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Voices from the debris: An interview with Mila Turajlić on unearthing anti-colonial solidarities

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Abstract

This interview with award-winning documentary filmmaker Mila Turajlić discusses her ongoing artistic research project Non-Aligned Newsreels, which consists of two feature-length films that premiered in 2022, along with performance lectures, installations, exhibitions, research articles, and online content. The interview begins with a discussion of the scopes and aims of the project, which engages with the largely-forgotten collections of Yugoslav Newsreels in Belgrade (Serbia), unearthing the cinematic and political collaborations that were at the heart of the Non-Aligned Movement. The interview further explores the project's reactivation of the archive and cultural memory, the relationship between politics and cinema, and the continuing importance of a 'third' way.

Keywords

Algeria, anti-colonialism, archive, documentary, newsreels, non-alignment, Third Cinema, Yugoslavia

Non-Aligned Newsreels is Mila Turajlić's ongoing artistic research project, and the latest addition to her established exploration of Yugoslavia's cinematic and political legacy. N*on-Aligned* and *Ciné-Guerillas*, two feature-length films with the joint title *Scenes from the Labudović Reels*, are the documentary centerpieces of the project, which both premiered in 2022 at the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) and Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) respectively. In addition to the documentary diptych, the Non-Aligned Newsreels project consists of performance lectures, video installations and exhibitions, research articles and online content.

At the crux of the project is non-alignment: a political stance that was historically taken by the (primarily from the Global South) members of the Non-Aligned Movement, which

formed a 'third' way to the political polarity of the Cold War. In Turajlić's project, however, non-alignment transforms into a seed of an anti-colonial approach whose neglected relevance cuts deep into the present. By delving into the forgotten vaults of Belgrade-based Yugoslav Newsreels, Turajlić unearths the cinematic and political collaborations that were at the heart of the Non-Aligned Movement.

This interview opens with a discussion of Non-Aligned Newsreels and follows by exploring the project's reactivation of the archive and cultural memory, the relationship between politics and cinema, and the continuing importance of a 'third' way.

Carolyn Birdsall: Both *Non-Aligned* and *Ciné-Guerillas* draw from the collection of newsreel footage captured by Yugoslav Newsreel cameraman Stevan Labudović (1926-2017). Could you tell us something about this remarkable archival collection, and your own process of encountering it?

Mila Turajlić: It was gradual and piecemeal, and, in that sense, slow and frustrating, but also just incredibly rewarding. I first visited Filmske Novosti [Yugoslav Newsreels] in 2005 when I was looking for archival footage for *Cinema Komunisto*. I developed a very good relationship with them. At the time, they didn't have a film scanner, and I desperately wanted the archives for *Cinema Komunisto* to be scanned. We made this whole arrangement where I was allowed to take reels out of the archive into a private lab that had a scanner, and we provided security. That really set up a relationship of trust, and the fact that *Cinema Komunisto* had such a successful and long life meant that they had a lot of patience for me as a filmmaker coming back.

In 2013, I was invited to Algeria to show *Cinema Komunisto*, which ended up winning the main prize of the festival. As a result, the next year, in 2014, they invited me to come back as a guest of the festival, and that year Stevan Labudović was the guest of honor of the festival. Ironically, as it happens, I met him in Algiers. I asked him if I could document his stay in Algeria, and he agreed, so I started filming with him as soon as I met him, the day after he arrived. The head of Filmske Novosti, Vladimir Tomčić, was also a guest at the festival that same year, so he was present at the moment my collaboration with Labudović began. Vladimir saw me filming in Algeria, he saw the reception of *Cinema Komunisto* in Algeria, and he saw the esteem with which Stevan was greeted in Algeria. When we came back to Belgrade, and I said, 'I'm going to make a film about Stevan, and I need access to his archives', Vladimir agreed.

Initially, I was looking through material that Labudović had filmed in Algeria. I began to build a timeline of his professional life using documents that I found in the Archives of

Yugoslavia. I went through the state documents of Yugoslav President Tito's visits to countries in Asia and Africa, and that tracked all of the movements of the Galeb [the ship used by Tito for state visits]. They included passenger lists, so I found out when Labudović was on the Galeb. I began to understand that Labudović had been present at every single important moment in the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement, and I began to expand my research beyond the story of Stevan in Algeria into the story of the birth of the Non-Aligned Movement. The process was piecemeal, it was very slow. Around three years into the process, I decided that I wanted to film a scene with Stevan among his reels, because we kept talking about his reels, but that wasn't a material thing in the film. At this point, it was probably 2016, by which time I had been working with Filmske Novosti for about a decade, but I had never been down in the vault before. When I filmed him there, I realised how many Algeria reels there were, many more reels than I had understood by talking to him. And then I saw these reels labeled 'Non-Aligned' and 'Mozambique Independence'. Stevan kept mentioning Mozambique and so on, but I had not really wrapped my head around it, and the staff at Filmske Novosti didn't have more details about its provenance.

