist Press, 2002).

²²⁵ See KSPPM Investigation Report “Kronologis Dampak Kehadiran PT. Inti Indorayon Utama (PT.IIU) Di Desa Sianipar 1, Sianipar 11, Simanobak Kec. Silaen, Kab. Tapanuli Utara.”

²²⁶ See *SIB*, September 21, 1998.

²²⁷ See Edy RF Simatupang, “Buntut Longsornya Bukit Yang Dikeruk: Perusahaan PT Indorayon Dihimbau Memberikan Ganti Rugi dan Truk Mereka Dilarang Lewat Bulu Silape” unpublished report, KSPPM.

vehicles, such as bicycles and motorbikes, which had to find alternative routes. In this action, elementary, junior and senior high school children helped their mothers. They joined the barricade action after they finished their school day. Meanwhile, the men looked after the houses and cattle, because there was strong pressure on them to stay clear of the action. The demonstrators cooked and ate at the barricade and even slept there.²²⁸

The villagers also launched demonstrations in Medan and Jakarta. They sat in at the governor's office and the provincial legislature to demand attention to their problems. They also went to Jakarta, where they met with high-ranking officials in the ministry of home affairs and members of the national legislature. These demonstrations were effective in winning the support of the government and the legislature so that IIU was forced to pay high compensation to the landslide victims' families. IIU guaranteed that a similar accident would not happen in the future, and they restricted the area where their trucks would operate.²²⁹

However, the Indonesian government still argued that the positive impact of IIU's operations to the state and people as a whole outweighed the negative impacts, so the operations of the company should continue. When Lundu Panjaitan, the Head of North Tapanuli district, went to see the landslide, he did not make any response to the local

²²⁸ See KSPPM Investigation Report, "Kronologis Jalan PT. IIU Oleh Masyarakat Dusun Bulu Silape," May 13, 1990; "25 Penduduk Silaen Unjuk Rasa" *Mimbar Umum*, March 17, 1990; "21 Ibu Penduduk Silaen Berkemah Di Jalan Menuntut Ganti Rugi" *Suara Pembaruan*, March 20, 1990.

²²⁹ See KSPPM Investigation Report "Kronologis Dampak Kehadiran PT. Inti Indorayon Utama (PT.IIU) Di Desa Sianipar 1, Sianipar 11, Simanobak Kec. Silaen, Kab. Tapanuli Utara"; "Warga Tapanuli Utara Adukan PT IIU Ke Jakarta" *Suara Pembaruan*, May 22, 1990; "Sekitar 30 Warga Taput Mengadu ke Depdagri" *Suara Pembaruan*, May 22, 1990.

people's demand that the company be closed. The government tried to resolve the situation through compensation and aid to victims of the landslide.²³⁰

Appealing to the Courts

On December 30, 1988, WALHI took the Indonesian government and IIU to court on the grounds that IIU had been granted a location license and an operational license without an environmental impact analysis as required by Environmental Act No. 4/1982²³¹ and the Government Regulation No. 29/1986.²³² This was the first time an environmental NGO tried to force the government to enforce an environmental law by turning to the courts. The defendants named were the Investment Coordinating Board (*Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal*, BKPM), the Home Affairs Minister, the North Sumatra governor, the Minister of Industry, the Minister of the Environment, Minister of Forestry and IIU. WALHI charged that IIU was responsible for water and air pollution. In addition, social unrest was emerging due to protests against the mill and the refusal of government officials to respond to the demand that the mill operation be reevaluated.²³³ WALHI demanded that IIU stop their activity in the villages of Tiga Dolok, Habinsaran, Samosir, Aek Nauli, Dolok Parmonangan and Sipolha. WALHI argued it was better to stop operations immediately to avoid further damage to the environment. Furthermore,

²³⁰ The media played an important role in disseminating news of the accident to the public. Media headlines created greater awareness in the public of the negative impacts of IIU on people and the environment. See Interview with Efendi Panjaitan April 22, 2003; Nurhidayati, April 16, 2003.

²³¹ This article sets out five goals of environmental management: 1 To establish a harmonious relation between human beings and the environment; 2 To use natural resources wisely; 3 To treat the Indonesian people as protectors of the environment; 4 To implement sustainable development for present and future generations; 5. To protect the state from the impact of activities that cause damage to the environment.

²³² See Suhardjo Hs, Amran Nasution and Irwan E. Siregar, "Tim Kontroversi Indorayon" *Tempo*, November 19, 1988; Joshua Gordon, "NGOs, the Environment and Political Pluralism in New Order Indonesia" *Journal of the Southeast Asian Studies Student Association* 2, 1998; Eldridge, Philip "Development, Democracy and Non-Government Organizations in Indonesia" *Asian Journal of Political Science* 4 : 17-36, 1996. p. 32.

²³³ See "WALHI Akan Gugat PT IIU" *Suara Pembaruan*, November 10, 1988.

WALHI argued that the government should cancel the mill license.²³⁴ Furthermore, WALHI noted that both the government and IIU had failed to arrange for independent assessment of the environmental impact or to correct environmental problems in the concession area. WALHI demanded that funds be provided to restore damaged areas and that IIU be fined Rp. 1000,000 for each day they ignored the court's ruling.²³⁵

The Indonesian government lawyers argued that WALHI had not suffered the direct impact of the mill and thus had no right to take the Indonesian government and IIU to court. They argued that while there was no contract binding WALHI, the Indonesian government, and IIU, this was a situation in which a group with an historical relation with the Minister of the Environment took an untenable position and caused the government to spend money, energy and time in court that should have been used for other purposes.²³⁶ Furthermore, the Indonesian government argued that in making this case, WALHI was opposing development in Indonesia.²³⁷

On August 14, 1989, the central Jakarta State Court decided that the Indonesian government through its institutions of the Investment Coordinating Board, the Home

²³⁴ Interview with Dodo Sambodo, May 4, 2003.

²³⁵ See David Potter, "Democratisation and the Environment: NGOs and Deforestation Policies in India (Karnataka) and Indonesia (North Sumatra)," In *NGOS and Environmental Policies: Asia and Adrica*, (Portland: Frank Case & Co, 1996); Ayi Vivananda, Puspita Rambati, Arimbi Heroe Poetri, *Replik and Duplik: Proses Peradilan Masalah-Masalah Lingkungan* (Jakarta: WALHI, 1991).

²³⁶ Although Emil Salim, Minister of the Environment in the Soeharto government, had been involved in establishing WALHI, WALHI did not have a structural and functional relation or agreement with the government. WALHI took the position that it would support the government if the government policies supported the environment and people. WALHI felt free to criticize the government if its policies did not mirror its commitment to the environment and people. During the Suharto era, this was a radical position. See Emmy Hafield, "Lugu, Polos, Demokrat Sejati," in *70 Tahun Emil Salim: Revolusi Berhenti Hari Minggu* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2000). Emil Salim, stated through his lawyers that he did not have authority to issue the license to IIU. Therefore WALHI failed in accusing him.

²³⁷ See Ayi Vivananda, Puspita Rambati, Arimbi Heroe Poetri *Replik and Duplik: Proses Peradilan Masalah-Masalah Lingkungan* (Jakarta: WALHI, 1991); Suwiryo Ismail *Sejarah Gerakan Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia*. Forthcoming, (Jakarta, 2003); George J. Aditjondro "Lahirnya Gerakan Lingkungan Indonesia: Beberapa Catatan Awal Bagi Riset Lanjutan" in *Gerakan Lingkungan Hidup di Indonesia* (Jogjakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2003).

Afairs Minister, the governor of North Sumatra, the Minister of Industry, the Minister of the Environment and IUU was not guilty. I Gde Sudharta, the chief judge, stated that granting IUU the license did not violate the law since the Indonesian government and the company could prove there was an environmental impact assessment document. Sudharta said that WALHI did not prove that the mill had polluted the environment. Furthermore, WALHI could not represent local people who suffered from the negative impact of the mill operation.²³⁸

Though WALHI did not win in court, this case got the public's attention. Even President Soeharto commented on the case: "In the name of Allah the government did not intend to hurt people. Yet, for development some people have to make a sacrifice. The Indonesian government thanks those who helped and participated in solving things that probably were not properly implemented. But I suggest that it is not helpful to participate in hampering development." The media—newspapers, radio and television—covered this case extensively. Although their stories tended to support the government's argument, coverage of the case showed people that it was possible to criticize government policies that damaged the environment and people. And as Ismail noted, the WALHI case showed how the law, the Indonesian court and Indonesian people could solve environmental problems caused by companies or the government.²³⁹

²³⁸ See Suwiryono Ismail, *Sejarah Gerakan Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia*. Forthcoming, (Jakarta, 2003); David A. Sonnenfeld, "Social Movement and Ecological Modernization: the Transformation of Pulp and Paper Manufacturing," *Berkeley Workshop on Environmental Politics*. Working Paper, December, 1999; Alan K.J. Tan, "Preliminary Assessment of Indonesia's Environmental Law," APCEL Report: Indonesia, National University of Singapore; Charles Victor Barber, *Project on Environmental Scarcities, State Capacity, and Civil Violence* (Cambridge: American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the University of Toronto, 1997).

²³⁹ See Suwiryono Ismail, *Sejarah Gerakan Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia*. Forthcoming, (Jakarta, 2003).

The Grave of Ompu Debata Raja Pasaribu

Lintong is a village in the Parsoburan, North Tapanuli district that was established by Ompu Debata Raja Pasaribu 200 years ago. He is buried in this village along with his descendants. In 1991 a number of Lintong villagers accused IIU in the North Tapanuli district court of planting eucalyptus trees on the site of Ompu Debata Raja Pasaribu's grave. They stated that the graveyard had a large number of banyan trees to protect the graves from the sun, but IIU cut down the trees on 50 graves. Gustaf Pasaribu, a descendent of Ompu Debata Raja Pasaribu, pointed out that the Batak showed respect for their ancestors by protecting their graves.²⁴⁰ The descendants of Ompu Debata Raja Pasaribu demanded that IIU be ordered to repair damage to the ancestors' graves. They also demanded their ancestors' graves be excluded from the IIU concession.

IIU insisted that what they did in the Lintong village area was legal. The area claimed by the descendants of Ompu Debata Raja Pasaribu was included in the concession granted by the Indonesian government through the Forestry Department. They claimed that they had seen no sign that the area was an old burial ground. The court decided that IIU had the right to plant trees in the burial ground.

The Rupture of a Chlorine Tank at the IIU Mill

In 1993 the rupture of a chlorine tank at IIU created panic among the Toba Batak who lived near the mill. Although IIU closed down the mill right away, thousands of Toba Batak fled from their homes near the mill. Toba Batak from Balige, Laguboti, Silaen, Lumbun Julu, Porsea and the Simalungun sub-district marched to the mill location

²⁴⁰ See *Majalah Tempo*, 1991.

to protest against IIU. During the protest, the demonstrators burned houses of IIU employees. According to IIU, 125 housing units were burned. The protestors also destroyed four motorcycles, five trucks and one tractor that belonged to the company and its employees. The security personnel responded to the mob action by shooting at the protestors. One protester, Hotman Sibuea, was shot in the leg and others were wounded. The police detained ten demonstrators and ordered the Toba Batak to disperse.²⁴¹

A few days later a large number of protesters marched to the mill base camp in Harbinsaran sector, burned the spare part camp, and stabbed a security guard. A protest also took place at the Sirait intersection where a street to the mill location in Sosor Ladang connects to the trans-Sumatra highway. The protesters halted the logging trucks at the Sirait intersection to protest that the people who were to meet with North Tapanuli officials for a dialogue in the traditional market building Porsea on the rupture of the chlorine tank were not legitimate representatives of the Toba Batak protestors. This protest ended when the local police forced the protestors to take down their blockade and let the trucks through.²⁴²

In Medan hundreds of students, who called themselves the Solidarity Committee of Indorayon Victims, marched to the provincial legislature and demanded that the Minister of Trade and Industry close IIU. They also asked the Minister of the Environment to take legal action against the company for the rupture of the chlorine tank and demanded that the Investment Coordinating Board freeze the bank accounts of IIU.

²⁴¹ See KSPPM Report, "Beberapa Hal Yang Terjadi Setelah Meledaknya Tabung Gas Clorin PT IIU, Sosor Ladang Porsea" 1994; "Dirjen IKD Ir Wardiasa: Masih Perlu Dijelaskan Pengoperasian Pabrik Pulp IIU Tak Mengkhawatirkan" *Suara Pembaruan*, November 14, 1993; "Aparat redakan Unjuk Rasa Masyarakat Sekitar Pabrik Kertas PT. IIU" *Suara Pembaruan*, November 7, 1993; Siahaan, 1993; "125 Pintu Perumahan Indorayon Dibakar Massa, Beberapa Kendaraan dan 1 Traktor Dihancur dan Dibakar" *SIB*, November 7, 1993.

