

CHAPTER 14

Passports to the Post-colonial World: Space and Mobility in Francisca Fonggidaej's Afro-Asian Journeys

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Abstract

Francisca Fonggidaej (1925-2013), a left-wing intellectual in the postwar decades and subsequently a member of the Indonesian parliament, was an active participant in Afro-Asian political exchanges. The trajectory of Third World internationalist movements can be mapped onto Fonggidaej's lifepath through the passports she obtained, destroyed, abandoned, and forged. She was a student activist with a rudimentary passport issued by a new government, an official with a diplomatic passport, a political exile with an annulled passport, and a refugee with a doctored passport. By tracing her journeys in the Bandung era and her later immobility and isolation, this chapter reveals Fonggidaej's understanding of the international realm as simultaneously personal and political, shaped by reason and diplomacy as well as by sensibility and intimacy.

Keywords: Indonesia, migration, colonialism, national independence, youth movements, international communist movement

On 20 July 1947, at the Maguwo Airfield of Yogyakarta, the temporary capital of the Republic of Indonesia, twenty-two-year-old Francisca Fonggidaej hurriedly boarded an airplane bound for India. She had been waiting for her passport, which was signed by Indonesian Prime Minister Amir Sjarifuddin Harahap (1907–1948) shortly before her plane took off. Made of "rough and yellowish" straw paper and without even the word "passport" on its cover, what Francisca held in her hand was one of the first travel documents issued by the nascent republic. In her late seventies, Francisca would comment in her memoir that this little booklet was not only a legal document that enabled her international travels but also a symbol of her national identity.¹

The rudimentary passport opened doors for Francisca, an activist in the Socialist Youth of Indonesia (*Pemuda Sosialis Indonesia* or Pesindo) who later became a journalist at Indonesia's Antara News Agency and a member of the Indonesian parliament's Foreign Affairs Commission (*Komisi Luar Negeri, Dewan Perwakilan*

Rakyat Gotong Royong or DPR-GR).² Having campaigned in India and Europe for Indonesia's national independence during her youth, she actively participated in Afro-Asian political and intellectual exchanges. In the 1950s and early 1960s, she attended important events such as the Congress of the Women's International Democratic Federation in Berlin, the Afro-Asian Women's Conference in Cairo, and the World Peace Congress in Helsinki.

Yet her life, the history of her country, and the trajectory of Afro-Asian movements would all take unexpected turns. In 1965, when visiting Santiago, Chile, for a meeting of the International Journalist Organization's (IJO) executive committee, Francisca heard shocking news about an abortive coup led by a group calling themselves "the September Thirtieth Movement." Due to the ensuing military-led oppression of the Indonesian left, Francisca was unable to return home. She traveled from Santiago to Havana to attend the Tricontinental Conference of 1966 and used her international stage to denounce the "fascist acts" of persecution and torture committed by the Indonesian military against the leaders of the Indonesian Women's Movement (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia* or Gerwani). Her public protests invited retribution from the Suharto government, which immediately canceled her passport.³

Suddenly rendered stateless in a foreign land, Francisca accepted an offer of asylum from the Chinese delegation at the Tricontinental Conference. With a temporary Cuban passport, a gift from Fidel Castro, Francisca flew to Beijing to work for the Afro-Asian Journalist Association.⁴ She spent nineteen years living as a political exile in China and witnessed the leftist extremism that occurred during the Cultural Revolution. In 1985, she arrived in the Netherlands on a forged passport and later obtained legal residence as a political asylum seeker.⁵

During her movements across a global terrain, Francisca used different passports and developed different identities. She was a student activist with a brand-new passport issued by a newly independent nation, a governmental representative with a diplomatic passport, a political exile with an annulled passport, and a refugee with a doctored passport. As John Torpey explains, the passport was "invented" by modern states to monopolize the "legitimate means of movement" and to tie persons to certain political orders.⁶ Indonesia, like many participating nations in Third World internationalist movements, "was born into a world where territorial boundaries were charted on maps, constructed on Western cartographical principles and where a universal system of passport control was already in place."⁷ Under Sukarno, Indonesia hosted the Bandung Conference and sponsored many of the vibrant Afro-Asian cultural and intellectual exchanges, but it restricted the movement of those who did not align with the state's stance in international politics by refusing visas.⁸ For instance, Indonesian socialists hoped to host the Asian Socialist Conference's third meeting in 1954 in Bandung, but Sukarno's

government refused to grant entry visas to socialist leaders from Israel, and the meeting relocated to Burma. After 1965, Indonesia became a compliant partner in the U.S.-led world order. While wiping out members and sympathizers of the Communist Party of Indonesia (Partai Komunis Indonesia or PKI) at home through political genocide, the Suharto government made thousands of left-wing activists living overseas stateless through passport cancellations.⁹

The stories about Francisca's passports show that, for Bandung-era internationalists like her, it was impossible to divorce oneself from geography and territory. Despite giving rise to sprawling networks of travel, mobility, and circulation, the Afro-Asian solidarity movements took place amidst turbulent contexts of nation-building.¹⁰ The global connections forged during the Bandung era were uneven, affected by the visa regimes, passport controls, and surveillance technologies employed by colonial and post-colonial governments.¹¹ As Su Lin Lewis argues, "The ideas of solidarity that characterised the Bandung era were both propped up and undermined by national interests and the ability of new national governments to control who flowed in and out of its [sic] borders."¹²

This chapter analyzes the ways in which one woman activist participating in the Afro-Asian movements navigated the international travel control systems and migration regimes of that time. By doing so, it discusses what Hodder, Legg, and Heffernan call "the spatiality of internationalism," or "how practices and theories of internationalism, despite their universal assumptions, are rooted in particular geographical and historical contexts and their spatial dimensions."¹³ Combining biography and geography, I use a "lifepath" method to analyze Francisca Fanggaldae's memoir, diary entries, personal letters, and oral history interview recordings.¹⁴ By tracing her globetrotting journeys in the Bandung era as well as her later immobility, displacement, and isolation, and by reconstructing her licit and illicit border crossings, I examine Francisca's evolving understanding of the international realm as a forum for consciousness-raising and political action. The following sections, structured in the format of the information page of a passport, show how her changing visions of the post-World War II world order were inscribed in the sites and places where she lived, worked, and felt she belonged.