I then asked permission to access the diplomatic archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Belgrade. This is when I started finding all of these documents about Yugoslavia's technical collaboration with Mali, Mozambique, Tanzania, and I started to understand. I spent another year and a half going through those paper archives, building another timeline from 1954 to 1977 of Yugoslavia's cinematic collaboration with countries in Africa via Filmske Novosti. I then went back to Filmske Novosti, and we started going through the reels. At that point, it was around 2021. So, six or seven years after I had begun working on the Labudović reels, I began to understand that there were also these 'Non-Aligned' reels. Overall, there was a long process of searching in the dark, and never fully getting my arms around the whole thing.

Fig. 1: *Ciné-Guerillas: Scenes from the Labudović Reels* (2022) – Stevan Labudović in front of the reels he filmed during the Algerian war in the vaults of Filmske Novosti [Yugoslav Newsreels], Belgrade.

Birdsall: I'd like to follow up by asking about the reactivation of the archive that you're describing, and the rethinking of the canon that's central to your Non-Aligned Newsreels project. Thanks to the efforts of your projects, the newsreels documenting the emergence of the Non-Aligned movement have been taken out of forgotten archives, as you've just described, and proposed as canon-worthy records of political and cinematic practices that have shaped twentieth century European and world history. You've mentioned your first encounter with the different parts of the archive, but could you speak to how you envision the aims and the scope of your Non-Aligned Newsreels project?

Turajlić: What I knew early on was that this was the first time I was venturing outside of telling the history of my own country. In the case of Algeria, it was extraordinarily important for me that I get it right. I knew I wanted the process to be inclusive and collaborative. My idea was to try and share as much of the research as I was discovering it, and particularly to solicit feedback from Algerians.

Because I started the research project of Non-Aligned Newsreels by going to academic conferences, I felt like I needed to start by publishing a research paper that is fully compliant with a historiographic methodology for the project to be considered 'valid'. So I wrote a research paper, 'Filmske Novosti: Filmed Diplomacy', which pieces together the story of Yugoslavia's cinematic role in the Non-Aligned world via Filmske Novosti. I started with the research paper and academic conferences, and then slowly that evolved into presentations in more artistic forms, where I felt more at home in the way I wanted to talk

and think about the project, the way I wanted to invite others to help me think through the project. I began to realise that the conversations that I wanted to have around this footage and around the research are really more in the art world than in the academic world. There are people doing this great work with archives from Guinea-Bissau, Egypt, Afghanistan. And that's when I began to realise that there's a whole constellation of artist-researchers whose gestures of working with the archive speak to me more.

After being selected for the CPH:LAB with Maja Medić in 2021 and being mentored by Katerina Cizek (MIT Co-Creation Studio), we developed what felt to me a better way of reactivating the archive: a system of workshops, where we invited people from the countries depicted in the archive to engage with it. The way we did that was to have a silent screening (initially, during the pandemic, on Zoom) where I would start by very quickly explaining the origin of the archive and then play the materials for them. I recorded these Zoom calls where the participants would tell us what it evokes, explain its political importance, and so on. We did an extraordinary one with a group of participants from Ghana, another one with participants from Ethiopia, and one with a poet/activist from Algeria, which I then turned into a prototype for the type of video installations that I wanted to build out of it.

Birdsall: I had originally planned to ask you a follow up about the ways in which the artistic research project straddles the domains of theory, research, and practice. But I'd like to refocus this to ask how you view – in addition to the theoretical and artistic research practice – your role as an active co-participant in the archival process?

Turajlić: The main problem has been that none of the Non-Aligned reels had been scanned. More than half of any budget that I get goes into the technical costs of actually scanning the archival materials. The frustration there is that, because the reels aren't labeled, I have no idea what I'm scanning, and I can only scan as much as I can fundraise. Hopefully this would one day become a proper institutional project. As it is, it's just a project based on enthusiasm and the support and energy of the people who think it's worthwhile to do this. My overall feeling is there's no one else to do this work.