²⁴² See Eliakim Sitorus "Tanggapan Untuk Purwo Santoso: Malapetaka Klorin, Baru Satu Babak Kecil" *Suara Merdeka*, December 4, 1993.

The students also went to the IIU office in Uniland Plaza in Medan to demand the mill take responsibility for the leak in the chlorine tank.²⁴³

On December 10, 1993, Toba Batak from twelve villages in Porsea and hundreds of students demonstrated at the Governor's office. They brought banners saying "Stop Indorayon," "Bring back the people's forest" and "IIU makes the Toba Batak suffer." The protestors hoped to meet the Governor, but instead the governor met with the Norwegian Ambassador.²⁴⁴

Finally IIU invited the local people, *adat* leaders (traditional leaders), local government officials and military and police officers to a ceremony called "*DiUpa-Upa*." in the TP Arjuna Langoboti Foundation in Balige. The ceremony was an offering of thanksgiving because people had been saved from disaster. The company invited Cosmas Batubara, former Minister of Manpower in the Soeharto government, and Buha Tambunan, former Director General of Medicine and Food in the Soeharto government, to attend in the hope that their presence would impress the Toba Batak.²⁴⁵ However, many of the Toba Batak objected to IIU conducting a traditional ceremony. They were suspicious that the ceremony was only conducted so that the Toba Batak would not protest when the mill began to operate again. Indeed, on November 20, 1993 at the TP Arjuna Laguboti Foundation after the ceremony, IIU convinced Toba Batak leaders to sign an agreement to allow the mill to start operating again.

²⁴³ See "Warga Porsea dan Mahasiswa Unjuk Rasa ke Kantor Gubsu" *Waspada*, December 11, 1993; Delegasi Mahasiswa ke Kantor PT IIU di Medan" *Mimbar Umum*, November 10, 1993.

²⁴⁴ See "Mahasiswa Taput Tetap Menuntut PT IIU Segera Ditutup" *Suara Pembaruan*, December 13, 1993; "Masalah PT IIU, Para Pengunjuk rasa Kembali Berdelegasi ke Kantor Gubsu" *Analisa*, December 11, 1993.

²⁴⁵ See "Gubernur Sumut: PT IIU Hentikan Kegiatan Untuk Sementara" *Suara Pembaruan*, November 9, 1993.

The Toba Batak in Patane village, Porsea, performed a Christian ritual of prayer in thanks at being saved from disaster (*Pertangiangan*). According to J. Anto, 800 people attended the ritual in the church and confirmed their determination not to accept the agreement made in the TP Arjuna Laguboti Foundation. They insisted the government closed the mill.²⁴⁶

Some Toba Batak went to Medan and were supported by 200 students from various universities in Medan demonstrated at the Provincial Government. They demanded that the government close the mill permanently. When Raja Inal Siregar, the governor of North Sumatra, stated that the demand of the Toba Batak and NGOs to close the mill was not realistic, the demonstrators went to the central office of IIU in the Uniland Plaza to demand that the mill be closed, compensation be paid to the local people, the forest be rehabilitated and ancestral lands be returned. Although these demonstrations did not succeed in convincing the local government or IIU to close the mill, this movement became the touchstone for Toba Batak who opposed the mill operation. The 1993 movement had temporarily stopped the mill and the speaker of the North Sumatra provincial legislature, H. Mudyono, had proposed that the government close IIU until the problem of pollution from the mill could be solved and also that the company repair streets and remill trees. This was when the message of the protestors changed to a demand that the IIU mill be closed permanently.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ See KSPPM Report, "Sikap Masyarakat Patane I Kec. Porsea Taput Terhadap PT. IIU Disampaikan Melalui Partamiangan" 1993.

²⁴⁷ After the 1993 movement the Toba Batak, students and NGOs no longer made "massive" demonstrations that involved a large number of protesters. From 1994 to 1997 the protesters changed strategy and used traditional symbols such as performing the *Tor-Tor* dance. This probably occurred because the government was cracking down on protestors who could potentially de-stabilize the Soeharto administration. Interview with Efendi Panjaitan, March 20, 2003; See "Ketua DPRD Sumut: Pengoperasian PT Inti Indorayon Utama Hendaknya Berhenti Sementara" *Kompas*, November 13, 1993; "PT IIU Hentikan Pengoperasian Pabrik: Gubsu Insiden 5 November Jangan Terulang" *Waspada*, November 9, 1993.

Conflict over the Leadership of HKBP

The crisis over leadership of the congregations of Toba Batak Protestant Churches (*Huria Kristen Batak Protestan*, HKBP) from the 1980s to the 1990s showed the Toba Batak how the government and the military intervened in Toba Batak institutions in order to control people. The conflict was over the selection of Dr. S.E.A. Nababan as chairman of HKBP, the biggest Protestant organization in Indonesia. The Indonesian government feared an independent and critical HKBP. Nababan had criticized IIU, and he was committed to making HKBP an instrument of the Toba Batak. The Indonesian government used the territorial military command to try to force Nababan to step down as chairman of HKBP. General Maraden Panggabean, supported by some Toba Batak businessmen founded a “peace team,” which was authorized by a memo of the Minister of Religion. This team tried to topple Nababan by occupying the HKBP office in Tarutung. They also tried to prevent the 1992 HKBP election of a chairman because Nababan would be re-elected. The government sent troops to the meeting, and the district military commander took over, stating that the government should handle the conflict in HKBP. A letter signed by Major General HR Pramono, Military Commander for North Sumatra authorized Dr. S.M. Siahaan to act as the chairman of HKBP. A wave of protests by HKBP members followed.

The Jakarta Agency for the Coordination of Support for the Development of National Stability (*Badan Koordinasi Stabilitas Nasional Daerah*, BAKORTANASDA) led by Major General H.R. Pramono then called a HKBP summit meeting at the Tiara Hotel in Medan to elect a new chairman. The government forced all HKBP branches in North Sumatra to attend the meeting at which Dr. P.W.T. Simanjuntak was chosen as the

new chairman. Following this meeting, military and police officers, supported by *preman*,²⁴⁸ occupied churches that still supported Dr. Nababan.

During this conflict Toba Batak in Porsea and other areas where there had been protests against IIU resisted government and military intervention in their churches. They demonstrated in Medan and Jakarta. They did not see the conflict in HKBP as a struggle for power between church leaders but as an attempt by the government to control their religious leaders. Even though supporters of Dr. Nababan were beaten, went to jail, and had their houses and vehicles burned, they continued to protest. The protestors also turned to violence. A group fleeing from Sirait Uruk killed a policeman. In the end the government was forced to accept Dr. Nababan as chairman of the HKBP. The human rights abuses against supporters of Dr. Nababan by security forces were never dealt with.

Conclusion

The operations of IIU in Toba Batak caused serious and persistent problems that could not be ignored. The mill location in the valley of the upper river close to several villages, the procedure for disposing of waste from pulp and rayon processing used by IIU, and over logging of natural forest to supply the raw materials for the mill had a severe impact on the natural environment and the livelihood of people in the area. Due to water pollution, for instance, the fish catch in the Asahan River declined. Villagers could no longer cultivate fish farms in the river. Furthermore, drought, landslides and floods affected farmers' crops. They could not get the enough water during the long period of the dry season. In times of flooding crops were destroyed. While the mill brought some

²⁴⁸ *Preman* are hired thugs.

jobs to the area, the overall impact of the mill on the local economy was negative. The Toba Batak in the movement said that they could no longer pay for their children's education or improvements in their standard of living.

The health problems caused by IIU were another important source of grievance. Research showed that villagers living near the mill had a high probability of having health problems. This helped to offset possible economic gains from jobs at the mill. The Toba Batak living near the mill also felt threatened by the establishment of prostitution which offended their religion teachings. The multiple problems caused by IIU's operations meant that wide ranges of people were convinced to join the movement against the mill.

The legacy of previous protests was also important in building the movement. The Toba Batak activists learned many things from previous protests that could be applied in the future. They learned to use tradition symbols such as Toba Batak clothing and music to attract support from other Toba Batak. They developed an argument that all Toba Batak have an obligation to save the Toba Batak land and people from the negative impacts of IIU. In this way they managed to get support from Toba Batak who had high positions in the government and military. They also used this argument against Toba Batak elites who were used by IIU to moderate the Toba Batak protests against IIU. For instance, IIU used Cosmas Batubara to convince the Toba Batak to allow the mill to operate after the chlorine tank ruptured in 1993. The leaders of the Toba Batak movement against IIU argued that Cosmas Batubara could not legitimately represent the Toba Batak in negotiating with IIU.

From the Sugapa “old women” who fought to get their land back from IIU, Toba Batak movement activists learned to involve women and children in their demonstrations. The police were more hesitant to use violence against women and children. This tactic also worked with government officials who were supposed to protect members of society, such as women and children in the Bulu Silape case where local people got landslide disaster. The activists in the movement also learned how to attract the media to their demonstrations. They learned that emphasizing the loss of land won support from NGOs. The Toba Batak activists came to understand that they had to make broad alliances in order to succeed in their struggle against IIU. They worked with church leaders because the church provided moral legitimacy and a network to spread the movement. Churches were used for meetings and the church bell was used to call people in an emergency situation. The Toba Batak also learned to build an alliance with students. They learned that NGO activists could strengthen their local organization and bring their campaign to the attention of NGOs at the national and international level. NGOs were also helpful in supplying information to both local and national media to balance the perspective of IIU and the government. The activists learned to look for elite support for their movement. Emil Salim, Minister of the Environment, made environmental laws requiring environmental impact analysis, which WALHI used to ask the courts to close IIU. However, the Toba Batak also learned that legal institutions would take the side of the government, as in the Sugapa case and WALHI case. Therefore, they changed their strategy and did not use the courts again in their struggle to close IIU. The Toba Batak also came to see that they could not expect the government or legislature to solve their

problems. They learned to be wary of the military which intervened in the HKBP church when Dr. Nababan criticized IIU.

Chapter IV

Political Opportunity Structure, the Role of Brokerage and Category Formation

Introduction

This chapter²⁴⁹ explores the importance of three factors—the political opportunity structure, brokerage, and category formation—in the success of the Toba Batak movement to shut down the pulp and rayon mill of IIU in Sorsor Ladang. First, the success of a social movement is highly dependent upon how much political opportunity is available in the political system. Second, brokers who try to unite, educate and speak for the victims play an important role in the success of the movement. Seven group—the United Voice of the People (*Suara Rakyat Bersama*, SRB), WALHI North Sumatra and the National Executive of WALHI in Jakarta, KSPPM in Parapat, the Batak organizations in Medan (Parbato) and Jakarta (Forum Bona Pasogit), intellectuals, religious organizations and religious leaders, and students were important brokers in the Toba Batak movement. Third, the way that the issues are framed in a social movement is important in shaping the way people respond. In the case of the Toba Batak movement, the use of cultural and environmental framing helped to strengthen the movement.

²⁴⁹ The information in this chapter is based on interviews with Prof. T. Tunggul Sirait, April 11, 2003; Jansen Sitorus, April 19 and May 10, 14, 1, 2, 2003; Longgena Ginting, April 19, 2003; Pastor Silaen, April 20, 2003; V. Sirait and A. Sitorus, April 10, 2003; Eli Hakim Sitorus, April 14, 2003; Martin Sirait, April 16, 2003; Nurhidayati, April 16, 2003; Prof. Firman Manurung, April 16, 2003; Gustaf Manurung, April 17, 2003; M. Sitorus, April 20, 2003; J. Anto, April 21 2003; Efendi Panjaitan, April 20,21,22, 2003; Erwin Nasution, April 23, 2003; Emmy Hafield, May 4, 2003; Saur Timoir Situmorang, April 23, 2003; Nabel Makarim, May 6, 2003; Villagers, Students, and NGO activists, April to May 2003.

The Political Opportunity Structure

The fall of Soeharto opened a window of opportunity to the Toba Batak and other groups opposed IIU. One of the most important new opportunities came with freedom of speech and freedom of the press and media, a reform implemented by the Habibie government. Other opportunities became available in the reformation era because of the demand that Soeharto and his cronies be brought to court on charges of corruption, the demand that the military withdraw from politics, and the demand that principles of good governance, such as transparency in making political decisions and accountability to the people, be implemented. Furthermore, reform activists demanded that the people participate in important political and economic decisions.