Place of Birth: Timor

Francisca was born in 1925, at the geographic edge of the Dutch East Indies, to elite creole parents who were at the social core of the colonial administration. Her father, Gottlieb Fanggaldae, was the child of a Christian pastor on Roti Island and studied at STOVIA (*School tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Artsen*), or "the school for the training of native physicians," in Jakarta. After graduation, he entered the

ranks of the colonial government and became a manager in the Dutch colonial government's Public Works Department (*Burgerlijke Openbare Werken*).¹⁵ Her mother, Magda Mael, a village woman from Timor Island, became fluent in Dutch after marrying and was known as an articulate leader among the wives of Dutch colonial bureaucrats.¹⁶ Francisca's mother was said to have given birth to her on horseback in the middle of a forest along the Mina River (*Noel Mina*) of Timor, as the family was relocating due to her father's job transfer.¹⁷

The family moved to Java around 1932–1933, and Francisca grew up amidst the “colonial cosmopolitan” milieu of an island widely regarded as the jewel in the Dutch Crown.¹⁸ Her father's employment as a high-ranking civil servant in the Dutch East Indies government gave all the Fanggidaej children, including one boy and four girls, access to Western education. Francisca excelled in her studies at the *Europesche Lagere School* (ELS), where almost all her classmates were Dutch and the history and geography curricula centered on Holland. She knew a lot about the railroad connecting Rotterdam to Maastricht but nothing about the one between Malang and Surabaya.¹⁹ The family was simultaneously confined to the small social world of colonial elites in the Indies and exposed to diverse cultures across the Asia-Pacific and Europe via free family vacation trips, which were among the work benefits her father enjoyed.

When attending the Dutch elementary school in the central Javanese city of Malang, Francisca once wrote, “Every man has a piece of angel.”²⁰ Seen in the context of both the privileges the family enjoyed and the racial discrimination they endured, this sentence reflects Francisca's ambivalence towards colonialism. The Fanggidaej family was Dutch linguistically and culturally. Her parents forbade the children to use Malay, which was considered a “foreign language”; the family celebrated Christian holidays such as Easter and Christmas and played bridge, tennis, and bowling; her mother read what Dutch housewives read, from sensational stories to food recipes. Because they were Dutch-speaking and culturally Westernized, Francisca's parents did not identify themselves as *pribumi* (indigenous).²¹ Yet on one of the family trips, Francisca's father was called “black fatty” by a white Dutch person when he went swimming on a cruise ship from Medan to Penang.²² The humiliating scene left a strong imprint on ten-year-old Francisca, who started to interrogate her identity as “dark Dutch” (*Belanda hitam*) among her white classmates at school. “Why,” she wondered, “was dark skin color always associated with ‘bad’ and white skin color with ‘good’? Weren't all Christians good people? Were dark-skinned Christians bad too?”²³

On young Francisca's mental map, the colonial metropole was near but her ancestral homeland was far away. Like “a group without roots,” her parents put their pasts behind them – there were no conversations about Timor and Roti, nor interactions with the extended family members remaining there. Francisca

speculated that her parents had established themselves by adopting the values of Dutch culture and did not want any interference from their memories or cultural heritages.²⁴ But this vacuum in her family history motivated her to join the Indonesian National Revolution.

Born in the same year as Francisca, the Indonesian writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer wrote about his coming-of-age experience under the Japanese occupation as a process through which he shed his ethnic Javanese-ness and became a real Indonesian.²⁵ For Pramoedya, his Indonesian affiliation overtook his Javanese-ness; for Francisca, her Indonesian-ness was forged through a reidentification with the islands in eastern Indonesia. The closure of Dutch schools by the Japanese drove her to seek companionship and intellectual stimulation from the young intellectual circle of Maluku youth in Surabaya (*Kelompok Muda Maluku Surabaya*) led by Gerit Siwabessy, a distant relative who later became Minister of Health and director of the National Nuclear Agency (*Badan Tenaga Nuklir Nasional* or BATAN) under Suharto. Her extended family ties to eastern Indonesia, largely ignored by her parents under Dutch rule, became a crucial source of emotional support and political awakening for Francisca during the Japanese occupation. Influenced by this group of nationalist youths, Francisca began to view the colonial system as a “rat poison” that “gradually entered people’s body until it’s all over the person’s blood and spirits.”²⁶