Filmske Novosti is one of the 26 institutions of culture in Serbia attached to the Ministry of Culture, with one of the smallest budgets. Nowhere in their budget, or in their mandate, or in their work plan, is to index, label, and figure out the Non-Aligned collection. It's only by virtue of a number of coincidences that have led to this access that I currently have: that I had such a long relationship with them, that I was making a film about their last living cameraman, that I wanted to film a scene with him in the vault. I have a huge feeling of

responsibility to try and do as much as I can, while it can be done. The agreement I have with them is a very simple agreement, which is that I have to cover all of the technical costs of the scanning. In exchange, they license me the rights to use this material within the scope of the project for free.

I think I've paid off one debt towards this archive, which was contextualising it. It happened to me once that I was participating in an event where I presented the archive without spending enough time explaining what the former Yugoslavia was, and its political position, or what the nature of Yugoslavia's cinematic aid towards Africa was. I ended up getting these responses, which were basically people looking at the Filmske Novosti collection as a 'white European' colonial archive. Because people had no space in their theoretical framework for a European Non-Aligned country. That's when I realised that the first step in this project had to be this contextualisation through the documentary films about Stevan. First, you have to understand that there was a Yugoslavia that had a legacy of anti-fascist, partisan struggle, that it extended that experience to other liberation movements, and that, as part of that gesture, they sent their cameramen, who themselves had backgrounds in the partisan struggle. I had to set up the political gaze with which this material was filmed before this project became a vessel through which this archival footage starts circulating. Otherwise it risked falling into this dichotomy of oppressor/oppressed, coloniser/colonised, in which there seemed to be no space [for another perspective]. This goes back to the third way – there was no third position from which this archive could be understood, or its creation could be understood.

For me, this archive is a record of a political gesture, and a political vision. I'm as much interested in how it can speak to the present moment as what it says about a past political project. So for me, it's a very political thing to try to unearth this archival collection and bring it into circulation. The second thing that is incredibly political is the fact that the Serbian state has zero interest in this archive. For those running and working in Filmske Novosti, it's not a question of interest, it's a question of means. Over the last five years, since I've been intensely working there on this archive, they've had several very important members of the staff die, and they are now severely understaffed. Serbia is under an IMF austerity program, so there's a hiring freeze on jobs in the public sector. I find it unfair when people question the Filmske Novosti archive's will. So in addition to not having the budget, they do not have enough staff to do anything concerning the Non-Aligned newsreels. Communities in the Global South are being deprived of an important visual component of their history and heritage, but I would never blame that on the institution of Filmske Novosti.

Fig. 2: *Non-Aligned: Scenes from the Labudović Reels* (2022) – Film strip from the opening credits of *Iz Alžira* (1959), a newsreel report on the Algerian struggle filmed by Stevan Labudović.

Birdsall: I have a question that returns to the theme of engaging with the archivists. We are really curious about your decision to involve the people whose work this is, such as Jovana Kesić, the archivist from Filmske Novosti, Violeta Kljajić from Radio Belgrade, or the staff at Radio Algeria. So not only Stevan as the central protagonist or even the archive itself as a protagonist of the film, but especially the archivists who work with them.

Turajlić: For many people, the archive is a faceless institution, a building. And I thought it was incredibly important that you get a feeling for the energy, perspective, and role of the people who are inside that archive, whose job it is to preserve and look after the materials. Jovana, in some ways, became my alter ego in the film: through her, you see a little bit of the research that I'm doing. Bringing [the viewers] into the space felt incredibly important, because, like I said, I didn't have an understanding of what Labudović's reels were until I saw them on the shelves and grasped their sheer quantity. In a similar way, I wanted to show Stevan holding his camera, so that you understand the materiality, the weight of this thing; when he opens the reels and you see that it's 35mm film, that these things are big and heavy. I think for a contemporary audience, it takes them back to the physicality and the materiality of the work that was done in the 1950s and 1960s, so they could get a real understanding of the stakes of what was done. It was really just about taking viewers into the space, taking in the materiality of it, and giving it a face and an emotion.

Fig. 3: *Non-Aligned: Scenes from the Labudović Reels* (2022) – Photo of Non-Aligned leaders attending the United Nations General Assembly in 1960.

Birdsall: Could you tell us about your own process of synching the image track and the audio recordings and the significance of showing that in the films?