At the grassroots level, peasant, labor and urban poor groups demanded that the new government solve problems caused by the Soeharto regime. Peasants demanded that the new government return land given in forestry concessions to corporations. Laborers pushed the new government to raise the minimum wage and pressed for a law that would provide job security. Urban poor groups resisted a government plan to move them from their urban neighborhoods (on the grounds that these were unsightly), arguing that the poor needed jobs and moving them from one location to another did not solve their problems.²⁵⁰

Freedom of Expression

In the Soeharto era, the regime monitored all news through the Department of Information, and any news that would threaten the regime politically was censored. In an

²⁵⁰ Sutiyoso, the governor of Jakarta proposed to move all of urban poor people who live on the banks of rivers in Jakarta. The Habibie government agreed to this plan as did the government of Abdurrahman Wahid. Wardah Hafiz, the Director of the Urban Poor Consortium, organized opposition to this plan.

extreme situation, the media could be banned from operating because its activities threatened the regime. Criticism of government policies and demonstrations were interpreted as an effort to disturb its political stability. The regime viewed protestors as anti-development. The protestors were also said to be communists or to have been influenced by communist ideas. This meant they could be detained without having to prove a charge. There was no security guarantee when journalists investigated news. Therefore, it was very difficult for the public to get true information about events which happened in Indonesia so that it was difficult to mobilize people to action. When Soeharto stepped down, the Habibie government allowed freedom of expression. All groups in society could demonstrate without fear of detention or being stigmatized as anti-development or as disturbing political stabilization or as Communists.

Efendi Panjaitan, Director of WALHI North Sumatra, looked at the new freedom of expression in the reformation era as a wonderful opportunity. He thought provincial WALHI groups should use this opportunity to bring up environmental issues, so that the new government would see that corruption, the role of the military and democratization were not the only important reform issues. He wanted them to see that Indonesia also had many other problems requiring urgent attention. When Panjaitan went to Medan from Jakarta in May 1998, he called on Poltak Simanjuntak, the Director of KSPPM in Parapat, to propose renewing the movement against IIU. He suggested that Simanjuntak contact the Toba Batak in Samosir Island and at the mill site in Porsea to suggest that there was a chance to convince the new government to close the IIU mill. According to Simanjuntak and Panjaitan, the Toba Batak in Porsea and Samosir Island welcomed this idea. They saw Soeharto's fall as an opportunity to press their demands. They had

witnessed the reformasi movement through television, radio and newspaper. They said that if students could demonstrate and fight for their cause, then others could do it as well. Some Toba Batak leaders working with NGO activists began to recruit supporters. They went from village to village asking people to join the demonstrations against the mill. They argued that if they did not act at once, the opportunity would be lost because in the long run the new government would consolidate its power and old elites would exert influence on the new government to protect their interests.

From 1998 to 2003, there were many demonstrations by Toba Batak and other groups opposed the mill. Demonstrations took place at the mill location and Sirait Uruk intersection. The demonstrators stopped all trucks bringing raw materials to the mill. They also went to the office of the head of the district and to the district legislature in Tarutung. They went to Medan to meet with the governor and the speaker of the provincial legislature. They went to Jakarta several times to demonstrate at the Ministries of Forestry and Industry and Trade, in national legislature and at the office of the President. They insisted that the mill had to be shut down. (For further explanation see Chapter Two).

Freedom of the press was also very important in presenting the issues in the conflict with IIU to the public. The newspapers and electronic press covered demonstrations by the Toba Batak and their allies, as well as press conferences and seminars regarding the conflict. In my research, I found that almost every day there was a news story about IIU from May 1998 to May 2003. The national newspapers, *Suara Pembaruan* and *Kompas*, ran regular news stories about Indorayon. Other media, such as *Republika*, *Koran Tempo*, *Tempo magazine*, *Media Indonesia*, *Jakarta Post*, *SCTV*, *RCTI*

and *Indosiar*, usually ran stories when there was a significant incident in Medan or Jakarta. These media do not have journalists in North Tapanuli and Toba Samosir so they did not have access to more regular news. Possibly also the editors of these publications were unaware of demonstrations or other events happening in North Tapanuli and Toba Samosir or they did not consider it news worthy.

At the local level, there was intensive coverage of the conflict with IIU. Each newspaper tended to cover the news differently. For example, *Sinar Indonesia Baru* would emphasize the importance of IIU to the people and government, while *Radar Medan*, *Waspada*, *Mimbar Umum*, *Patriot*, and *Garuda* tended to be critical of IIU. *Portibi*, *Perjuangan* and *Medan Pos* actively supported the anti-IIU movement. This wide news coverage was very effective in presenting the issues to the local public.

Efendi Panjaitan said that during the reformation era the activists had no difficulties communicating with journalists. When they had press conferences the journalists came and they often went to the villages near the mill to learn how villagers felt and to see the negative environmental impacts of the mill. It was important to the movement that the public be exposed to different perspectives on the conflict with IIU. According to Panjaitan, the media reports helped build up momentum, which was used effectively to spread the anti-IIU movement. He maintains a good personal relationship with journalists in Medan and Jakarta.

He said that the journalists also started to accept WALHI North Sumatra as a valid source of information and data about IIU. This was a significant change in the way they presented the news, not just covering the positive side of IIU but also the negative one. Panjaitan said that IIU tried hard using money and facilitation to influence the

journalists to cover the issues from IIU's perspective. But in the reformasi era, if the media did not present the news about the conflict fairly, people would accuse them of being a New Order group. People would ultimately decide for themselves which newspaper was credible and stop reading newspapers, magazines and electronic media which published biased news. In the reformation era, people expected journalists to have alternative news sources.

Electronic mail and electronic news sites were used extensively by the anti-IIU movement to distribute data and information. Because these media do not have territorial barriers, up-to-date news developments about the conflict could be sent all across the world easily and quickly. The new government did not think electronic mail should be controlled. *Detik.Com* is one of the important electronic newspapers which continues to publish news about IIU. NGO activists inside and outside Indonesia also sent email to IIU, the government and parliament in support of the Toba Batak movement.

Nurhidayati, chief of the WALHI campaign, said that even though WALHI cannot publish a newsletter with a large press run every month, a newsletter is still an effective way to disseminate information to activists, people, and the government. Efendi Panjaitan added that the WALHI newsletter is sent to the government and to the grassroots sector, especially in Porsea and Samosir Island. He said that people in the villages are interested in alternative media because they have difficulties getting information from regular newspapers. It is different in an urban setting where information is relatively easy to access. WALHI's newsletter is available in small shops where the Toba Batak usually gather for coffee or snacks and to discuss the news and the campaign against IIU.

Activists and anti-IIU groups also published regular one-page information sheets about IIU. According to Jansen Sitorus, an SRB activist, this alternative press is very effective in distributing information and data about IIU. The articles are short and to the point. The sheets are distributed not only to the Toba Batak but also to passengers in buses and private vehicles that pass through Porsea, which is on a primary route to any city in North Sumatra.

The Military Withdraws from Politics

In the Soeharto regime, military personnel, both active and non-active former military, took part in guarding industries or investment projects. They were paid by the companies to secure their business interests against local people or groups opposed to them. The military received vehicles and other benefits from the companies, and former military men worked as company security. A high-ranking military officer usually served as chief of security for the company. The military would interrogate and intimidate Toba Batak leaders who supported protests against the mill. This approach was very effective in controlling radicalization at the grassroots level because Toba Batak leaders feared violence and being jailed without due process.

In the reformation era, all democratic elements strongly criticized the military role in politics and security. They asked that military personnel involved in human rights violations be tried in court. Foreign countries and individuals also pushed the new government to investigate the human rights violations by the military. Therefore, during the early reformation era, the military as an institution and its personnel were very careful when facing a demonstration because they were afraid of violating human rights.

According to Efendi Panjaitan, activists in the movement knew that the military would not protect the mill because it was not good for their image to use force against demonstrators. Activists were confident that if IIU asked for military units to guard the mill from anti-IIU groups, the military would refuse. Panjaitan also argued that if IIU asked military personnel to intimidate Toba Batak leaders opposed to the mill, they would not do so because they would be afraid that human rights organizations would accuse the military of using old methods against civilians. Because of the decrease in the role of the military, Panjaitan said that student and NGO activists no longer had to be afraid to recruit in the villages and to organize there. Joko Sitompul, a community organizer, said in the Soeharto regime, the movement leaders had to hide from the military but in the reformation era, the military personnel avoided student and NGO activists in the villages. The activists in Porsea and Samosir Island told me that they could even question the military about their activities in the village. Sometimes they even could ask the military to leave and the military usually did not argue. In some instances, they got angry and yelled if the military did not follow their instructions to leave the villages.

The villagers also found the courage to object if the military and police spied on political activities such as village meetings to discuss demonstration plans. The villagers argued that such spying was a violation of their right to conduct political activities. Even when there were no students or NGO activists in the village, the movement leaders often objected to the presence of the military because they knew from newspapers and through discussion that the state protects civilian rights.

According to Efendi, when the police were separated from the Indonesian military, at first IIU could convince the district police chief in North Tapanuli to mobilize police personnel to protect the mill. However, after a couple of months the police lost interest in taking over the role of the military in guarding investments or industries. They only went to the mill if demonstrators threatened to destroy property. The police did not try to detain any Toba Batak, student or NGO activist. The police did not want to arrest organizers of the movement because the demonstrators would threaten to destroy the police office if their leaders were not released. The police usually released the protestors to reduce the radicalization at the grassroots level. Efendi Panjaitan explained that the police were not confident about taking over the role of the military in the early *reformasi* era demonstrations. They were very careful when facing anti-IIU groups at demonstrations because they did not want to be accused of violating human rights principles. Therefore, the villagers demonstrated without fear of police action.

When anti-IIU groups became more radical because there was no response to their demand that the mill be closed, the police response tended to be more violent. In November 1998 a Toba Batak died in a conflict between police and demonstrators, the first victim from the anti-IIU groups (See Chapter Two). However, this did not frighten the Toba Batak, who escalated their protests. They argued that the police should protect the Toba Batak not the mill.

During the Habibie and Gus Dur administrations, according to Panjaitan, the police did not act harshly toward the demonstrators if there was no clear and strong reason to do so. This was probably because both presidents had given a clear message to the police and military personnel not to overreact in facing demonstrations by civilians.

However, this changed under the Megawati government. Herwin Nasution, the new Director of WALHI North Sumatra, said that under the Megawati government the police behaved very unprofessionally. They used violence to disperse demonstrators instead of attempting to engage them in a dialog. This created violent clashes between people and police which resulted in many victims from the people's side. The police also detained many people and student activists who they accused of being provocateurs or of damaging public facilities. At present (August 2003) 21 activists are being detained by the police, including two priests and the chief of SRB.

The police saw priests who tried to calm the masses as provocateurs. Musa Gurning was detained in the district government office in Balige rather than in Porsea, the site of the demonstration. The police accused him of masterminding the demonstration. According to students and NGO activists who live in Porsea, the police also patrol in the villages. This makes the Toba Batak at the grassroots level fear that the police will dismiss their meetings. Furthermore, it is now normal to hear gun shots at night, making people afraid to go out at night. They close their doors and windows earlier than usual. The Toba Batak leaders also hide in the forest or go to Medan or Jakarta to avoid police raids aimed at detaining all Toba Batak leaders in Porsea.

When I was in Porsea, I observed that there were three truck loads of Brigade Police (Brimob) monitoring Toba Batak demonstrations against the mill. The police also guard trucks bringing wood to the mill. Every two trucks have a *Kijang* escort.²⁵¹ Each convoy consists of eight trucks and four cars carrying police to guard the trucks. According to activists and the Toba Batak, the police say that they are following order from the central government to protect IIU.

²⁵¹ A *Kijang* is a kind of car.

As this summary of movement actions shows, changes in the political opportunity structure had a strong effect on the shape of the Toba Batak movement. In the Habibie and Gus Dur administrations, the police did not want to be involved in protecting industries which had conflicts with the people. This opened a window of opportunity for the movement against IIU to launch big demonstrations (See Chapter Two). Even though two people died in clashes with the police—one was shot and the other was beaten by the police—in general, the police showed restraint. In contrast, under the Megawati government, the police used violence to disperse demonstrators even when the demonstration was peaceful.