Shortly after Sukarno and Hatta declared Indonesia’s independence in August 1945, Francisca joined the youth movement *Premuda Republik Indonesia* (PRI) in Surabaya and was invited to the first Youth Congress (*Kongres Pemuda*) in Yogyakarta. She had kept her political activism secret and was unsure how to persuade her mother to let her leave. Politics was a taboo topic in the Fanggidaej household, which had lost its breadwinner – Francisca’s father – during World War II. As a woman from a humble background, Francisca’s mother achieved remarkable upward social mobility by marrying a civil servant in the Dutch colonial government.²⁷ When the Japanese occupation shattered Dutch power and prestige and the colonial social hierarchy was turned upside down, her mother lost her self-confidence. In Francisca’s understanding, her mother, a Christian Timorese, saw the Indonesian resistance against the Dutch as a struggle only on behalf of the Javanese Muslims. She recalled her mother saying, “As an underdog, the Javanese could be sympathized with, but they should not be given the authority to dream.”²⁸ Yet Francisca’s mother allowed her to join the youth movement in support of the Indonesian national independence, prepared her clothes, kissed her goodbye, and wished her success. Francisca recalled in 1995 that when her mother expressed that desire for “success,” she was signaling her acceptance of Francisca’s political cause. That moment of endorsement meant the world to her and would remain with her until she died. It absolved her from guilt after their separation in 1945 turned out to last forever, as the mother and daughter never saw each other again.²⁹

Place of Issue: Yogyakarta

At the 1945 Youth Congress in Yogyakarta, a “horizontal universe” of people connected by their shared desire for national independence emerged before Francisca’s eyes.³⁰ Although Timorese by birth, Francisca attended the congress as a representative of the Maluku Islands due to her long association with the Maluku youth. To her pleasant surprise, she discovered her sister Delly at the congress, dressed in traditional Timorese costume and representing their native land. Their encounter was like “two ships that pass in the night,” as neither had ever revealed their political orientation despite sharing the same room at home.³¹ When the bespectacled leader of the youth movement, Amir Sjarifuddin, raised his hand and shouted “*merdeka*” (independence) on the stage, Francisca felt shaken to her core. When reminiscing about that moment in 1995, Francisca said the feeling had never waned and was still burning after fifty years.³²

After the Youth Congress, Francisca’s decision not to return home to Surabaya was, paradoxically, her own type of homecoming. The congress marked her personal “Wilsonian moment,” when she began to imagine a community of young people from across Indonesia and in the wider colonized world all demanding political independence.³³ She found her roots and spiritual home while away from her pro-Dutch birth family, rubbing shoulders with other congress attendees from different cultural backgrounds, and using her still rudimentary Bahasa Indonesia language skills to communicate with them. When the congress ended, she was reluctant to leave the alluring “new world” in front of her. It was as if she had “stepped through a door which had opened wide.” She did not want to take a step back and close the door.³⁴

In her new social circle in the Socialist Youth of Indonesia (Pesindo), Francisca inhabited two spaces: the soundscape of Radio Gelora Pemoeda Indonesia and the “barrack-like” physical environment of the Marx House in Madiun. Her lack of proficiency in Bahasa Indonesia, a language she began to study in earnest only during the Indonesian National Revolution, and her complete lack of knowledge of Javanese made it difficult for her to participate in the mobilization of the local masses. Yet her command of European languages made her a perfect candidate for international publicity campaigns. Radio Gelora Pemoeda Indonesia broadcast in three languages – Bahasa Indonesia, Dutch, and English; the latter two were tasked to a foreign relations section led by Francisca, who compiled and edited the contents.³⁵ Radio, an important tool that had defined the colonial space, was repurposed by Pesindo for a nationalist agenda with predominantly female voices.³⁶ Francisca worked with Yetty Zain, the younger sister of Ambassador Zairin Zain and a polyglot fluent in Dutch, English, French, and Japanese; Harmini, the wife of PKI leader Ruslan Wijayasastra; and Rusiyati, who later became the vice head of the national news desk at Antara.³⁷

In 1946, Francisca attended study sessions at the Marx House, a political training camp where young activists listened to lectures on Marxism, Leninism, and the histories of Indonesian nationalist movements delivered by all-male, Western-educated teachers during the day and slept on the floor at night.³⁸ In contrast to Radio Gelora Pemoeda Indonesia, the Marx House was probably a space where Francisca felt doubly marginalized as a Christian woman, because most of the students were young men from East Java whose family supported the Indonesian National Revolution. The rough physical environment – sleeping on mats without mosquito nets – also caused her to miss the material comfort of her parents' mansion with its thirteen rooms and seven servants.³⁹ As a “city lady (*perempuan kota, nyonya*) from a family with a colonial mentality,” Francisca was self-conscious about her parents' complicity in colonialism.⁴⁰ But she was “respected” by her colleagues in Pesindo for her educational background, and she became the organization's face for international exchange.⁴¹

In July 1947, as an informal ambassador for a country seeking to establish itself as a diplomatic actor, Francisca embarked on a nine-month journey in Asia and Europe to rally international support for Indonesia's struggle for independence. Like Ali Sastroamidjojo, who later served as chairman of the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference, Francisca crossed the still-developing national boundary with a “primitive” passport hurriedly prepared by the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁴² For this trip, Francisca and her two male colleagues brought along a suitcase with only two changes of clothes, but full of brochures and posters about Indonesia and its independence struggle.⁴³ Their first stop was India, where the country's leader, Jawaharlal Nehru, warmly supported the fledgling Republic of Indonesia by donating rice, arranging air travel for the Indonesian leaders, and sponsoring Francisca and her colleagues' trip to Prague to attend the conferences of the International Union of Students and World Federation of Democratic Youths. From Prague, Francisca traveled to Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Britain to raise funds and solicit donations of weapons and medicine for Indonesia from leftist groups in Europe.⁴⁴