Turajlić: I don't know if that would have come about if it wasn't for the newsreels that I started finding in the French, Cuban, East German, and US archives, which used the same images with different voiceovers. Politically, when the footage is silent, you don't quite know who was speaking, and who they were speaking to, via the making of these films. I found it so interesting, because the Non-Aligned leaders are speaking about finding their political voice, and yet in the newsreels they don't get to express a political voice, because it's someone else's voice speaking over what they're saying. When I went to the archives of Radio Belgrade and found the shelf with all of the audio recordings [of the first Non-Aligned Summit in 1961], it really blew my mind to think of the fact that there was this extraordinary repository that no one's obviously worked with for a long time. I had spent five years looking at this event as silent, and then when listening to the event without image at the radio archives I actually perceived it in a completely different way. The next step was to try to sync the sound and image.

I'm now trying to build an installation just using the sound recordings, because I don't think we've done enough work to ensure that those voices from the first summit travel, and I'm also working on a project with debaters in Belgrade to create an event where they would perform the speeches of the summit. The political relevance of what these leaders are saying in their speeches to the present day is so extraordinarily striking that it's something that I really want to get out there, to circulate.

Nadica Denić: Your artistic research project uses different forms to reactivate the memory of the Non-Aligned Movement. Can you tell us about the choices behind these different forms, and your view of their specific affordances in the reactivation of cultural memory?

Turajlić: *Non-Aligned* is constructed as a personal essay film, weaving together my search to understand what lies at the core of the concept of non-alignment, the process of discovering and trying to think through these reels, and Stevan as the chronicler of the birth of that political project. *Ciné-Guerillas* is formally a very different film. One, because it's no longer really my voice, it's now Stevan's voice from his diaries. Secondly, because it's the Algerians' story, it really had to be told by Algerians. Between 2013 and 2022 I spent a lot of time in Algeria trying to find Stevan's comrades and other people who had been involved in the media battle led by the National Liberation Army and National Liberation Front. I also conducted follow-up interviews, because I would find new archival materials and then bring it to them to invite their reading, decrypting, understanding. I wanted it to be a choral film, and that the Algerian voices are carrying the crux of the story. It had to be the Algerians who explain to you the importance of what Labudović has done for Algeria.

With the workshops, other things have started to develop. I developed this performance where I was trying to extend the reflections around the process itself: Am I up to the task in front of me? Will I meet my responsibility towards this archive? Am I thinking about this in the right way? So the performance has a very confessional tone, as I try to verbalise what I've been through, the questions that I'm still facing, and then invite the audience to join me on that journey and to feel for themselves, what that was like to be down there in that vault and face these reels and ask yourself these questions. So that's the performance I did at the EYE Film Conference in Amsterdam [in June 2023]. What we did, for example, at IDFA [in November 2022] was something quite different, which is, for me, the second phase of the project: How do we invite other voices and other perspectives into this space? And how do we truly activate this footage? Maja Medić, who joined the project as a co-creator and creative producer, and I developed a concept for the IDFA on Stage program, which was to basically take one of the workshops that we had developed over Zoom and do it live, with people from Non-Aligned countries. We built this format where I live VJ-ed the footage, and they reacted to it live.

All of these gestures of conversations were really oral histories: in the way that I came to them prepared, knowing the timeline, bringing the archival footage with me, inviting their input and reflections. Somewhere at the crux of this project is oral history as a way of voicing those silences, filling those gaps, and contextualising the images. The reactivation of

archives isn't just to bring these materials to light and have them circulate, but rather: how do we build a story and voices around those images? This project is built on these two legs: oral history and the image. It's not just a question of digitising the image, it really has to be accompanied by these conversations that can encircle the archival materials.

Fig. 4: Mila Turajlić presenting 'Non-Aligned Newsreels – Voices from the Debris', a live documentary performance at EYE Film Museum, Amsterdam, 4 June 2023, photo courtesy of Floris Paalman.

Denić: How do you see the project as reactivating the memory of the Non-Aligned Movement on a local level, where the archive is situated, on a regional level, as well as internationally? How do you navigate the reactivation of these different levels of cultural memory of Non-Alignment?

Turajlić: Reactivating this memory in former Yugoslavia contexts has been interesting. It was really only when I started reading Tvrtko Jakovina's book Treća strana Hladnog rata [The Third Side of the Cold War] that I began to realise that there is this mirroring taking place. When you show Non-Aligned footage to people in the former Yugoslavia, and you open the subject of Non-Alignment, you are at the same time opening the subject of the Yugoslav project. Because the principles of common struggle against fascism, brotherhood, fraternity among different religions and different ethnicities were shared among the two projects. It's at two different scales, but the exact same principles. So I find it truly interesting to present this archival collection and this project to audiences from across the former Yugoslavia.