Divisions Among the Elite

In the reformation era, political elites could criticize political and economic regulations and policies if they harmed people and the environment or if there was an indication that the policies advantaged a certain group in the administration, state companies or the legislature. It was a very different situation in the Soeharto era when elites had to implement the political, economic and social decisions made by Soeharto and his closest circle. Elites who disagreed with such decisions could lose their jobs or be jailed if the regime saw them as a threat. A clear example is Emil Salim, Minister of Environment the Soeharto regime, who disagreed with the location of IIU in Sosor Ladang, because it was near a community and on the upper Asahan River. Salim also objected that the IIU management had failed to finish their environmental impact analysis study, and he raised questions about raw materials for the mill. But when Habibie, Minister of Technology, said that Soeharto supported this project because it would create

state and personal income and jobs, all Salim could do was to set difficult conditions for the IIU management to meet. In the New Order criticism from the elite was short-lived.

The growth of the movement against IIU in the reformation era and its success in closing the mill for a period was due in part to a division among elites in formal political institutions. This division created two blocs, one of which supported the Toba Batak demand that the mill be closed and the other which did not. Elites who favored closing the mill contributed to the movement's success because their support made the protests of anti-IIU groups legitimate. The public could see that members of the government and legislature supported the movement.

At the national level, the division among elites started when Panangian Siregar, Environmental Minister in the Habibie administration, supported closing the mill. In a working meeting with the House of Representative members, Siregar said the legislature should recommend closing the mill because it had been proven that the mill caused many problems. The legislature approved Panangian Siregar's proposal to recommend the government close the mill. AP Siregar, a member of the House of Representative, said that the government had an opportunity to close the mill because Soeharto no longer ruled. However, Minister of Industry and Trade, Rahadi Ramelan, disagreed with Siregar's recommendation. The difference was resolved when Habibie ordered IIU be closed temporarily, to resume operation only after an independent auditor approved.

Efendi Panjaitan said that before Habibie decided in favor of temporary closure of the mill, he sent Fahri Ali and Bahtiar Efendi, political analysts to Medan to meet with Panjaitan in the WALHI North Sumatra office. Ali and Efendi wanted to discuss alternatives to closing the mill, but Panjaitan said that it would be better if the Toba Batak

could voice their opinion directly to Ali and Efendi instead of channeling it through WALHI North Sumatra. According to Panjaitan, Ali and Efendi agreed to closing the mill. When they returned to Jakarta, Habibie declared the mill had to be closed. According to Panjaitan, Habibie had the training to understand that the mill was located in the wrong place.²⁵² Panjaitan also said that Habibie wanted to be popular with the people in order to be re-elected as president.

In the Habibie administration, almost all elites at the local level, both in the district administration and the legislature, stated their support for closing the mill, although the district administration may have agreed in order to avoid conflict with the demonstrators. Strong support came from the district legislature, which agreed to send a letter to the central government stating their support of the demand to close the mill.

In the Gus Dur administration, elites in the district administration, led by the district head, stated that the government needed a good reason to close the mill. They supported the idea that an audit team be formed to prove that the mill should be closed down. The governor tried to be neutral, waiting for instructions from the central government. However, the director of the district Environmental Impact Management Agency and the head of the Forestry Department supported closing the mill because their research showed it had caused many problems and if it were reopened it could create a disaster for the Toba Batak and the environment. This support was very helpful to the movement. District legislature members also supported closing the mill. Aden Manurung, a district legislature member and a supporter of the movement against IIU, helped to

²⁵² Professor Dr. Ing. Tunggul T. Sirait said that it was relatively easy to talk with Habibie because he understood technical issues in relation to environmental problems and the location of the mill. When they presented their research on IIU to Habibie, he could understand why Professor Dr. Sirait together with other experts recommended closing the mill.

organize support for the Toba Batak's demands. Provincial legislature members Viktor Simamora and Effendi Tambunan spoke at gatherings and in the legislature as well as to the media in support of the demand to close the mill. They welcomed anti-IIU protestors demonstrating at the provincial legislature. Commission VIII members, who were responsible for environmental issues, held to the previous decision recommending the mill be closed. Prof. Tunggul T. Sirait,²⁵³ a Commission VIII member, was a strong supporter of the movement to close the IIU mill. He sent letters and his reports on the IIU issue to other legislature members and the government; he interrupted Commission VIII meetings if they did not include IIU on the agenda; he welcomed anti-IIU groups when they came to the Legislature to persuade supporters of IIU to oppose the government when it gave the green light to IIU or IIU tried to open the mill. He also advocated for demonstrators detained by the police, asking that they be released in the name of a legislature member. However, another group argued that the Toba Batak should seek legal redress for the damage caused by the mill or that an independent team should be appointed by the government to resolve the conflict.

In Gus Dur's administration, a division occurred between Minister of Environment Sony Keraf and Trade and Industry Minister Yusuf Kalla. Keraf recommended that the government close the mill following the decision of Habibie. Kalla, together with other economic ministers, disagreed. He said that if the IIU mill were closed down, it would be bad for the investment climate in Indonesia. When Luhut Panjaitan replaced Kalla as Minister of Trade and Industry, the government supported the

²⁵³ Prof Tunggul T. Sirait told me, "The Toba Batak in Toba Samosir have chosen me and it is my responsibility to fight for their demand, in this case to close IIU." He said that he was an environmental expert so his position was not based on his imagination. It was based on his research and experience as a person born in Porsea."

Toba Batak's demands and did not give any signals to IIU that they could reopen the mill. When Panjaitan was pressed by elites who wanted to reopen the mill, he always told them to get the permission of the Toba Batak first. According to Efendi Panjaitan, Luhut Panjaitan's strategy was to keep his decision fluid because at this time, many important elites in the Gus Dur administration supported the Toba Batak's demand to close the mill.

The debate over the mill continued until Gus Dur decided to close the rayon mill and allow the pulp mill to operate again on the grounds that the rayon mill was the more dangerous for people and the environment. In this way the government could reduce the Toba Batak's demand from total to partial closing and also respond to pressure to be responsible to international shareholders. According to Emmy Hafield, Gus Dur decided not to close the mill because he knew the Indonesian government would be brought to international court by international shareholders and the government would lose, based on experience in a case involving the state-owned electricity company in which the Indonesian government had to pay \$50 million in fines. In meetings with Gus Dur, Panjaitan asked that IIU's demand for full police protection of the mill not be honored if it were impossible for the president to close the mill. In this way Gus Dur gave the Toba Batak an opportunity for direct action in the field without fear of the police repression. This was how the Toba Batak leaders and NGO activists tried to take advantage of the division among the elites.

The division between those who wanted the mill shut down and those who wanted it reopened in the Megawati administration. Supporters of reopening the mill argued that the mill would not create environmental problems because it was to operate under a new paradigm. Megawati's Cabinet accepted this argument. Nabil Makarim, Minister of

Environment, said that he had to follow the cabinet decision to allow the mill to operate again even though he disagreed with the decision. He said that opposing the decision would threaten his position. Since there was no guarantee that a new minister would support closing the mill, this was not useful. The Megawati administration persisted in the decision to reopen the rayon mill even though legislature members recommended it be closed. Viktor Simamora and Effendi Tambunan did not believe in the new paradigm, and they kept fighting for the demand that the mill be closed down or moved to a different location. However, their support did not affect the government's decision to reopen the mill. This can be seen is a sign that the legislature is less powerful under the Megawati government.

IIU had close connections with Megawati's party. Even Aden Manurung, a member of PDI-P, supported Megawati's decision to reopen the IIU mill. When Jakob Nua Wea (of PDI-P) came to Porsea, he was welcomed as someone who would negotiate with the Toba Batak in order to reopen the IIU mill. IIU agreed to provide financial support for community development and local income generation. Therefore, during the Megawati administration the movement against IIU no longer had an influential ally among the elites.

Brokerage

Various brokers played an important role in mobilizing support for the Toba Batak movement to oppose IIU and in uniting different groups in the movement. In this section of the chapter IV discuss seven groups that played a role as a broker: the United Voice of the People (Suara Rakyat Bersama or SRB), WALHI North Sumatra and the

National Executive WALHI in Jakarta, KSPPM in Parapat, the Batak organizations in Medan (Parbato) and Jakarta (Forum Bona Pasogit), intellectuals, religious organizations and religious leaders, and students. Together with influential allies in political institutions, they worked arm in arm against IIU and pressed the Indonesian government to close the mill.

Suara Rakyat Bersama (SRB)

SRB was established in August 1998 to fight against IIU. SRB members come from various backgrounds. Some are rich farmers and others are peasants. Former military, police and bureaucrats are also members of SRB. Merchants and bureaucrats were actively involved, and women and children also participated in SRB actions.

Before SRB was founded, people who lived in Toba Samosir, including Porsea and Samosir Island, had had an organization called KAPAL, which was established in February 1998 when people were demonstrating against IIU. This organization was disbanded because KAPAL leaders took money from IIU. Jansen Sitorus, the SRB secretary, said that the Toba Batak asked how KAPAL could represent the Toba Batak against IIU if their leaders were paid by IIU. KAPAL leaders agreed to negotiate with IIU, when KAPAL members wanted IIU closed. Therefore, the Tobat Batak established a new organization.²⁵⁴

SRB activists tried to unite the Toba Batak opposed to IIU into one resistance organization. They went from village to village asking the Toba Batak to join SRB,

²⁵⁴ Toba Batak in SRB also demonstrated at the KSPPM office in Parapat in 2000 because they felt that KSPPM leaders had deserted their struggle against IIU. They asked KSPPM leaders why they compromised with IIU whereas KSPPM had taught them to oppose IIU. They asked Indra Nababan, a KSPPM leader, to explain to them why should their strategy and corporate with IIU.

emphasizing the importance of having a single organization against IIU. Jansen Sitorus said that they were invited to particular villages to explain the role of SRB and how people could join. Then each village would form their own SRB unit. The SRB village structure is very simple. There is one SRB coordinator, often the village chief, who is helped by a secretary and treasurer. Village chiefs are chosen because it is easy for them to call people together. The villagers say that the village chief has to follow what his or her villagers want because this why they were chosen.

At the village level, a SRB meeting is held, usually once a week, to consolidate and unite people in the village. Each SRB formulates its own rules.²⁵⁵ At the meetings, members discuss how to attract others to join. They also discuss strategy against IIU. The most important purpose of the village organization is to maintain active support for the movement. SRB also brings together SRB activists from every village to a big coordination and evaluation meeting, where they discuss new actions opposing IIU and evaluate strategy and new developments in SRB. SRB holds these meetings weekly, which move it from one village to another based on a decision from the previous meeting.

Every two years SRB holds a big congress, as a forum to evaluate their strategy and to discuss further actions to achieve their goal of closing IIU. At this forum, SRB members elect new leaders. This congress is also meant to show the government and IIU that support for closing the mill is strong. At the last big congress on November 11, 2002 SRB members demonstrated at Sirat Uruk intersection (which has been called the demonstration intersection). Tens of thousands of Toba Batak from villages far up in the mountains and from Samosir Island came to participate in this demonstration.

²⁵⁵ Therefore, the SRB mechanism differs from one village to another.

SRB plays an important role in organizing and managing both large and small demonstrations. Small-scale demonstrations are usually held in the villages, with dozens or even of hundreds of participants. SRB holds a village meeting to decide who will be in charge of the demonstration, where to hold the demonstration, what kind of strategy to use and what the goal of the demonstration is. Large-scale demonstrations are usually held at Sirait Uruk intersection. The central SRB facilitates a meeting to prepare these actions. It also organizes Toba Batak who want to go to Balige, Tarutung, Medan or Jakarta to hold a demonstrator to attend meetings with local, provincial and national government officials and members of the legislature. SRB central appoints the spokesperson who will negotiate with external persons or speak for the organization. Each SRB representative at the village level who attends a working meeting is responsible for informing members at home about SRB decisions and winning support for them.

To build networks of support at the local, provincial and national levels, SRB activists use provincial and national Batak organizations, like Parbato and Forum Bona Pasogit. They approach “sons of the soil” Toba Samosir who lead these organizations and tell them they are responsible for saving their hometown from IIU pollution and other negative impacts caused by the mill. They also contact NGOs and religious organizations willing to support their movement.