In December 1947, Francisca left London for Calcutta to attend the Conference of Youth and Students of Southeast Asia Fighting for Freedom and Independence. The first international communist meeting in the region after World War II, this event was attended by more than 100 representatives from countries such as Vietnam, Malaya, and Burma. With no tables, no chairs, and no guesthouses for accommodation, the young activists held discussions in tents that became their bedrooms at night. The Calcutta conference advocated a “complete rejection of Western imperialism” and encouraged the Southeast Asian youth to continue their “implacable struggle against world imperialism.”⁴⁵ During the conference, Francisca became anguished upon hearing about the signing of the Renville Agreement, a

temporary ceasefire between the Dutch and Indonesian Republican forces, which in her view was a huge setback to Indonesia's struggle for independence. A skinny, eighteen-year-old male leader of a weapons factory in Vietnam "with long hair and sagging clothes" hugged Francisca and invited her to come to Vietnam and escape the war in Indonesia, telling her that Vietnam was her motherland too.⁴⁶

While at the Calcutta conference, Francisca facilitated clandestine communications between the Communist International (Comintern) and the PKI, an act that contributed to Indonesia's "inescapable" entanglement in the Cold War.⁴⁷ At the end of the conference, Francisca and two male delegates from Indonesia faced the problems of how to return home without any money and how to circumvent a blockade imposed by the Dutch against Indonesia during the last stage of the nation's anti-colonial struggle. They were assisted by Tio Oen Bik, a Peranakan Chinese Indonesian doctor who had volunteered in the international brigade in the Spanish Civil War and supported the Chinese communists during the Second Sino-Japanese War.⁴⁸ Besides arranging her travel, Tio gave Francisca her a document of about four or five pages to take to the PKI leadership and instructed her to "tuck the papers in her kebaya to avoid searches."⁴⁹ This document was later described by Indonesian journalist Rosihan Anwar as a "blueprint" for the Madiun Affair. In September 1948, a left-wing coalition force led by the PKI attempted to establish a popular sovereign state free of imperialism and bourgeois rule, but the uprising was ultimately suppressed by the government of the Republic of Indonesia.⁵⁰ Francisca claimed to have never read the document, but she suspected that it was the text of a speech delivered by Soviet leader Andrew Zhdanov at the Indian Communist congress, which followed the youth conference. She wrote in her memoir:

At the time, the ideas of Afro-Asia, Asia-Africa-Latin America and the Third World had not yet been born. If there was a blueprint presented by Zhdanov, it was not a blueprint specifically for the PKI to carry out a "revolt" at Madiun. It was more of a strategy for the communist parties all over the world to fight for independence and against colonialism. According to Zhdanov, there was only one way for the colonized peoples to achieve independence, and that was through armed struggle.⁵¹

In April 1948, Francisca was ultimately "smuggled" back into Indonesia through the joint efforts of Tio Oen Bik and John Lie, the only Chinese Indonesian navy admiral and awardee of the title of National Hero (*Pahlawan Nasional*).⁵² Tio helped Francisca and three other Indonesian attendees at the Calcutta conference to stow away in a ship bound for Singapore. On board, they hid with other "black passengers" (*penumpang gelap*) and destroyed their Indonesian passports for fear of encountering Dutch patrol boats.⁵³ Upon arriving in Singapore, they were cared for by one of Amir Sjarifuddin's contacts and a young Chinese woman who was likely

a member of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). While the group was staying in a dark and small hotel room, a letter written in Chinese mysteriously appeared on Francisca's desk one day. The young MCP woman quickly recognized it as bait planted by the British colonial police. The hotel was soon raided, but fortunately, Francisca and her colleagues had left thanks to the MCP woman's warning. They went underground for several days until a motorboat arranged by John Lie picked them up in the shallow waters along the shore of Singapore, taking them into Indonesia through Jambi.⁵⁴ Lie, a Christian, would later tease Francisca when both were members of parliament in the early 1960s: "If I had known I was bringing communists like you back to Indonesia, I wouldn't do it!" and "You found your way to the hammer and sickle; I found my way toward God."⁵⁵

Place of Cancellation: Havana

From the mid-1950s to the early 1960s, Francisca was a socialist cosmopolite constantly on the move. After the Madiun Affair, the PKI was not banned due to public recognition of its contribution to Indonesia's anti-colonial struggle. The party rehabilitated itself, although its position was precarious in the early 1950s.⁵⁶ Having been imprisoned while pregnant and having lost her first husband during the Madiun Affair, Francisca gradually recovered, both personally and politically. In 1950, she was elected as the chairwoman of the Pemuda Rakyat, the youth wing of the PKI reconstituted from Pesindo. When the Bandung Conference was approaching, she retired from the youth movement, became a reporter at the Antara News Agency, and married a coworker, Soepriyo. She also joined three leftist organizations: the Indonesian Women's Movement, the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (*Organisasi Internasional untuk Setiakawan Rakyat Asia-Afrika*), and the World Peace Committee (*Komite Perdamaian*).⁵⁷ In 1957, she became a member of the Indonesian parliament and its Foreign Affairs Commission. In these official capacities, Francisca attended the congress of the Women's International Democratic Federation in Berlin, the Afro-Asian Women's Conference in Cairo, the preparatory conference for a "second Bandung" in Algiers, and the World Peace Congress in Helsinki.

