INTRODUCTION

This Artist Project is the culmination of a series of dialogues between artist Naeem Mohaiemen and researcher Uroš Pajović on the relative absence of Non-Aligned Movement co-founder and former President of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, from Mohaiemen's 2017 video installation on the history of the movement. First shown at Documenta 14, Kassel, in 2017, *Two Meetings and a Funeral* is a three-channel installation that unfolds as a series of conversations between Vijay Prashad, Samia Zennadi, Atef Berredjem, Amirul Islam, and Zonayed Saki that chart a history of the Non-Aligned Movement, founded in 1961 after the groundbreaking Bandung Conference of 1955.

For this special issue of *ARTMargins*, Pajović becomes a new collaborative interlocutor within the framework of *Two Meetings and a Funeral*, following a screening of the work in Berlin in 2017, during which Pajović noted the occlusion from Mohaiemen's film of Yugoslavia, one of the three founding countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, along with India and Egypt. In historical terms, Pajović's text reintegrates the Yugoslav bloc federation into *Two Meetings and a Funeral* post facto. Mohaiemen in turn responded to Pajović's text with a series of images from unused footage collected for the original work. While Pajović's text concludes with a hopeful view of the potential of

https://doi:.org/10.1162/artm_a_00237

the Non-Aligned Movement, Mohaiemen's images and the superimposed quote from Tito instead express an ironic doubling back. In Mohaiemen's superimposed text, the Indian coalition that pushed for Bangladesh's independence in 1971 intersects with Tito's confident comment to Indira Gandhi's delegation that such problems of "tribalism" were only happening in Asia. In Tito's view, Yugoslavia had already solved the "Balkan problem," a confident pronouncement made exactly twenty years before Tito's nation would split apart during the Yugoslav Wars. The geopolitical struggles that Tito failed to see in 1971 are harbingers of the blind spots that would cause the collapse of the Non-Aligned Movement.

SOUTHWARD AND OTHERWISE

Uroš Pajović (Text) + Naeem Mohaiemen (Images)

The year was 1961. The world—our *home*—was one where wall and curtain stood as crucial elements of discourse. Not only as spatial determinants, but also as demarcations in the space of international politics. In terms of our *home*, there was the idea of the morning alarm, the broken window, the call to lunch (a cold one).

Tread carefully! This *home* was by no means a regular one. In an Escherian twist, the walls could be walked and the curtains could be entered. Half a world away from West and East (not an in-between, but also not not-one), a claim to a space within, but concurrently outside the political division of the world into two blocs, a third world birthplace of the Non-Aligned Movement.

"You Can Never Leave" reads a title in the first half of chapter three (*Dhaka*) in *Two Meetings and a Funeral* (dir: Mohaiemen, 2017). The independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971 was followed by a reversal via the pincer movement of unlikely allies—China vetoing UN membership for Bangladesh, and the Nixon White House blocking aid shipments to the country. Facing these twin obstacles, Bangladesh turned to the Non-Aligned Movement, which enrolled the new country as a member during the 1973 Conference in Algeria. This was meant to be a proxy for the ultimate goal—to be recognized by the United Nations.

At the same time, Non-Aligned Movement member Saudi Arabia and its allies were possibly concerned that the Non-Aligned Movement's embrace of liberation movements may have started with the Palestinian struggle, but would eventually target constitutional monarchies as well. Work to neuter such support progressed on many fronts, including the increasingly influential Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which chose Pakistan to host the second OIC Summit in 1974. In exchange for OIC recognition of Bangladesh's independence, which would open access to desperately needed reconstruction funds, Bangladesh attended the 1974 summit. This was a decisive break with India, which was banned from OIC membership over Kashmir.

These events exemplify some of the many ruptures with the wider Non-Aligned Movement. Barrister Amirul Islam, organizer of the Bangladesh delegation to the 1973 Algeria conference, addresses this pivot toward pan-Islamist politics in the closing credits of *Two Meetings and a Funeral*: "Non-Aligned Movement, born in Bandung, midwifed in Algeria, died in Bangladesh."[1]

Meanwhile, already in 1973, in the audience footage of the conference, blurry signals of the internal contradictions of nonalignment can be glimpsed, if you look closely. The gathering feels at times like an old boys' club—Indira Gandhi of India, Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka, and Madame Binh of Vietnam are the exceptions.