Tactics developed by SRB include peace demonstrations, halting trucks carrying wood to the mill, barricading streets to the mill, and throwing rocks. They call this kind of action “guerilla warfare.” They hope to attract media coverage in order to call government and IIU attention to their actions. They also use what they describe as “civil

disobedience.” This includes the following actions: 1) women stop tending their farms. They say that demonstrations at Sirait Uruk intersection and other places have higher priority than farming. Women took over the role of demonstrating against IIU when they saw how repressive the police were in facing their husbands in demonstrations. Even if the impact of refusing to grow crops to sell to people in the cities is very small, the message to government elites is clear: they must prioritize solving the conflict between the Toba Batak and IIU. 2) women remove their clothes in front of the police when they demonstrate. This action violates Toba Batak values, culture and tradition. By this action they try to deliver the message that police and the government do not respect Toba Batak values, culture and tradition. In the Toba Batak tradition, a leader must follow what people want, including giving security to the people. Nakeness is a symbol of women’s resistance to the violation of Toba Batak values, culture and tradition. 3) people in Porsea do not go to the weekly market in the capital city of the sub-district Porsea, but go instead to small markets in their own villages. They say that this keeps money in the local community. This action is to protest that chiefs in the Porsea sub-district did not fight for the people’s aspirations. 4) people in Porsea and other places in Toba Samosir refuse to pay taxes. They say that their taxes do not bring government services and other benefits. 5) students from kindergarten through senior high school refused to go to school for almost a month (February to March, 2003). Every day they stood at the edge of the road wearing their school uniforms. They sang songs with protest themes about IIU and the government and the police. When I interviewed Juli Sitorus, one of the protesting students, she said that the students could not just stand by witnessing their parents demonstrating every day. They had to do something when they saw the police beating

their parents. They could not concentrate enough to follow the lectures because they brooded about their parents' fight. They also worried about their future and wondered whether they would get an education if their parents' income fell because of IIU. 6) people are considering not participating in the 2004 general election as a form of civil disobedience. They say that political parties did not honor their campaign promises to close IIU, specifically pointing to PDI-P. They see that political parties only want their votes and the people's agenda is not really a priority. They predict the same thing will happen in 2004. 7) 52 village chiefs returned to the government their stamp and letter-of-appointment. They say that although the government pays no attention to what the Toba Batak need, village chiefs have promised to support the people's aspirations. According to Jainus Sirait, this does not mean the chiefs who hand over their mandates are no longer village leaders. They just rule in a different way, meaning that they do not need legal recognition from the government.

SRB also raises money to support the movement. Every SRB member is obliged to contribute a monthly donation, and when a big action is planned for Tarutung, Balige, Medan or Jakarta, members are asked to donate more. SRB activists also organize big parties and invite important public figures from Tarutung, Balige, Medan and Jakarta to participate by selling things like cake. In this way SRB activists can raise money. Sometimes they can get from five to ten million rupiahs (\$500. - 1000.) SRB also gets funds from NGOs like WALHI when they do joint programs. However, there is a problem with financial management. Some villagers say that SRB activists have not been transparent in managing the money, especially in the Musa Gurning period. Villagers

think SRB should report how much money is spent each month. This problem should be solved quickly because it has become a source of conflict among villagers.

A Study Group for the Development of a People's Movement (KSPPM)

KSPPM was founded in February 1985 by a study group for the development of a people's movement and to push for rule of law. KSPPM, which is located in Parapat, is the oldest advocacy NGO in North Sumatra and one of oldest advocacy NGOs in Indonesia. The activists in KSPPM have worked together since 1983. KSPH was led by HKBP priests and law and human rights activists, like Nelson Siregar (priest), Asamara Nababan, Indira Juditka Simbolon and Eli Hakim Sitorus. This NGO has three goals: empowerment of the people by promoting a people's movement; developing critical education to change an oppressive system; and building strong peasant organizations with economic, political and cultural access.

KSPPM has supported the movement against IIU since 1986-87 when Asmara Nababan learned that a pulp and rayon mill would be established in Sosor Ladang. At first, there was no information about who owned the mill or what negative impacts it might have. Eli Hakim Sitorus learned that Sukanto Tanoto was behind development of the mill under the umbrella of his Raja Garuda Mas group of companies. Sitorus began to inform Toba Batak who lived near the mill site about the potential for negative impacts of a pulp and rayon mill after reading a book about such mills in Northern countries, including Canada.

KSPPM supported the protests of the Sugapa women when IIU took their land to mill eucalyptus in 1988. The same year KSPPM was involved in the protests when a big

landslide killed 13 people from Sianipar village and destroyed farms and houses. (See Chapter Three.) KSPPM became involved in issues when protests were initiated by the Toba Batak. The first issue that emerged was land conflict between the Toba Batak and IIU in the 1980s. KSPPM demanded that IIU not log in protected forests and that proper compensation be paid to people for their land. Later KSPPM focused on pollution problems caused by IIU. KSPPM asked IIU to be more transparent about what technology they used and how they treated their dangerous chemicals. At this stage, KSPPM did not demand that the IIU mill be closed because people still hoped the mill would fix their chemical treatment and keep their promise to give proper compensation for pollution that occurred 1993. Finally KSPPM supported demands to close IIU because the company never kept its promise to solve problems related to technology and chemical waste treatment and to resolve conflicts with the Toba Batak. This stage began in 1998 and continues to the present.

KSPPM focused empowering the Toba Batak to change their lives. It did not seek allies by campaigning for support from officials at the local, provincial, national or international level. However, KSPPM realized that it must work hand in hand with other NGOs in the struggle against IIU. Because of the role of KSPPM in organizing the Toba Batak, the Soeharto regime accused KSPPM of being a front for the Indonesian Communist Party and warned the Toba Batak not to allow activists to stay in their houses. The Tarutung district command banned KSPPM on August 13, 1990 on the ground that their activities endangered the government.

To build critical awareness at the grassroots level, KSPPM employed various strategies: 1) KSPPM organized village or group meetings in places which had problems

with IIU. KSPPM activist would ask questions to help the villagers identify the problems and to highlight strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as they formulate their demands. In the Silaen case, for instance, KSPPM suggested that the villagers reject IIU's offer of compensation if there was no common agreement among villagers. To not present a united front would reduce the villagers' bargaining power against IIU. In the Sugapa case, KSPPM activists provided opportunity and threat analysis to the villagers and discussed strategy and tactics. At that time, the military and government used violence and intimidation to repress protests. KSPPM wanted to make it clear to the villagers that it would be a hard struggle so they could prepare mentally and find the energy to fight for their rights.

2) KSPPM provide critical law and political education to the villagers. In educational sessions, KSPPM activists discussed agrarian economy, forestry, environmental issues and human rights law. In this way, villagers could identify laws that violated people's rights or favored large corporations, such as investment, natural resources, and industry laws. KSPPM activists asked villagers to think about how these laws were enacted in Indonesia and why the government did not allow the people to participate in making them. In this way, villagers could see that their struggle was not just to solve their own problems but also for a change in the law.

3) KSPPM conducted legal training workshops in villages. This training gave villagers resources in facing the police and other government officials. Villagers learned what to do when other villagers were detained by the police. They could ask whether the police had a warrants and check to see if the warrant had the name of the persons being detained. Villagers were taught to identify IIU pollution impacts and to use this

information when questioned by the police. This training focused on villages in Toba Samosir close to the mill and villages in the areas being logged.

4) KSPPM also worked to empower villagers economically by providing workshops on agriculture and small grants to be used as capital for new enterprises. KSPPM emphasized economic empowerment because they concluded, based on many discussions with villagers, that peasants do not want to be involved in opposing IIU because they have their own economic problems. Therefore, often they were apathetic and afraid to protest. In one report, KSPPM said that villagers in Siruar, Sosor Ladang, Huta Nagodang and Lumban Binaga were more radical in criticizing IIU after their economic problems were solved.

5) KSPPM also collected data in the field about pollution and other issues. This information could be used by any one – NGOs, journalists or others – to campaign on different issues. KSPPM worked with villagers to win their support for participatory research. KSPPM activists live in villages in Porsea and on Samosir Island. The activists are always ready to facilitate a discussion or give information to people. They also give legal advice and advocate for the people. KSPPM helped to establish a law office in the village in Porsea so the villagers could consult lawyers immediately when there was an emergency. KSPPM also encouraged people to discuss problems with their priests so the priests could help people to solve them. Many HKBP priests were involved in KSPPM from the beginning, and they wanted to recruit other priests in HKBP to support the struggle against IIU.

Indonesian Forum on Environment (WALHI)

WALHI, a forum of organizations concerned with the environment and injustices in managing natural resources, was established on October 15, 1980. It was initiated by NGOs, such as Nature Lovers (KPA) and the People's Participation Group (KSM), which felt the Indonesian government have a paradigm of development that was unsustainable and unjust both for people and the environment. Today WALHI has 400 member organizations,²⁵⁶ and it has become the biggest NGO in Indonesia.

WALHI list six principles in their statement of mission: 1) WALHI is a network of independent organizations that work to create a fair and democratic society and to preserve the environment; 2) WALHI works to develop a social movement based on solidarity, creative direct action and non-violence; 3) WALHI respects gender, oppressed groups and the environment; 4) WALHI is based on democratic, transparent, accountable, and professional practices; 5) WALHI maintains that a clean and unpolluted environment is a human right; 6) WALHI is an inclusive environmental movement. Every three years WALHI reviews these principles and applies them to strategic issues and campaigns through a national consultation forum.

WALHI has 25 branches across Indonesia and a national executive in Jakarta which facilitates and coordinates all WALHI units. WALHI establishes district executives which facilitate and coordinate actions on local issues. WALHI North Sumatra was founded in 1988. Twenty organizations are joined under WALHI North Sumatra.

WALHI has supported the movement against IIU since 1989 when WALHI took IIU and the Indonesian government to court in Jakarta, arguing that IIU had caused damage to the environment and taken land from people illegally. (See Chapter Three.)

²⁵⁶ Individuals also may join WALHI.

WALHI argued that IIU had not completed an environmental impact analysis which is a requirement before an industry is established. The location proposed for the mill was not acceptable because waste would flow into the river and Lake Toba. Such court action was radical and something that no environmental NGO had ever done before. Since Efendi Panjaitan became Director in 1995, WALHI North Sumatra has advocated for the Toba Batak against IIU intensively.

The National Executive WALHI and WALHI North Sumatra apply certain strategies in making the anti-IIU movement operational, such as building alliances inside and outside the government, mobilizing public opinion, and a campaign of mass critical education.

As Director of WALHI North Sumatra, Efendi Panjaitan intensively lobbied high ranking government officials. For instance, Panjaitan invited Sonny Keraf to come to Porsea to meet people there. He convinced Keraf that through this action, NGO activists would see that Keraf as a *reformasi* minister who understood environmental problems and try to solve them. Efendi Panjaitan also built an alliance with the new Trade and Industry Minister, Luhut Panjaitan. Efendi Panjaitan appealed to ethnic and clan loyalty in approaching Luhut Panjaitan. According to Efendi Panjaitan, Luhut Panjaitan agreed with the Toba Batak's demand that the mill be closed. He said that he would not issue a green light for IIU to operate again but whether or not the IIU mill stayed closed depended on the Toba Batak. If they were strong they could close it.

In building alliances at the provincial level, WALHI North Sumatra organizes meetings to discuss negative impacts of IIU and to urge that NGOs, students and other groups become involved in the movement. WALHI North Sumatra works with NGOs

and other groups which oppose IIU in developing action plans and organizing demonstrations in cooperation with local residents, NGOS and other groups in Medan and other places.

WALHI North Sumatra also provides critical education about politics and the environment to the Toba Batak in Toba Samosir. They worked with KSPPM at the grassroots level. WALHI North Sumatra held environmental impact analysis training so that the Toba Batak would understand how to analyze the impact of IIU activities. For instance, if certain fauna die in an area, people would understand that this could be due to high acid drainage caused by the mill. They do not have to be technologically trained to identify the pollutant. Their observation is still valid. WALHI North Sumatra makes investigation data available to the press and public through press releases or press conferences. WALHI North Sumatra also disseminates information about human rights violations in the field.

Emmy Hafield of WALHI in Jakarta was in the Indonesian Working Group where she developed close connections to influential persons, including Sonny Keraf and Gus Dur. WALHI hoped to use these connections to help the Toba Batak to close IIU. At the national level, WALHI works with other NGOs, such as the Legal Aid Institute (YLBHI), the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (KONTRAS), Women's Solidarity (*Solidaritas Perempuan*, SP), the Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy (ELSAM). WALHI in Jakarta facilitates meetings between Toba Batak leaders and high-ranking officials. The National Executive WALHI meets with members of the national legislature to discuss the IIU case and lobbies Commission VIII, which is responsible for the environment. WALHI in Jakarta also arranges for research and funds the researchers.

For instance, WALHI collaborated with the Health Faculty at the University of Indonesia to conduct research on the impact on health of pollution caused by IIU. The National Executive WALHI helps to make the public aware of the issues through press conferences, seminars and workshops. The National Executive WALHI also builds alliances with international NGOs by providing information about IIU. Finally, the National Executive WALHI provides financial support to WALHI North Sumatra.