Yet underneath the conviviality of these international gatherings, Francisca perceived simmering discord. At Algiers, she described the conference as an inefficient "big picnic" and considered the large Indonesian delegation a waste of government funding. Moreover, the plans for a second Bandung proved untenable, and Indonesia's radical anti-imperialist policies proved unpopular among Afro-Asian countries.⁵⁸ At the Bandung Conference of 1955, Indonesia had spearheaded the movement toward autonomy in international politics among the previously

voiceless Third World countries. But the abortive second Afro-Asian Conference ten years later revealed Indonesia's increasing isolation. Through *konfrontasi*, the military campaign in Borneo to block the formation of Malaysia, and projects to replace the Olympic Games with the Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO) and to replace the UN with the Conference of the New Emerging Forces (CONEFO), Sukarno used militant anti-imperialism to rally domestic support and distract the general public from the deteriorating national economy. In the process, he transformed the Indonesian government from a reasonable campaigner for Afro-Asian solidarity into a fierce rebel against the international system.⁵⁹ In 1965, in his last Independence Day speech delivered as Indonesia's president, Sukarno declared, "We are now fostering an anti-imperialist axis – the Jakarta-Phnom Penh-Hanoi-Peking-Pyongyang axis."⁶⁰

"Like lightning in broad daylight," the September Thirtieth Movement and the subsequent anti-communist mass violence in Indonesia derailed the trajectories of Francisca's career.⁶¹ While she was attending an International Journalist Organization meeting in Santiago, back in Jakarta an armed group abducted and killed six senior anti-communist generals in the wee hours of 1 October 1965. The kidnappers claimed that they had taken this action to prevent a CIA-sponsored intrigue targeting Sukarno. The next day, Major General Suharto initiated an effective counterattack, characterising the event as a coup attempt by the PKI, which had grown to become the third-largest communist party in the world. According to statements by Suharto and his Indonesian Army, half-naked members of the women's wing of the communist party, Gerwani, had mutilated the lifeless bodies of the generals before their male counterparts dumped the corpses into a dry well called the crocodile hole.⁶² This extreme propaganda, which defamed women activists and dehumanized all participants in the left-wing movements, was an important step in social mobilization for one of the worst mass murders of the twentieth century. In a little over six months, about half a million people allegedly affiliated with the PKI were killed. Another million or so were detained without charge, some for more than thirty years.⁶³

Francisca was probably the first person to alert the international community regarding the atrocities committed against female left-wing activists during the Indonesian mass killings of 1965–1966. In January 1966, she left Santiago for Havana to attend the Tricontinental Conference, which for the first time expanded the realm of Afro-Asian solidarity to Latin America. Together with delegates including Isa Ibrahim, Umar Said, and Wijano – who had been Indonesian representatives to the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, Afro-Asian Journalists' Association and Afro-Asian Jurists' Association, respectively – Francisca voiced her strong opposition to Suharto's new military dictatorship before a global audience.⁶⁴ As the only female in the group, she decried the Suharto regime's "brutal oppression" of



Figure 14.1. Francisca Fanggidaej with Fidel Castro and Isa Ibrahim. Courtesy of Reza Rahadian.

Gerwani's top leaders as well as the "tortures of the most bestial type" perpetrated against "housewives and other women in Indonesia." She highlighted gender-based violence: "Besides subjecting the arrested women to constant untold sufferings in the prisons, the reactionaries cut their hair." She appealed for "support and solidarity" from the women of Asia, Africa, and Latin America on behalf of "all progressive women of Indonesia":

The history of Gerwani has been characterized not only by its consistent fight for full national independence, democracy, and women's emancipation but also by its staunch fight for the cause of Afro-Asian and Latin American unity and solidarity. The attempts of the Indonesian reactionaries to crush Gerwani and other progressive organizations and to wipe them out of the political life in our country are also aimed at weakening Indonesia's contribution to the common cause of the three continents. Therefore, these criminal attempts must be foiled.⁶⁵

The public protests by Francisca and her fellow delegates invited retribution from the Suharto government, which immediately canceled their passports while the group was still in Havana.⁶⁶ They accepted an offer of asylum from the People's Republic of China (PRC) delegation at the Tricontinental Conference. On 26 January 1966, Francisca arrived in Beijing and began her nineteen-year exile in the PRC.⁶⁷

Immediately after her arrival in Beijing, Francisca busied herself with publishing and translation work at the Afro-Asian Journalists' Association (AAJA).⁶⁸ Originating from the 1955 Bandung Conference, the AAJA promoted international collaboration among journalists in newly independent countries. Built on an inclusive foundation of peaceful coexistence, the AAJA contributed to the development of expansive global information networks, lively intellectual traffic, and rich visual arts among Afro-Asian nations. After 1965, the Indonesian Army began searching AAJA headquarters in Jakarta, confiscating documents, cutting off its communications with the outside world, and arresting and harassing its staff members. As a result, the AAJA secretariat relocated to Beijing, and its new headquarters became a magnet for left-leaning Indonesian intellectuals from different parts of the world, including Francisca. However, by the time she arrived in Beijing, the reconstituted AAJA had been transformed from a cosmopolitan alliance of socialist presses into an international branch of the PRC propaganda system, promoting Mao as the universal leader of an embittered Third World's battle against American imperialism and Soviet revisionism.⁶⁹

In China, Francisca lost her freedom of movement, and her cosmopolitan identity was also stripped away. Although her Chinese hosts provided her with a privileged life insulated from economic difficulties, they also confined her and her fellow Indonesian exiles to enclaves isolated from the general Chinese population. Francisca was paid a high salary and enjoyed an honorable status as a "foreign guest of the Party." Nevertheless, worldly comforts did not fully compensate for the emotional stress of living in a stifling atmosphere. Initially housed in the Peking Hotel, Francisca was transferred in 1966 to the Nanjing Military Academy, China's boot camp for radical groups from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. There, the Indonesian exiles congregated to study Maoist guerrilla warfare strategies. The strain of isolation, combined with the exiles' dim prospects of returning home and resurrecting the PKI, eventually caused them to turn in upon themselves in bitter acrimony. The community of exiles was subjected to strict internal party discipline and a principle of secrecy during the Cultural Revolution.⁷⁰ All its members adopted *noms de guerre*, with Francisca changing her name to "Santi."⁷¹ In volatile campaigns mimicking those of the Cultural Revolution, "Santi" suffered fierce personal attacks, possibly due to her pro-Dutch, bourgeois family origin.⁷² Francisca was disheartened by the irreversible erosion of the PKI's internal unity and the painful unraveling of her past friendships.