Presenting it across the Non-Aligned world has been sobering. The Algerians' access to archives is heavily proscribed, due to the nature of the political regime in place in Algeria. When you go to India, you see that the current government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is doing so much to dismantle the Nehru legacy, which includes Non-Alignment. I was witnessing so much of this disconnecting from the past for political reasons. This is how the [Labudović reels] project became intensely political for me, because it's trying to build a bridge to a memory that someone is purposefully trying to erase and displace from the public domain.

And then there's the Western engagement with this subject. The quantity of people who came up to us after the screenings to say that they had never heard of the Non-Aligned Movement was staggering. So many times the question comes up of 'How is it possible that we've never heard about this?'. That highlights the conscious effort to downplay the legacy of the Non-Aligned Movement. Of course, the Non-Aligned imploded its own contradictions and irrelevance by the late 1980s. But the birth of the Non-Aligned Movement and the vision of a third way, a third world, is something that I think has been purposely written out of history books. I side with Vijay Prashad in reclaiming the 'Third World' term, because for me, it doesn't speak to a first, second, or third class, but points to a third way to think through a conversation on the global stage.

Fig. 5: *Non-Aligned: Scenes from the Labudović Reels* (2022) – Archival footage from Filmske Novosti of the Galeb, a ship used by Yugoslav President Tito for state visits, traversing the Suez Canal in 1954, filmed by Stevan Labudović.

Denić: You have brought up the importance of the 'third way' for the project. Can you tell us more about your understanding, and the personal relevance, of the third way, as a stance and a perspective?

Turajlić: I think the idea of the third way became a very tangible thing for me during the NATO bombing [of Belgrade in 1999]. In 1996-97, I was in high school and active in the winter protests against [former Serbian president] Slobodan Milošević. And we had come very close to destabilising his hold on power. The leaders of the opposition were invited to a meeting in Paris where they were told that we had to back off because Milošević was needed as a guarantor of the Dayton Peace Accords, and so that we couldn't remove him. As a result of Europe basically telling us you need to stop your protests against Milošević, he grew very emboldened in his hold on power and decided to crack down on two sources of opposition that had destabilised him: the students and Kosovo.

I specifically remember a phone call from a friend in England, who called me during the bombing and heard the air raid sirens over the phone. She said: 'I really feel bad for what you're going through, but I really think this is necessary, the right thing to do.' And I remember then thinking, how could I explain that you could have been against the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia, but also against the US bombing of Cambodia? That there is a third position from which to observe these situations. How is it that people fall into the trap of, are you on this side or are you on that side? How is it that it is so easy to obscure or remove the possibility of a third position?

To me, one of the most important sentences in *Non-Aligned* is the footage of the American reporter quoting John Foster Dulles in 1961, when he says that it is immoral for a nation not to take sides. There's so much I want to say about that thought, and to argue that you can actually find a third way. It was really that moment of the NATO bombing where you could be either pro-Milošević or pro-NATO bombing. And the fact that the position I had was not allowed, did not have a space to exist, could not be voiced, verbalised, or explained. I think that the third way became an incredibly important thing for me.

Birdsall: How do you see the trajectory of your filmmaking, moving from the first two films, *Cinema Komunisto* (2011) and *The Other Side of Everything* (2017), and how they make sense of former Yugoslavia, through to the present focus on the Non-Aligned movement and its cinematic archive in the recent diptych? Is there a central thread, not just in terms of timeframe, but in terms of your take on the former Yugoslavia and its cinematic legacy?

Turajlić: For me, there's no chronology to these films. I don't see them developing chronologically, but during the years it took to make them I obviously developed as a filmmaker and an individual. *The Other Side of Everything* came out of my complete loss of political faith. After the revolution [5 October 2000], I was so disillusioned by the

pragmatism and compromises required to participate in the construction of any political project that I lost my faith in any kind of political engagement. And that colors all of my conversations with my mother in The Other Side of Everything. If you know that about me, then when you see the film, you grasp what's going on, which is that I'm trying to get a political raison d'être from her that she obviously can't supply me with, because that is a process of internal comprehension.

The making of *Non-Aligned* was a manner of restoring some political faith. In order to have hope, you really have to look at how the Non-Aligned Movement came about, you can't look at what happens to it at the end. The endings are always the same as all political projects will disappoint us and all utopias will fail us because human nature will fail us. But what's the point in focusing on that the whole time? You will just end up in this political pessimism that I found myself in for twenty years. For *Non-Aligned* I thought, let's look at how something is born, how it is formulated and voiced.