WALHI in North Sumatra and Jakarta facilitate transportation, accommodations and logistics when the Toba Batak demonstrate in Medan and Jakarta. They rent buses and provide food and drink. In Medan and Jakarta, the Toba Batak sleep in WALHI North Sumatra and National Executive WALHI offices when they have to stay more than a day. WALHI also facilitates legal support when local people have to face the police because of their protest activities. WALHI provides lawyers and operational funds so the lawyers can put their best efforts into helping the Toba Batak in the police office or court.

Religious Organizations

Religious leaders, both as individuals and institutions, play an important role in giving legitimacy support to the Toba Batak who fight to close IIU. The involvement of religious leaders began in 1989 when Dr. S.E.A Nababan, the new chairman of HKBP, criticized IIU because it was responsible for so many problems, like landslides in Sianipar village and land conflict in Sugapa. Dr. Nababan demanded that IIU help solve such problems so the peasants did not have to go to jail for protesting. He also suggested that IIU train young people in Toba Samoisi so that they could work in the mill and provide management and skill training for peasants to increase their farming productivity.

Dr. Nababan also demanded that IIU stop the pollution in Porsea and other places in Toba Samosir.

When Dr. Nababan criticized IIU openly, other HKBP priests felt free to do the same. At first this criticism did not mean that HKBP leaders demanded that IIU close down the mill. They just wanted IIU to provide positive programs for the Toba Batak and help to resolve problems and reduce pollution of the environment. However, over time, some leaders in HKBP argued that IIU would never set up programs to help the Toba Batak. The company could not even solve basic problems by adopting new technology to reduce pollution or by adopting a new approach to the people. Hence, in March, 2003 HKBP leaders demanded that the IIU mill should be closed.

HKBP were slow to come to an agreement that the church as an institution should demand that the IIU mill be closed. First, the church was not ready to confront the government because individuals felt threatened physically and psychology by military, and police. Until Dr. Nababan became the Chairman of HKBP there was no support from the church as an institution for Toba Batak struggling to close IIU. HKBP began to support the movement when two ministers were arrested because of their activities supporting the struggle. Second, HKBP leaders were divided over the issue of closing the IIU mill. Priests who had benefited from IIU insisted that HKBP not officially demand the mill be closed. They argued that it was sufficient to support the Toba Batak by prayer.²⁵⁷ But other priests argued that prayer alone was not enough.

HKBP ministers like Miduk Sirait actively supported Toba Batak protests even though he and his wife both were jailed for their actions. Miduk Sirait participated in

²⁵⁷ HKBP did not support “liberation theology” which stresses work with poor people to free them from an oppressive system.

demonstrations at Sirait Uruk intersection, Balige, Medan and Jakarta. Because he is a good orator, the Toba Batak always asked him to speak at demonstrations. He also acted as a negotiator when demonstrators faced the police or high-ranking government officials. At meetings organized by SRB, he emphasizes that it is important for the protestors to stick together and not betray the movement by taking money from IIU if they want to win. In his sermons in church, Miduk Sirait connects Jesus' teachings with environmental, economic, social and cultural problems. He also allows the Toba Batak to use church facilities for the struggle to close IIU, for discussions, workshops, seminars or planning of demonstrations. During weekly prayer meetings, he allows the Toba Batak to announce SRB plans for actions and demonstrations for the coming week.

Other HKBP churches, in Porsea and other places, especially in Simpang Sirait Uruk, also allow their buildings to be used as meeting places. They allow the church bell to be used to call the Toba Batak when there is an emergency and the Toba Batak have to leave their work on their farms to go to Sirait Uruk intersection, where they gather to decide on a plan.

The involvement of the Catholic church in the campaign against IIU began with Priest Hyginus Silaen, who became the Head of the Catholic church at the district level in Balige in 1998. According to Silaen, he had begun criticizing IIU when he was priest in Parapat in 1994. He asked the Forestry Department why there was so much logging on Samosir Island when this would create drought and flooding.²⁵⁸ The Catholic church as an institution supported the struggle against IIU for several reasons. First, Catholic parishioners complained about problems caused by IIU to their priests. Second, priests saw for themselves the negative impact of pollution from the IIU activities on water, air,

²⁵⁸ Interview with Silaen, April 20, 2003

and the environment along with economic and social problems (especially prostitution) and human rights violations.²⁵⁹ Third, the Vatican encouraged the Catholic Church to help the poor as a manifestation of their theology.²⁶⁰ (Catholic leaders emphasized that the church was not trying to convert people with its support for the campaign against IIU. For instance, Priest Silaen got angry with Protestants when they wanted to convert to Catholicism. He argued that they should fix their religious institutions so that their religious leaders would support them.) Finally, the Catholic church in Indonesia has a history of fighting for poor people, as exemplified by the movement started by Priest Mangunwijaya in Jogjakarta. Priests in North Sumatra wanted to follow in the footsteps of Priest Mangunwijaya.

The Toba Batak call Priest Silaen their “field general” because of his bravery in demonstrations. He has participated in demonstrations at Sirait Uruk intersection, Balige or Tarutung, often as a leader of the demonstration. He often is called to negotiate with police if they detain demonstrators. Even when there is violent conflict between police and demonstrators, he does not show any fear of the police and tries to protect demonstrators who are being beaten. In many cases Priest Silaen has saved demonstrators from police violence. He offers to surrender himself in place of those who are being attacked, detained or harassed, but the police never accept his offer. Priest Silaen

²⁵⁹ Letter to IIU of April 15, 2003 from head of Catholic Church North Sumatra.

²⁶⁰ Liberation theology as a movement in the Catholic church developed in Latin America. In Nicaragua Ernesto Cardenal and others established Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional (FSLN) to free people from Samozá's dictatorship. Liberation theology was used as a guide for this movement. In El Salvador Bishop Romero led civil disobedience to resist a military regime that killed hundreds of people who protested against policies that violated the rights of the poor. Bishop Romero was assassinated and his murder triggered massive demonstrations in opposition to the regime. In the Philippines, Cardinal Sin and pro-democracy groups toppled the Marcos regime under the banner of liberation theology. See Kathleen M. Nadeau, *Liberation Theology in The Philippines: Faith a Revolution* (Praeger: Westport, Conn., 2002); John Burdick and W.E. Hewitt ed, *The Church at the Grassroots in Latin America: Perspectives on Thirty Years of Activism* (Praeger: Westport, Conn., 2000).

dedicates himself to the struggle of the Toba Batak in Toba Samosir. He always comes to a trouble location when called, even if he is in church. He argues that people who are oppressed are more important to be served than people safe in church. So, the Toba Batak also call him “Priest 24 hours.” In church, Priest Silaen explains from the Catholic perspective why IIU must be closed. He also allows the movement to use church facilities.

The Catholic church as an institution also plays a major role in the movement against IIU. Mgr. A.G.P. Datubara, the Bishop of Catholic church in North Sumatra invited all the Christian churches to a meeting on IIU. This was the biggest ecumenical Christian meeting ever held in North Sumatra, with every sect working hand in hand to help the Toba Batak struggling to close IIU. Mgr. Datubara addressed the meeting. He said that IIU must be closed and that the Toba Batak should not be afraid because their struggle is just. All the main Christian sects in North Sumatra signed a letter demanding that IIU stop operating and move from Sosor Ladang.²⁶¹

The Catholic church also assigned three young priests, Ivoy Sinaga OFMCap, Markus Manurung OFMCap and Diakon Hilarius Karo-Karo OFMCap, to work with the Toba Batak in Toba Samosir. They collected data, noting day-by-day the pollution and other negative impacts and documenting human rights violations by the police or other groups. The priests also helped to mobilize the Toba Batak and to give them hope that with the support of the church, their struggle would succeed. The Catholic church also

²⁶¹ This letter was signed by Dr.J.R Hutaaruk of HKBP, Manurung, Bishop of Indonesia Protestant Christian Church (GKPI), Dr. E. Munthe, Bishop of Simalungun Protestant Christian Church (GKPS, B. Matondang, Bishop of Padang Angkola Christian Church (GKPA), Timur P. Bacin, Bishop of Pakpak Dairi Protestant Christian (GKPPD), R. Simanjuntak, General Secretary of Indonesia Christian Huria (HKI), GH Manurung, Bishop of Medan Protestant Church, and RPM Tambunan, Bishop of Indonesia Methodist Church (GMI).

sent nurses to big demonstrations at Sirait Uruk intersection and monitors so that no provocateur can disrupt the demonstration.

Muslim leaders played a minor role in supporting the Toba Batak in its struggle to close IIU. The leaders of Nahdatul Ulama (NU), a traditional Islamic organization, and Muhamadiyah, the modernist Islamic organization, just signed letters supporting the demand to close IIU. Approximately ten percent of the Toba Batak in the movement were Muslim.

Students

For almost four years students have played an important role in the growth and success of the movement against IIU. Like other groups who oppose IIU, students see firsthand the negative impacts of logging and mill operations and the problems for Toba Batak living near the mill. The rupture of the chlorine tank prompted students to protest against IIU. It also undermined the government's argument that the mill had a positive impact because it created jobs and that accidents like a landslide and land conflict in the 1980s were normal consequences of development. Students who came from Porsea and Samosir Island knew that their parents were finding it difficult to send money to their children studying in Medan because of poor harvests and the impact of IIU activities on their income. Students were also inspired by the demonstrations of student activists elsewhere in Indonesia.

Three universities became resource bases in the struggle to close IIU. From 1993 to 1999 students in Nomensen University in Medan supported the movement. In every demonstration, they sent the most students. They could mobilize 500 to a thousand

students. However, in 1998 IIU succeeded in co-opting high-ranking university officials and some students by offering financial support and program collaboration. Some student organization leaders changed their stance and started supporting IIU, and the university administration no longer allowed students to demonstrate against IIU on campus. This affected the movement against IIU. The Toba Batak questioned the commitment of the students of Nomensen University to the movement. However, a small group of activists in the Nomensen Discussion Group kept the movement going.

Students in North Sumatra University also became engaged in the movement in 1993 when the chlorine tank ruptured. Students in Santo Tomas Christian University joined the movement against IIU movement after Soeharto was toppled in 1998. They became active when the Catholic Church declared its support for the demand to close the IIU mill. In addition to moral and legal support from the university, the students were able to use university facilities. For instance, when they demonstrated in Porsea, Tarutung or Baligi, they used university buses. (Nomensen and North Sumatra University do not allow their students to use university facilities for demonstrations.)

Other universities, such as Medan Technology Institute and Muhamadiyah University, and the Islamic State University in North Sumatra played a minor role in supporting the movement against IIU.

When students learn from NGO activists or students in Toba Samosir that a demonstration is planned for Medan or some other place, they usually join to show solidarity. However, sometimes they read about some terrible even in the newspaper and decide to organize their own demonstration. Then students from various universities in Medan meet to agree on demonstration tactics and to set targets. At the meeting, they

choose an action coordinator from among themselves and decide on a place where they will gather. Students from each university gather together and they all assemble in one place. They often conduct rallies on their own campuses to get support for the demonstrations from other students. They ask lecturers or alumni who support the movement to speak. They also invite Toba Batak activists. Demonstrations are usually held at the office of the Governor and at the Provincial Legislature or the IIU office in Uniland Plaza in Medan. The students are very effective in leading demonstrations because they know how to give an oration. They tell the demonstrators that if they can topple Soeharto, they can close IIU.

Some students from universities in North Sumatra come from Porsea. They assist Toba Batak leaders of the movement and facilitate discussions about Indonesian politics and tactics to fight IIU. They explain that to achieve the target of closing the mill the Toba Batak have to have support from other groups and a strong people's organization. Student activists are effective mobilization villagers. They go from one village to another to facilitate discussion or just to talk to the villagers and in this way they build solidarity. According to villagers, the students in the movement give them new hope of winning the struggle to close IIU. They do not feel alone in fighting for their beliefs.

Police and local government officials usually intimidate student activists who go to live in Toba Batak communities. These officials send unsigned threatening letters to the Toba Batak warning them not to allow students to live in their community because they are communists, anti-development, and provocateurs. Sometimes police come to the students' base camp to tell them to leave Porsea because they disturb local security. Police also take students to police headquarters to be questioned about their activities in

the community. Local government officials advise the students to stay out of the movement and to study hard, graduate and find good jobs. In some extreme cases, police have detained student activists and accused them of being provocateurs. One example is Binsar S, a Nomensen University student, who was jailed because of his activities in the villages. He is still in jail, waiting for the court to decide how many months or years he will be sentenced.