By the mid-1970s, ideological fervor began abating in China. After U.S. President Richard Nixon's historic visit to the PRC in 1972, Beijing started to tone down its propaganda promoting Maoist-style guerrilla insurgencies worldwide. Following Deng Xiaoping's ascent to power in the late 1970s, economic growth gained priority over ideological campaigns. The PRC looked to the capitalist world for investment,

managerial knowledge, and technology while cutting back its support of the international communist movement. China's transformation had a significant impact on Indonesian communist exiles such as Francisca. In 1974, to keep the exiles away from public view, the Chinese Communist Party's International Liaison Department (ILD) constructed an enclosed compound in the suburbs of Nanchang, the capital of the hinterland province of Jiangxi. Although confined to the compound, the exiles lived in rent-free apartments equipped with expensive, imported household electronics and ate for free at a public canteen. They also enjoyed free medical care, translation services, and annual holiday trips arranged by the ILD.

In the mid-1980s, China and Indonesia began negotiations on the resumption of diplomatic ties. Pressured by Suharto to renounce any ties with the PKI, the PRC canceled its comprehensive welfare packages for the exiles. The ILD issued a new rule stipulating that if the exiles would like to remain in China, they would have to become naturalized PRC citizens without any privileges. They needed to be economically independent and make their own financial calculations based on personal income. But due to a lack of Chinese language skills, most of the exiles had few employment opportunities in China and instead migrated to the West.

The beginning of Reform and Opening in China signaled new hopes for many Chinese who had suffered during the Cultural Revolution. But for Francisca and her fellow exiles, it was a moment of loss and disillusionment. Feeling betrayed by Beijing's endeavors to reconcile with the Suharto regime at their expense, they fought "tooth and nail" against the PRC's decision to expel them.⁷³ Francisca ultimately gave in and left China for Holland. Despite her proficiency in Dutch, she experienced downward social mobility. She felt that her pride was "offended" as she "begged" for political asylum at the advanced age of sixty.⁷⁴ Three weeks after her arrival, she wrote to her friends back in China that she was homesick – using "home" to refer not to Indonesia but to the clandestine compound where she used to live in Nanchang. She compared herself to "an old tree struggling to take root in new soil."⁷⁵

During her early days in the Netherlands, Francisca thought Chinese society was more "humane" whereas everything was "cold" and "foreign" in western Europe.⁷⁶ With assistance from the Indonesian exile community in Holland, she resettled in a "quiet and lovely" flat in Zeist, a small town thirty minutes away by bus from the city of Utrecht.⁷⁷ After some initial struggles to acquire practical life skills such as cooking, which she had never bothered to learn in thirty years of adulthood, Francisca adapted to her new life and continued her intellectual pursuits and political activism. She filled her schedule with voluntary work in international campaigns for the release of Indonesian political prisoners as well as lectures and studies at Leiden University.⁷⁸ In 2004, Francisca returned to Indonesia for the first time since 1965. She passed away in the Netherlands in 2013.

Conclusions

Francisca Fanggidaj represented Indonesia at three conferences that marked inflection points in the Afro-Asian movements: the Conference of Youth and Students of Southeast Asia Fighting for Freedom and Independence of 1948 in Calcutta; the preparatory meeting for a second Afro-Asian Conference in 1964 in Algiers; and the Tricontinental Conference of 1966 in Havana. If the Calcutta conference marked the embryonic stage of Afro-Asian solidarity, the Algiers meeting exposed its latent fissures and the Havana conference signaled the ultimate separation between countries demanding militant, revolutionary change and those that prioritized peaceful accommodation of the two superpowers.⁷⁹ Francisca's travels reflect the complexity of the worldwide anti-imperialist coalitions, give us a glimpse into the extensive networks generated by internationalist movements, and showcase various states' efforts to facilitate as well as to constrain and surveil Afro-Asian activists' movements across borders.

Francisca's identity was made and remade through her Afro-Asian journeys.⁸⁰ In Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *The Mute's Soliloquy*, the renowned Indonesian writer narrated a story of how a Javanese young man's migration from rural central Java to Jakarta made him into a genuine Indonesian with an Indonesian sensibility.⁸¹ Francisca was a contemporary of Pramoedya, and her own migration from her comfortable birth home to the spartan environment of the Marxist study camp gave rise to nationalist sentiments as well as internationalist ideals. For her, the Indonesian National Revolution represented not an act of revenge against the Dutch but a journey of homecoming (*seperti pulang ke rumah sendiri*), of self-discovery, of locating her own place in the world.⁸² When the nation achieved its independence, she felt that she had gained her individual independence as well.⁸³ Yet having grown up in the port city of Surabaya, Francisca, like many cosmopolitan urban elites across the trading ports of maritime Asia, had a sense of "double consciousness of both global processes and local pluralism."⁸⁴ Committed to an equitable and inclusive vision of humanity that crossed national lines, Francisca had been an outward-looking Indonesian nationalist with a socialist cosmopolitan identity connected to the Third World. Since her attendance at the Calcutta conference, she had been envisioning a "family" of people of color all across the world united by their shared feelings (*persaan*) and aspirations for national independence (*merdeka*).⁸⁵

"Where is the international?"⁸⁶ For Francisca, the international realm was simultaneously personal and political. The trajectory of Third World internationalist movements can be mapped onto Francisca's lifepath and is embodied in the passports she obtained, destroyed, abandoned, and forged. In her early years, Afro-Asianism provided her with a home in her search for belonging. During the liveliest phase of the Afro-Asian solidarity movement, she could be simultaneously

an Indonesian nationalist and an internationalist, a revolutionary and a Western-educated cosmopolitan. For the young Francisca, who was constantly on the move, the international was embedded in the soundscape dominated by young women at Radio Gelora Pemoeda Indonesia, inscribed in the physical spaces of gatherings in Prague, Berlin, Cairo, and Helsinki and the emotional space of relationships with fellow activists. Yet in the second half of her life, trapped in China during the Cultural Revolution, she saw her physical mobility constrained and her socialist cosmopolitanism called into question. The demise of the communist movement in Indonesia and the decline of Afro-Asianism deprived Francisca of the strongest iterations of her identity.