1 Naeem Mohaiemen, *Two Meetings and a Funeral*, three-channel digital video, 89 mins., 2017.

In the audience, one of the few women who can be seen during Tito's long speech in Algeria is his wife Jovanka Broz, a former fighter with the Yugoslav partisans in Nazi-occupied Croatia. The television stills displayed within this essay are borrowed from footage of the Algeria speech, but the "subtitles" we attach to them are not from 1973. They are lifted instead from an earlier statement by Josip Broz Tito.

»Nikada više neće biti pitanja Balkana na svijetu«

which translates from Serbo-Croatian as

»There will be no Balkan question ever again in the world.«

These far too confident words were spoken by Josip Broz Tito during a meeting in 1971 to discuss the spiraling war that would split Pakistan into two countries—Pakistan and Bangladesh. In Tito's conception, Asia was still struggling with the problems of "tribal" partition which Europe had seemingly resolved forever. Tito could not yet see the coming collapse of Yugoslavia—that was far away, and would become full-fledged war in 1991.

In the quadriptych of images here, the 1971 sentence floats over Tito's 1973 speech in Algiers. By that time, 1971 is "settled history."

Listening to his speech with a seeming half smile is Jovanka. The couple separated in 1975, and Jovanka Broz was not allowed to see Tito again until his death in 1980.

We return to take a closer look at the geopolitical position of Yugoslavia, emblematic of the positioning of the Non-Aligned Movement as a whole. Yugoslavia was one of three countries behind the founding initiative, along with India and Egypt, and one of only two European countries among the Movement's original members. On the one hand, Yugoslavia was a socialist Eastern European country; on the other, soon after World War II, it had cut ties with the Soviet Union and Stalinism. It was these events that engendered the peculiarity of the position of Yugoslavia in the (third) world.

Until the end of the 1940s, the social system in Yugoslavia was centralist, with state institutions controlling all aspects of the country's mechanisms, especially the economy, education, and culture. However, in 1948, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (later the League of Communists of Yugoslavia), led by Tito, broke with the USSR (and, effectively, with all other Eastern European/Soviet-satellite states) and was expelled from the Cominform. Yugoslav state officials immediately began refuting centralist-State socialism as Stalinist and reductively unhelpful for the emancipation of the working class.

This moment was the actual birth of "the Yugoslav experiment." As historians Dragan Bogetić and Ljubodrag Dimić write:

> Yugoslavia and the newly freed countries of Asia and Africa alike saw the preservation of their hard-earned independence solely in the opposition to the Bloc-division of the world (that is, the forces which until recently virtually

disabled their autonomous advancement) and the respect for the principle of peaceful coexistence as the only acceptable bases on which the complex of international relations could grow.[2]

This form of internationalism was to a great extent rooted in unrealistic observations of the political leanings of the time, and the interests of the great forces (namely, the US and the USSR) cast their shadows on the road to nonalignment from the moment of its political formalization on September 1, 1961, in Belgrade. But before Belgrade, there was Bandung.

In 1955, the Bandung Conference took place with the aim of promoting Asian-African cooperation, particularly in opposing colonialism and neocolonialism. Yugoslavia was not part of this Asian-African conference, but the principles stated in the final *communiqué* of the conference were close to, and sometimes even overlapped with, those of Yugoslav foreign policy. Some of them were pointed out in 1970 by politician Leo Mates:

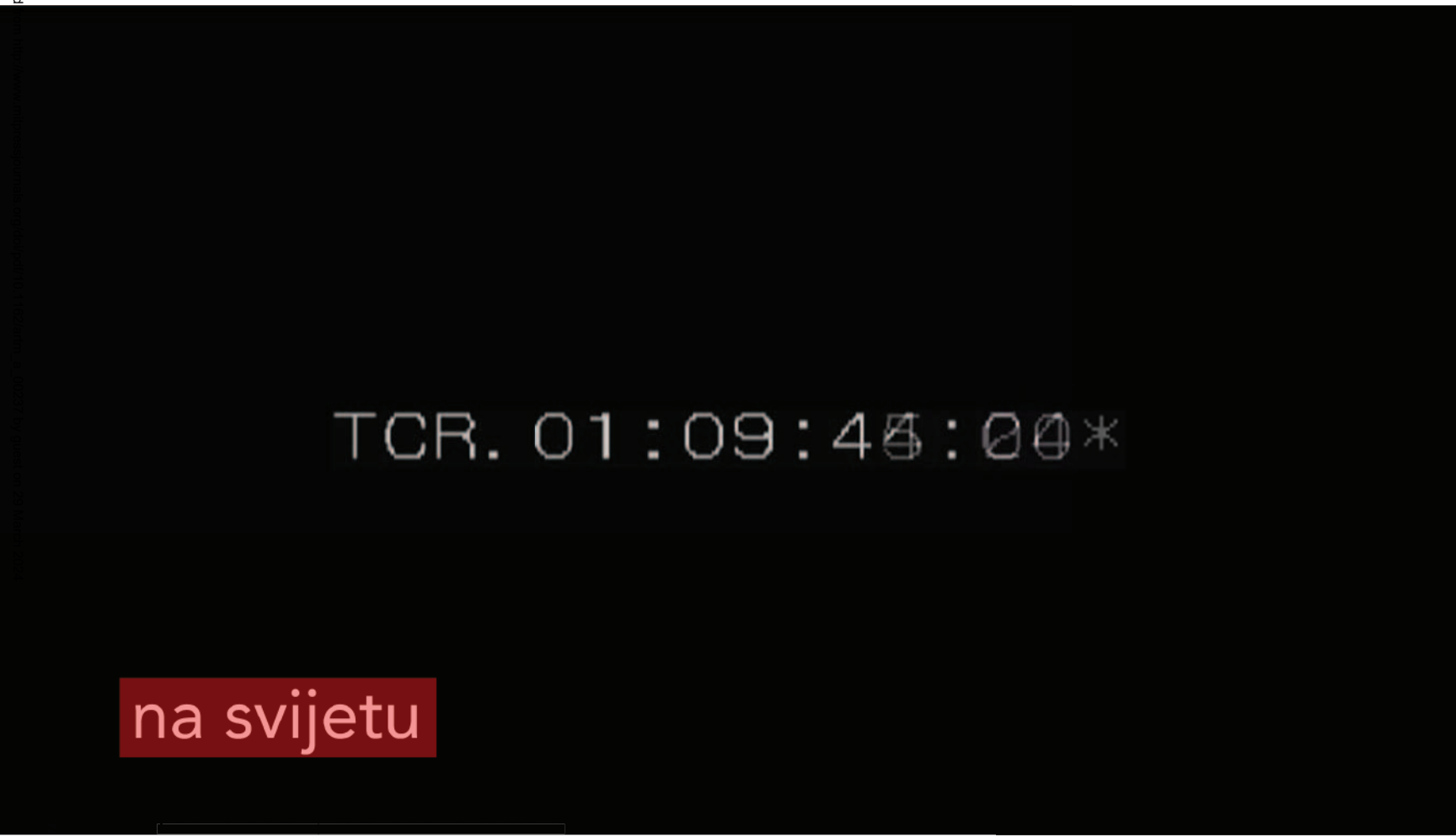
> The principles on which the gathering of nonaligned states [of Africa and Asia] was based were initially formulated within the bilateral negotiations between India and China, made public in the mutual statement of Nehru and Zhou Enlai, given in Delhi on June 28, 1954. It encompasses the following five principles: respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; noninterference in internal affairs; nonaggression; equality and mutual benefit; peaceful coexistence. . . . On this occasion, the cooperation of countries with different social systems was emphasized as something that "shouldn't stand in the way of maintaining peace and shouldn't create conflict.". . . This declaration in many ways inspired the participants of the Bandung conference and influenced the content of the resolution brought in Bandung.[3]

Tito was informed of these principles, along with the preparations for the meeting in Bandung, by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru at the beginning of January 1955. After his return to Belgrade from India, a special committee was formed to follow the activities surrounding the preparation of the Bandung Conference. Bogetić and Dimić write:

> The demands for the establishment of economic cooperation on the basis of "mutual interest and respect for national sovereignty" were along the lines of policies led by Yugoslavia. . . . Much like the representatives of the countries

2 Dragan Bogetić and Ljubodrag Dimić, *Beogradska konferencija nesvrstanih zemalja 1–6. septembra 1961: Prilog istoriji trećeg sveta* [*The Belgrade Conference of Non-Aligned Countries 1–6. September 1961: A Contribution to the History of the Third World*] (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2013), 13. All translations are by the author unless otherwise noted.