Batak Organizations

Batak organizations in Medan and Jakarta played an important role in strengthening the movement against IIU. The Association of Toba Batak in Medan (Parbato) was established by Toba Batak originally from Toba Samosir as a forum for communication and discussion to find solutions to problems which arise in Toba Samosir. Parbato is the biggest and the most credible Toba Batak organization in Medan. In Jakarta, Forum Bona Pasogit was established to support the development of business in Toba Samosir. This organization also concerns itself with social and environmental problems. Forum Bona Pasogit is the biggest organization of Toba Batak in Jakarta and involves many clans.

The overthrow of Soeharto in May 1998 provided a window of opportunity for these Toba Batak organizations to criticize what was happening in Toba Samosir. They realized that they would lose their legitimacy as Batak organizations if they ignored local demands to close IIU. In addition, they had witnessed the change from prosperity to poverty and insecurity when the mill operated in Sosor Ladang. IIU can no longer claim that they are supported by Toba Batak organizations in Medan and Jakarta as they used to do in the Soeharta era.

Parbato press releases about IIU have pushed the Indonesian government to close the mill and demanded that government security apparatus not simply protect IIU, but rather take the side of the people because that is who they work for. PARBATO also protested when activists in Porsea, Medan or Jakarta were detained, pushing the Indonesian government to solve the problem of IIU immediately. Ompu Monang Napitupulu, the Chairman of Parbato, repeatedly states in interviews with local media that the IIU mill has to be closed. He argues that while IIU has changed its name and promised to fix its technology, it has not solved basic problems such as the location of the mill, the supply of raw materials and non-polluting technology. Parbato allows Toba Batak activists to use their print machine to run off broadsheets so that SRB can distribute their statements or information about a demonstration.

In Jakarta Forum Bona Pasogit performs a similar function. It issues press releases and holds press conferences for national media. Martin Sirait, the Chairman of Forum Bona Pasogit, argues that it is better for government to close IIU now rather than waiting to have many people die trying to close the mill. He also lobbies high-ranking government officials in Jakarta, such as Nabel Makarim, the Environmental Minister in the Megawati government, and officials in the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Both Parbato and Forum Bona Pasogit send speakers to big demonstrations in Porsea, such as the Earth Day demonstration, and to the SRB Congress. They speak for the Batak Toba when the national legislature holds hearings on SRB and support the SRB demand to close the IIU mill. These organizations often employ Batak symbols in their actions. For instance, Parbato gave a traditional Toba Batak sword to the governor and the speaker of the provincial legislature. (See Chapter Two.) In Jakarta, Forum Bona

Pasogit invited successful Batak from Toba Samosir, such as Sitor Situmorang and Ratna Saraumpet (artists) to join in demonstrations in support of the movement.²⁶²

The Role of Intellectuals

The growth of the movement against IIU and its relative success in closing the IIU mill was also due to the contribution of intellectuals or experts from universities such as North Sumatra University, the Bandung Institute of Technology and the National University of Malaysia. Most of these experts are graduates of universities in Australia, Germany, and the USA. They include Prof. Dr. Firman Manurung, a chemist and former lecturer at the National University of Malaysia, Dr. Alaxander Manurung, an expert on land who lectures at North Sumatra University, Prof. Dr. M. Sitanggang, an anthropologist at Medan State University, Prof. Dr. Tunggul Sirait, an environmental expert, who was formerly a lecturer at ITB and President of the Indonesian Christian University (the biggest Christian university in Indonesia), and Prof. Dr. Midian Sirait, an environmental expert, who was formerly a lecturer at ITB and the Chairman of Danau Toba Heritage Foundation. These intellectuals became involved in the movement for different reasons. Most of them come from Toba Samosir, especially from Porsea and Samosir Island, and they have observed or heard stories about the effects of the IIU operations. Many have been asked to become involved in research projects relating to IIU. For instance, Dr. Alaxander Manurung and Prof. Dr. M. Sitanggang accepted Parbato's offer to do research on the negative and positive impacts of IIU, and Prof. Dr. Firman Manurung was asked by Prof. Dr. Tunggul Sirait, the Lake Toba Heritage

²⁶² Ratna Saruempet held a fund-raiser in Jakarta to mobilize support for the Toba Batak. Sitor Situmorang sold his poems to the audience. The funds were used to support the movement. Saruempet also convinced national editors to run anti-IIU struggle stories in their newspapers.

Foundation, to join his research team. Because of the reformation era, they can disclose to the public what they find based on their research without worry about being intimidated by the government or IIU. Finally, they have seen in the Labat Anderson environmental audit report that the chlorine chemical waste from IIU's mill is dangerous for the environment and people.

These intellectuals have collected primary and secondary data about the effects of the mill operations. They are able to translate what the Toba Batak feel and observe into an academically acceptable form. They evaluate previous research done by WALHI, the Health Faculty of Indonesian University and Labat Anderson and point out that these research results differ sharply from those of Indorayon experts. They have generally concluded that it is not feasible to keep the mill operating in Sosor Ladang. They have published their reports in the media and sent copies to IIU and the government.

As the expert team of the movement opposing IIU, these intellectuals attend meetings between groups opposed to IIU and IIU and ask critical questions of IIU experts who claim that the mill should be reopened in Sosor Ladang. This is important because the Toba Batak who do not understand chemistry and technology can only accept information that IIU offers. Furthermore, the government prefers to consider expert arguments rather than the emotional protests of the Toba Batak who have experienced the long-term negative impacts of IIU operations. For instance, when WALHI met with Commission VIII in Jakarta, if WALHI had not brought Prof. Dr. Firman Manurung to the meeting the legislatures members would have been less confident about deciding that IIU had to be closed.

The experts are also important as a source for media reports on the case of IIU. They help the public to understand the issues in the case. The experts speak at seminars, workshops and discussion groups organized by IIU and the government or anti-IIU groups. They convinced religious leaders at a meeting in Siantar organized by the Christian church that IIU is harmful to people and the environment. They joined with leaders of the movement against IIU to meet with President Habibie and Abdurahman Wahid.

Category Formation

The movement against IIU has come to be seen as a “Toba Batak” movement. Activists suggested that a person who supported IIU was not a “true” Toba Batak. A true Toba Batak is someone who wants to preserve the land from pollution because the land is the heart for the Toba Batak. From the land the Toba Batak get food, livestock, fish, and wood. The land gives the Toba Batak resources so they can send their children to good schools in Porsea, Balige, Tarutung, Medan and Java. (Toba Samosir is well-known as an area with a high education rate.) The movement activists also appealed to Toba Batak cultural values. True Toba Batak do not allow prostitution in their homeland.

By contrast, activists never appealed to religious identity. So the fact that SRB leaders are Muslim never became a problem for Christian Toba Batak. For instance, Musa Gurning is a Muslim from a small Batak clan, but he was chosen as a leader. Aden Manurung, former secretary of SRB, and Makmur Sitorus, the chief of Silamosik II village, and the chairman of SRB in that village, are Muslims. The activists also were careful not to define the movement by gender. Women played an important role in the

movement as well as in society. Women may even become chiefs of villages in Toba Samosir.

The category of “true Batak” as anti-IIU was enforced in various ways. If people did not oppose IIU they could be socially sanctioned. There are soft and hard social sanctions exercised by movement activists. Soft sanctions included such acts as boycotting a wedding party if the host supports IIU. Anti-IIU activists argued that IIU financed the wedding party directly or indirectly, because people who support IIU generally benefit from IIU. In Toba Batak tradition, it is a big honor if many people especially from the village attend a wedding party because this is a symbol of status in society. Hence, it is very embarrassing for the host and the couple if people avoid their wedding even though they have prepared an impressive ceremony by providing music and good food. In the 1990s to the 2000s many wedding ceremonies were attended only by small groups because the family supported IIU. Another soft sanction was to not make a visit of condolence following the death of a person who supported IIU. In the Toba Batak tradition, the family is supposed to get support and sympathy from many people following a calamity such as death. At a funeral all the family comes together. The Toba Batak perform traditional music and give speeches to encourage the family not to mourn but to give thanks because the departed is now closer to God. They sing church songs asking that the deceased’s spirit be accepted into heaven. Hence, it is a big rejection if people shun a pro-IIU family which has suffered a death.

Another soft sanction is to make an IIU supporter unwelcome in local shops, which sell coffee, fried bananas, cigarettes and noodles. Traditionally in Toba Samosir, the villagers come to coffee shops in the morning, afternoon or evening to meet and relax

after their work. They discuss issues, especially IIU, and therefore it is a strong social sanction for the Toba Batak to be shunned if they go to a coffee shop.

A harder sanction is when a clan forbids individuals who support IIU to participate in clan meetings. For instance, the Situmorang family has a clan meeting weekly or monthly. It is a forum to share information and to strengthen clan affiliation and mutual support. The clans use “*arisan*” (a regular social gathering where members contribute money and take turns at receiving an aggregate sum of money) as an instrument to build cohesion. In Toba Batak tradition, clan meetings are part of the culture. It is an obligation and an honor for a family member to host or attend the clan meeting. Therefore, it is harsh punishment when the clan majority bans an individual. In the language of the Toba Batak culture, he or she is no longer Toba Batak, having lost clan acceptance.

Another hard sanction is to isolate IIU sympathizers at church and in the neighborhood environment. Villagers do not communicate with such a person or provide any kind of help. A Toba Batak would experience such isolation as a heavy psychological burden. In many cases, IIU supporters moved to another place, such as IIU housing or the capital city of the Porsea sub-district, when subjected to such isolation.

Another form of sanction is to not provide labor during the rice harvest for someone who supports IIU. During the rice harvest, villagers need help cutting and transporting rice from the field to the house. They have to find laborers from outside Porsea. It is a major social sanction to not get help for the rice harvest. It is not only a matter of labor for communal effort during the rice harvest is part of Toba Batak culture.

The most harsh sanction for a villager who supports IIU was to be threatened, beaten or even killed. According to villagers, from 1998 to 1999 there were many cases where anti-IIU groups beat IIU supporters. In one instance, three IIU supporters died in a clash between anti-IIU groups and pro-IIU groups. Anti-IIU people argued that anti-IIU people were beaten in the mill complex or by the police who supported IIU. Anti-IIU people say this is why they used hard social sanctions against pro-IIU individuals and groups.

Anti-IIU groups also burned houses of pro-IIU individuals. In one instance 15 pro-IIU houses were burned down, including the house of the former head of Porsea sub-district and an SIB journalist. Anti-IIU groups said that they did this because those people supported IIU and their action was a clear signal to others in Porsea not to support the mill. As traitors they could suffer the same fate.

Both soft and hard social sanctions were effective in persuading people who wanted to be neutral to side with anti-IIU groups. As proof, most villagers in Toba Samosir are anti-IIU, and it is very easy to mobilize large numbers of villagers from these areas to demonstrate. According to the villagers, no one from Toba Samosir now works for IIU as truck drivers or in other jobs at the mill because they are not ready for social sanctions from anti-IIU groups. In some cases the sanction may have led people to change from pro-IIU to anti-IIU.

On the other hand, in the long run anti-IIU groups using harsh sanctions would collide with law or become targets of revenge. In the public eye, the hard sanctions are unacceptable. The public prefers non-violence as a way to reach a goal even when anti-IIU groups use violence in self-defense.

Chapter V

From Peripheral to Central: The Batak Movement to Oppose PT Inti Indorayon Utama: A Conclusion

Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly argue that the factors which explain why some social movements grow and succeed in reaching their goal while others do not are as follows: 1) grievances, 2) a legacy of previous protest, 3) the political opportunity structure, 4) brokerage, and 5) category formation. In this study of the Toba Batak movement opposing IIU, we can see that a variety of serious grievances, a legacy of previous protests against IIU, a change in the political opportunity structure, the role of several broker groups in supporting the movement and building solidarity, and the definition of the protests against IIU as a “Toba Batak” movement worked together and influenced each other so that the IIU mill was closed down for four years. The movement against IIU forced four different governments in Indonesia to confront the tension between giving free rein to a “development strategy” prioritizing foreign investment, on the one hand, and concern for the environment and the societies of local peoples, on the other hand. This thesis has shown that the success of this movement can be explained by the mechanisms identified by McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly.

The grievances that motivated the movement included air, land, and water pollution; land conflict; social and economic problems, and a high level of violence in conflicts between protestors and IIU supported by government forces. The Toba Batak used these grievances to win support from crucial local, national and international NGOs, other allies and the public. The legacy of protests against IIU was an important factor in

accustoming the Toba Batak to demonstrations. Toba Batak activists learned how to develop a long term strategy for the movement. They learned which tactics were most effective and how to attract people to join demonstrations. Over time the leaders of the movement were able to establish a good working relationship with important allies and to build solidarity among the Toba Batak in opposition to IIU.