In her memoir, Francisca wrote that the political freedom she pursued had been more emotional than rational.⁸⁷ Along with the other feminist scholarship in this volume, this chapter shows how “the emotive expression of solidarity and calls for social justice among ordinary people” was a crucial component of Afro-Asian movements.⁸⁸ Francisca’s spatial imaginaries of internationalism were shaped by reason and diplomacy as well as by sensibility and intimacy.

Notes

- ¹ Hersi Setiawan and Francisca Fanggaldaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner* (Yogyakarta: Percetakan Galangpress, 2006), 106.
- ² Setiawan and Fanggaldaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 106.
- ³ “Peristiwa Havana Sepenuhnya Mendapatkan Perhatian DPR-GR; DPR-GR menyatakan protes,” 1 February 1966, Antara, Jakarta, in Francisca Fanggaldaej Papers, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.
- ⁴ Isa Ibrahim, *Kabar dari Negeri Seberang* (Jakarta: Historia Publisher, 2013), 104.
- ⁵ Francisca Fanggaldaej diary entry, 17 October 1985, Francisca Fanggaldaej Papers.
- ⁶ John Torpey, *The Invention of Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), xi.
- ⁷ Jean Gelman Taylor, *Global Indonesia* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 125.
- ⁸ Su Lin Lewis, “Skies That Bind: Air Travel in the Bandung Era,” in Mike Heffernan *et al.* (eds), *Placing Internationalism: International Conferences and the Making of the Modern World* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 239; Su Lin Lewis and Carolien Stolte, “Other Bandungs: Afro-Asian Internationalism in the Early Cold War,” *Journal of World History* 30:1-2 (2019), 12-13.
- ⁹ John Roosa, *Buried Histories: The Anticommunist Massacres of 1965–1966* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2020), 24; David T. Hill, “Indonesia’s Exiled Left as the Cold War Thaws,” *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 44:1 (2010), 21-51; David T. Hill, “Indonesian Political Exiles in the USSR,” *Critical Asian Studies* 46:4 (2014), 621-48.
- ¹⁰ Jake Hodder, Stephen Legg, and Mike Heffernan, “Introduction: Historical Geographies of Internationalism, 1900–1950,” *Political Geography* 49 (2015), 4-5.

- ¹¹ See, for example, Carolien Stolte, "Grounded. On Not Travelling in the Bandung Era," *Afro-Asian Networks*, 26 March 2019, <https://medium.com/afro-asian-visions/grounded-on-not-travelling-in-the-bandung-era-83b3031ed809>.
- ¹² Lewis, "Skies That Bind," 241.
- ¹³ Hodder, Legg, and Heffernan, "Introduction," 4-5.
- ¹⁴ Stephen Daniels and Catherine Nash, "Lifepaths: Geography and Biography," *Journal of Historical Geography* 30 (2004), 449-58.
- ¹⁵ Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 207.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.
- ¹⁸ Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson, "Colonial Cosmopolitanism," in Zawawi Ibrahim (ed), *Social Science and Knowledge in a Globalising World* (Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia: Malaysian Social Science Association, 2012), 371-87.
- ¹⁹ Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 24-25; 36.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 17, 20.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 22.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 37.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 32, 44.
- ²⁵ Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *The Mute's Soliloquy* (New York: Hyperion East, 1999), 153-91.
- ²⁶ Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 54-57; 80.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 55.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 64.
- ²⁹ Hersi Setiawan, interview with Francisca Fanggidaej, 15 June 1995, "In Search of Silenced Voices" oral history collection, Institute of International Social History, Amsterdam.
- ³⁰ Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World* (London: Verso, 1998), 31; Setiawan, interview with Fanggidaej, 15 June 1995.
- ³¹ Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 76-79.
- ³² Setiawan, interview with Francisca Fanggidaej, June 15, 1995.
- ³³ Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 134.
- ³⁴ Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 134-35.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 85.
- ³⁶ Rudolf Mrázek, *Engineers of Happy Land: Technology and Nationalism in a Colony* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 168.
- ³⁷ Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 83, 85; on Rusiyati, see Roosa, *Buried Histories*, 52.
- ³⁸ Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 98.
- ³⁹ Setiawan, interview with Francisca Fanggidaej, 15 June 1995.
- ⁴⁰ Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 92.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 94.
- ⁴² Lewis, "Skies That Bind," 241; Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 103.
- ⁴³ Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 105.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 118.
- ⁴⁵ Ruth McVey, *The Calcutta Conference and the Southeast Asian Uprisings* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1958), 17-18.