3 Leo Mates, *Nesvrstanost. Teorija i savremena praks*a [*Nonalignment: Theory and Practice*] (Belgrade: Institut za međunarodnu politiku i privredu, 1970), 248–49.



gathered in Bandung, the political leaders of Yugoslavia also found that cultural cooperation was one of the most powerful means to improve the understanding between nations, and wholeheartedly supported this idea. Yugoslavia strongly condemned colonialism, racism, foreign exploitation, and fought for the freedom and independence of the colonized world.[4]

On the idyllic islands of Brijuni along the Croatian coast, these ideals were once more brought to light. Inspired by the unfolding of the Bandung Conference, Tito arranged overlapping visits with his two closest allies in the Afro-Asian world: Jawaharlal Nehru of India and Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. The three spent several days in Tito's summer residence discussing the question of nonalignment and establishing some principles toward its formalization.

Their joint Brijuni statement is considered by some historians to be the first official multilateral document of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, already in this seemingly relaxed meeting, the cracks in the foundations of nonalignment were showing. While Nehru was resistant to publishing a joint *declaration* and insistent on reducing the length of the three leaders' multilateral *statement*, both he and Tito took issue with the fact that Nasser never mentioned his intentions to nationalize the Suez Canal—their concern was that Yugoslavia and India might be accused of encouraging such a radical decision by proxy.[5]

Several months before the conference, the unsuccessful US-sponsored attack on Cuba brought the world to the brink of destabilization. Several days before the conference, construction began on the Berlin Wall. On the day the conference commenced, the Soviet Union launched a series of nuclear tests. These events provided the leaders of the new Non-Aligned Movement with much to reflect upon and criticize, but they largely fell short in doing so. The conference was compromised by diverse, sometimes conflicting, objectives of the state leaders involved. Burdened with economic dependency to great forces in the West and the East, as well as an eagerness to prioritize national interests over those of the nascent Non-Aligned Movement, the conflicting positions of the participating countries were reflected in the struggle to establish a unified tone and agenda.

Despite these struggles, there was also some agreement: on the call for nonalignment itself, which extended to nonmembership in any military bloc dominated by one of the great powers; a commitment to equality in the relations between nations; the right of every country to self-determination; the avoidance of force as a means of settling international disputes; a focus on economic development; and the condemnation of colonialism.[6]

4 Bogetić and Dimić, *Beogradska konferencija nesvrstanih zemalja*, 144.

5 State Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia (1956–57), *Yugoslav-Indian Relations in 1956/57* (f-1, 156 and f-3, 325); *England* (f-20, 415, 926). See also Bogetić and Dimić, *Beogradska konferencija nesvrstanih zemalja*, 28.

6 State Archive of Yugoslavia (1961), KPR (837), I-4-a/K-202, *Belgrade Conference*.

Yugoslavia ties itself to the birth of the Non-Aligned Movement. Since 1989, the Cold War has ended, the Berlin Wall has fallen, and the Soviet Union has disintegrated. So has Yugoslavia, in a set of bloody conflicts that substantially betrayed the Non-Aligned Movement's principles. The Movement now persists only in the form of remnants, echoes, and formalities. Often obscured by conflicts and contradictions, there are still lessons to be found in the existence of the Movement and the path of its member countries towards nonalignment. The most valuable of these lie exactly on the thin line between romantic nostalgia and *a priori* judgment, reminding us of a framework outside of the paradigm of the East/West division of 20th-century history, and beyond the gaze of its two dominant worlds.

To consider the Movement lost to history would, then, be unnecessarily pessimistic. Instead, as we stand before its many voices and forms, let us consider these various meetings as a structure of potentialities to revisit, as a set of questions to retrieve and reactivate. For in every principle worth remembering, there lies the possibility for another worth engendering.