The most important factor in the success of the movement was a change in the political opportunity structure following the fall of the Soeharto. The reformation era regime provided a window of opportunity allowing freedom of speech, freedom to establish new organizations, and freedom to demonstrate. The changing political climate in Indonesia stimulated both local and national press to publish stories about IIU and the grievances of the Toba Batak. For the first time the response of the Indonesian government and police to the protests was subjected to critical review in the media. The press contributed to forming public opinion and winning support for the movement. IIU and the government could no longer ignore the problems created by the company's activities.

The decreasing role of the military in politics, security and society made people less hesitant about joining protests against the mill. They no longer feared being arrested and subjected to torture as had happened in the Soeharto regime. The military and police were more careful about employing violence when facing protestors because human rights watchdog organizations were monitoring their behavior toward civilians.

The opening of the political opportunity structure divided elites in the administration and legislature at the local, provincial and national levels. Many political figures began to support the Toba Batak movement to close the mill. They responded to

pressure from the people rather than pressure from foreign and elite investors. For instance, the environmental ministers, except Nabel Makarim in the Megawati administration, declared publicly that the government should close the mill. The industry and trade minister, Luhut Panjaitan, said that the decision to close or reopen the mill was in the hands of the Toba Batak, not the government. In other words, he agreed that the mill should be closed although he avoided saying so because of international pressure.

Several broker groups played a significant role in the success of the movement. Brokers worked to bring groups opposed to IIU together; they brought new people into the movement and mobilized them to action. SRB was the most important local broker organization. SRB worked to empower the Toba Batak at the grassroots, building networks and mobilizing opinion public. KSPPM helped to build a strong local organization in support of the movement and to educate the Toba Batak about the law and the political policies of the Indonesian government relating to IIU. WALHI was a broker at the local, provincial and national levels helping to integrate the movement into larger political currents outside North Sumatra. WALHI initiated academic research, and it was a very effective spokesman for the movement, using media to bring the environmental issues in the case to the attention of national and international NGOs. Religious leaders and organizations provided political support and legitimacy to the movement. Religious leaders living in the community helped to organize demonstrations and gave a critical perspective to their followers in the churches. Students also played an important role as brokers, mobilizing friends in universities in Medan and Jakarta to support the movement by demonstrating against IIU. Some students who lived in the community helped to educate the Toba Batak about their rights and the policies of the

government. Batak organizations in Medan and Jakarta helped to mobilize Toba Batak in these cities in support of the movement and lobbied key figures in the government. They also spoke to the press and attended local activities in the villages. They involved intellectuals in the movement who could present the facts and arguments more systematically in an academically accepted form. These intellectuals and experts legitimated the protests of the Toba Batak. They attended meetings with IIU representatives and government and legislature members and explained the grievances of the Toba Batak to external parties. They worked hand-in-hand with the NGOs and Batak leaders to win public support for the movement and to pressure the government to act.

Category formation also played a significant role in swelling the Toba Batak movement and helping it to close the mill temporarily. Through social sanctions such as isolating Toba Batak who supported IIU and intimidating people who wanted to work at the mill, the Toba Batak removed local support for IIU. These social sanctions threatened the social identity of those who supported IIU. They were said to be betraying their Toba Batak identity. During the reformation era, to be acceptable in local Toba Batak society a person had to be anti-IIU. Many people changed their stance to anti-IIU because they did not want to be labeled traitors to Toba Batak values.

During the Soeharto era, the movement against IIU was not so strong. The importance of the factors identified by McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly can be seen in the table below.

The Toba Batak Movement to Oppose IIU	Grievance	The Legacy of Previous Protests	Political Opportunity Structure	The Role of Brokerage	The Category Formation
In the Reformation Era from 1998 to 2003	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
In the Soeharto military regime era from 1988 to 1998	Strong	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak

Even though during the Soeharto era the grievance level was high, the movement opposing the mill was weak. There was not a legacy of previous protests and the political opportunity structure was closed. The Soeharto regime did not allow freedom of speech in Indonesia. The regime rigidly controlled civil society organizations, issuing warnings against them and resorting to intimidation and coercion if the NGO activities threatened regime interests. The press did not openly report the realities for fear of having their license revoked.

In the Soeharto era, the military played a significant role in controlling politics, security and society. The military was present in the legislature, in government and in business. They interfered when the Toba Batak and NGO activists protested against the government, arguing the demonstrations would destabilize the regime and disturb the development plans of the Indonesian government. The regime experienced very little elite division at the local, provincial or national level.

Broker groups in that era were weak. The Toba Batak did not have a strong local organization that could reach many villages surrounding the mill and in areas where IIU

was logging. KSPPM acted alone in the field to educate and unite the Toba Batak. Even though students lived in the villages, they did not have an organization and they could not risk opposing the government. WALHI North Sumatra was not strong because they were undergoing internal consolidation. The National Executive of WALHI in Jakarta had limited resources, and they were concentrating on the Freeport campaign in West Papua.

The movement also did not have support from Toba Batak organizations in Medan and Jakarta, intellectuals, Catholic priests or Christian and Muslim organizations. Government security forces intimidated the students. The protestors hoped HKBP could play a significant role to pressure the government and IIU, but the leaders of HKBP chose to avoid a confrontation with the Indonesian government. Some of them enjoyed advantages by being close to IIU. Meanwhile, the Toba Batak protestors had not developed a strong image as leaders of a movement upholding Toba Batak values and defending the land of the Toba Batak.

The factors that explain why the Toba Batak movement was successful in temporarily closing the IIU mill can be used to explain why local people together with NGOs and other parties in South Sumatra, Riau and Jambi, failed to close mills causing pollution in their areas.

Although the protest movements in Riau, Jambi and South Sumatra in the reformation era also benefited from the opening of the political opportunity structure—due to freedom of expression, freedom of media and withdrawal of the military—they did not benefit from divisions among the elite, as did the Toba Batak movement. They also did not have a legacy of previous protests, and the local movements were not connected to so many important brokers as the Toba Batak movement. The activists in Riau, Jambi

and South Sumatra did not recruit support from religious institutions and ethnic organizations. Students and intellectuals who supported the Toba Batak movement were drawn into the movement through the church and through appeals to their ethnic identity. This suggests how important category formation was.

In Riau and Jambi, local activists were divided over their goals in opposing three mills owned by Asia Pulp and Paper (APP) and Raja Garuda Mas (RGM). Some of the activists and NGOs and local people demanded reforms in company practices, such as insisting that raw materials be obtained from plantations instead of the natural forest and that the companies pay more attention to pollution, provide community development programs and recruit local people as mill employees. Other NGOs, like WALHI and Hakiki Foundation wanted to close the mills. Because there was no consensus among the NGOs and local people regarding their demands, there was no strong category formation on which to build solidarity.

In South Sumatra, WALHI South Sumatra and the Legal Aid Institute Palembang (LBH Palembang) helped to establish a strong organization of local people in conflict with the paper and pulp company, PT TEL. However, this organization, the Peasant Welfare Solidarity Group (*Kesatuan Solidaritas Kesejahteraan Petani* or KSKP) did not get wide support from people in Palembang (the capital city of South Sumatra province) and other places in South Sumatra. The local people were also divided in formulating their demands of PT TEL. Many supported a reform of company practices, while WALHI South Sumatra and LBH Palembang campaigned to close down the mill. This split the movement. The activists did not develop a strong category formation that could unite all faction opposed to the mill into a single organization.

In the South Sumatra movement to close PT TEL, some political elites, like Suripto, the General Secretary of the Ministry of Forestry in the Gus Dur administration, supported returning forest concession land of Musi Hutan Persada, a company which supplies raw material to PT. TEL, to local villagers in Rambang Lubai in Muaraenim and in Pelawe in Lubuk Linggau district,, but he did not support closing the PT TEL mill.

Although the movements in Riau, Jambi, and South Sumatra opposing pulp and paper mills tried to take advantage of changes in the political opportunity structure, they did not have the same kind of support from elites in government as the Toba Batak movement. There are some reasons why this is so: 1) the movements were not strong so the elites did not feel it was urgent to respond; 2) few elites came from these provinces, especially from the conflict area; 3) the activists were not effective in lobbying for elite support of their movement.

Another difference is category formation. In Riau, Jambi, and South Sumatra, the movements did not have a distinct cultural identity which could bind many local groups in opposition to the mill. The Toba Batak movement shows how ethnicity can be used to build a strong movement. The Toba Batak applied social sanctions from soft to hard to gain and maintain support for the movement against IIU.

Looking Forward: The Narrowing of the Political Opportunity Structure and the Crystallization of Resistance Culture

The narrowing of the political opportunity structure under the Megawati government allowed the IIU mill to reopen in February 2003 after it had been closed for four years. This change in policy was due to the lobbying of Leo Batubara, who

convinced the cabinet that IIU would implement a “new paradigm” reducing the level of pollution and providing development funds to communities around the mill. IIU would also change its approach to the Toba Batak. Jakob Nua Wea, the minister of manpower, emphasized that the mill would provide jobs. He ignored the long trauma of the negative impacts of the mill and the assessment of experts that environmental problems related to the mill could not be solved. He mobilized Toba Batak to attend a mass meeting to support IIU. However, it was not the Toba Batak from Porsea who had suffered from the mill, but Batak from places outside Porsea who came to this mass meeting. Meanwhile, Nabel Makarim, the environmental minister, did not stand by his commitment to close the mill. He feared this would create tension between him and other members of the Megawati administration and disrupt other environmental agendas such as opposition to the Pantura reclamation project in Jakarta.²⁶³ Activists believe that he is worried that Megawati will replace him if he opposes the plan to reopen the IIU mill.

During Megawati administration, elites at the provincial and district level united to persuade the Toba Batak to agree to reopen the mill. They told the media and protestors that the local government would implement the central government decision even though it was not popular. Local government officials warned local people not to support the Toba Batak movement opposing the mill and accused activists from WALHI and Forum Bona Pasogit of being provocateurs. Local officials warned village chiefs not to go to Jakarta to demonstrate. When the Toba Batak, NGOs, students, intellectuals, Toba Batak organizations, and religious figures and institutions organized demonstrations

²⁶³ Interview, May 6, 2003. The Pantura project was proposed by Sutiyoso, the Governor of Jakarta. He would like to reclaim land on the waterfront in Jakarta. Environmentalists argue that this project will lead to further flooding in Jakarta and the intrusion of sea water since the mangrove forest will be destroyed. Because the natural flow of the water will be disrupted, the sea water near the electricity turbines of the state-owned electricity company (PLN) will be heated posing a further threat.

opposing the government decision to reopen the mill, the police provided full protection to IIU, guarding trucks bringing raw material to the mill and hauling the finished products to the seaport in Medan. They also supplemented the civilian guards at the mill.

The long struggle in Toba Samosir resisting IIU operations is turning into a culture of resistance. The long campaign against IIU from 1988 to 2003 has taught the Toba Batak how to resist injustice created by the government. They realize that the only way to reach their goal is by continuing to pressure the government through protests. The Toba Batak demonstrate at Sirait Uruk intersection in Porsea twice a week, on Wednesday and Sunday. On June 13, 2003, fifty-two village chiefs demonstrated in Jakarta. They went to the national legislature and the national police headquarters to demand that police in Toba Samosir stop arresting protestors and respect the right of people to demonstrate. They also demanded the police cease guarding the mill and IIU properties. They also went to the National Commission of Human Rights to ask the commission to take up their case and investigate human rights violations by the government, police and the company in Porsea. They demonstrated at the presidential palace to demand that Megawati reverse her decision to reopen the mill. Religious leaders, especially Christian leaders, made public statements demanding that the government close the mill. Activists continue to hold meetings to formulate new strategies to resist the mill. Student activists say they plan to boycott school for a second time if the government does not close the mill again. The NGOs, intellectuals, Toba Batak organizations, and students have not given up their struggle. They keep protesting by sending letters to the government, organizing demonstrations, collecting money and

seeking support from local, provincial and international groups to press the government to do what the people want.

The latest development in the Toba Batak movement to oppose IIU is a declaration by a group of local activists of the establishment of a Porsea Liberation Movement, which will take action if the government refuses to accede to their demand to close the mill. This declaration signals a shift from appeals to the government to close the mill to a threat to take more violent action. In my interviews with the villagers, I was asked how they could buy rifles and other weapons. Local people say their movement opposing the mill will not stop until their goal is achieved.

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