- ⁴⁶ Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 122.
- ⁴⁷ Ann Swift, *The Road of Madiun: The Indonesian Communist Uprising of 1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1989), 1.
- ⁴⁸ Leo Suryadinata, *Prominent Indonesian Chinese: Biographical Sketches* (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2015), 328-29; Gregor Benton, *Chinese Migrants and Internationalism: Forgotten Histories, 1917-1945* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 70; Nancy Tsou and Len Tsou, "The Asian Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War: A Report," *Science & Society*, 68:3 (2004), 342-50.
- ⁴⁹ Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 163.
- ⁵⁰ Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 159; Akiko Sugiyama, "Remembering and Forgetting Indonesia's Madiun Affair: Personal Narratives, Political Transitions, and Historiography, 1948-2008," *Indonesia* 92 (2011), 21.
- ⁵¹ Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 160.
- ⁵² Suryadinata, *Prominent Indonesian Chinese: Biographical Sketches*, 142-43.
- ⁵³ Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 167.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 168.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 170.
- ⁵⁶ Swift, *The Road of Madiun*, 90.
- ⁵⁷ Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 174.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 191.
- ⁵⁹ U.S. Embassy in Jakarta to the Department of State, "British Borneo Possibly Next Target," 13 July 1962, National Archives (United States). Archives Unbound, link.gale.com/apps/doc/SC5109679669/GDSC?u=univbri&sid=bookmark-GDSC&xid=ab58a702&pg=1 (I thank Su Lin Lewis for sharing this piece of document with me); Taomo Zhou, *Migration in the Time of Revolution: China, Indonesia and the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019), 132-51.
- ⁶⁰ Marshal Green, *Indonesia: Crisis and Transformation, 1965-1968* (Washington, DC: Compass Press, 1990), 36.
- ⁶¹ Setiawan and Fanggidaej, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 191.
- ⁶² Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia* (London: Palgrave MacMillan: 2002), 17.
- ⁶³ Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacres, 1965-1966* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 1-2.
- ⁶⁴ Katharine McGregor, "The World Is Silent? Global Communities of Resistance to the 1965 Repression in the Cold War Era," in Aidan Russell (ed), *Truth, Silence, and Violence in Emerging States: Histories of the Unspoken* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 151.
- ⁶⁵ Francisca Fanggidaej, speech at the Tricontinental Conference, January 1966, Francisca Fanggidaej Papers.
- ⁶⁶ "Peristiwa Havana Sepenuhnya Mendapatkan Perhatian DPR-GR; DPR-GR menyatakan protes," 1 February 1966, Antara, Jakarta, Francisca Fanggidaej Papers.
- ⁶⁷ "Gerombolan Ibrahim Isa Disinjalir di Peking Hong Kong 26/1/1966 Antara," Francisca Fanggidaej Papers.
- ⁶⁸ Francisca Fanggidaej, diary entry, 19 February 1966, Francisca Fanggidaej Papers.
- ⁶⁹ Taomo Zhou, "Global Reporting from the Third World: The Afro-Asian Journalists' Association, 1963-1974," *Critical Asian Studies* 51:2 (2019), 166-97.
- ⁷⁰ David T. Hill, "Cold War Polarization, Delegated Party Authority, and Diminishing Exilic Options: The Dilemma of Indonesian Exilic Options," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 176 (2020), 338-72.
- ⁷¹ Francisca Fanggidaej, letter to Nila, 13 March 1986, Francisca Fanggidaej Papers.

- ⁷² Francisca Fanggaldae, diary entries, 14 and 15 August, 15 September, 22 November, and 6 and 7 December 1966 and 17 January 1967, Francisca Fanggaldae Papers; Hill, "Cold War Polarization."
- ⁷³ Francisca Fanggaldae, letter to "Endro," undated, Francisca Fanggaldae Papers.
- ⁷⁴ Francisca Fanggaldae, letter to Agam Wispi, 30 August 1985, Francisca Fanggaldae Papers.
- ⁷⁵ Francisca Fanggaldae, letter to "Sum," 11 November 1985, Francisca Fanggaldae Papers.
- ⁷⁶ Francisca Fanggaldae, letter to an unnamed "Zus," 21 November 1985, Francisca Fanggaldae Papers.
- ⁷⁷ Francisca Fanggaldae, letter to "Beno," 20 December 1985, Francisca Fanggaldae Papers.
- ⁷⁸ Francisca Fanggaldae, letter to "Sasya," 15 December 1987, Francisca Fanggaldae Papers.
- ⁷⁹ Mark T. Berger, "After the Third World? History, Destiny and the Fate of Third Worldism," *Third World Quarterly* 25:1 (2004), 20-21.
- ⁸⁰ On the different identities of activists in the global anti-imperialist movements, see, for example, Tim Harper, *Underground Asia: Global Revolutionaries and the Assault on Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021); Oliver Crawford, "The Many Names of Tan Malaka," 21 May 2019, *Afro-Asian Networks*, <https://medium.com/afro-asian-visions/the-many-names-of-tan-malaka-163a6f2e0bc8>.
- ⁸¹ Toer, *The Mute's Soliloquy*.
- ⁸² Setiawan and Fanggaldae, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 54-57, 80.
- ⁸³ *Ibid.*, 44.
- ⁸⁴ Su Lin Lewis, *Cities in Motion: Urban Life and Cosmopolitanism in Southeast Asia, 1920-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 11.
- ⁸⁵ Hersi Setiawan interview with Francisca Fanggaldae, June 22, 1995, Oral History Collection *In Search of Silenced Voices*, Institute of International Social History, Amsterdam.
- ⁸⁶ Stephen S. Legg, "An International Anomaly? Sovereignty, the League of Nations, and India's Princely Geographies," *Journal of Historical Geography* 43 (2014), 96-110.
- ⁸⁷ Setiawan and Fanggaldae, *Memoar Perempuan Revolusioner*, 80.
- ⁸⁸ Rachel Leow, "A Missing Peace: The Asia-Pacific Peace Conference in Beijing, 1952 and the Emotional Making of Third World Internationalism," *Journal of World History* 30:1-2 (2019), 25.