When I traveled to Algeria, I experienced a connection and a communication that happens when you, as a Yugoslav, travel to another Non-Aligned country. So it's hard to say that the entire Non-Aligned project is a failure if these types of connections are still possible. I realised that these connections come out of human gestures. In the film, I say that Stevan is the Non-Aligned Movement, in going and spending three years fighting someone else's war because he believed in their fight for independence. So for me, *Non-Aligned* is actually a much more positive film, as it willfully chooses to focus away from the problems, the messiness, the contradictions, or the implosion of Yugoslavia, or of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Denić: I am interested in the relationship between cinema and politics in your films. You have proposed elsewhere an understanding of the Non-Aligned newsreels in relation to Third Cinema. Can you elaborate on their unique positioning in that tradition?

Turajlić: In my journal article, I wrote that I see the Non-Aligned newsreels as predecessors of Third Cinema, because from what I've understood about it, the carriers of Third Cinema were independent agents, which with Stevan Labudović and his newsreels is not the case, as he was an envoy of the Yugoslav state. Nonetheless I felt that it's interesting to try and describe it as a precursor to Third Cinema, with this idea that there is a militant image that can be a gesture of transnational solidarity. And that this image doesn't necessarily have its greatest value within the history of cinema, or as a documentary record, but as a political vector of a struggle. So I felt that in the way that Yugoslavia had decided to help liberation movements, of Algeria, Mozambique, but also the P.L.O. [Palestinian

Liberation Organisation], by providing them images in an information battle, with full knowledge that these images would then be sent to the United Nations or circulated in screenings or at diplomatic receptions at embassies, and so on. There was a full consciousness of the use-value of these images.

Second, the material served a double purpose. On the one hand, the films were shown locally to populations, and they were really used by the Liberation Army to recruit people into the armed struggle. On the other hand, they were distributed to internationalise the political question, to win over international public opinion and to make the position of countries like France or Portugal morally untenable. So in the manner through which a moral argument is being advanced in the films, I felt you could talk about a certain Third Cinema. I was drawing from Ros Gray's research on Mozambique, and from what I've read about what was happening in Latin America at the time, I felt that you could describe the Non-Aligned archives as a kind of forerunner to those movements.

Fig. 6: *Ciné-Guerillas: Scenes from the Labudović Reels* (2022) – Footage filmed by Stevan Labudović of celebrations upon gaining independence from France following the Algerian War (1954-1962).

Denić: At the end of *Ciné-Guerillas*, you reflect on the newsreels' intervention, as images of battle, in the battle over images. Where do you see the battle over images happening most acutely today?

Turajlić: When I refer to the battle over images taking place in Algeria, I'm referring to the fact that they don't have access to the images that are even in their own cinémathèque or archives. In a very concrete sense, there is a battle over the image taking place in a country

like Algeria, where simply the young generation has not had the right to see that past. There's a really interesting YouTube channel, run by a young Algerian, called Archives Numériques du Cinéma Algérien [Digital archives of Algerian cinema]. He posts whatever scrap of archival footage concerning Algeria he can find. He wants to make images of Algeria's past accessible to younger Algerians, and for me, this gesture is one type of battle of the image, between an authoritarian state and a young generation that wants to see that past in order to be able to build on it.

As someone who's working as a documentary filmmaker in the domain of film archives, I can't not mention the second battle over images that's taking place, which is the monetisation and monopolisation of the archival domain by Getty Images. There was an extraordinary film at IDFA 2022, A History of the World According to Getty Images, and I think what Richard Misek's done here is spectacular. There was also a manifesto that was signed a few years ago at Dox-Box, really referring to the images that are in colonial archives, that should be repatriated, but it is also referring to this wider concern about the monopolisation and monetisation of archival footage.

And then, in the present day, there is a battle of images in the social media news space. I'm quite certain that what is required is media literacy on a level that hasn't yet been achieved in education and is going to be required of all of us if you want to keep living in the current media landscape. *Ciné-Guerillas* was a tiny gesture in that direction, to understand that these are images filmed by a person who has limitations, who has perspectives, who has his own insight, his own agenda, who even has a script, who is restaging, to really just help people understand the constructedness behind a filmed 'documentary' image, and to not take it at face value as a historical record of any kind.

Denić: The diptych presents Non-Alignment as a historical movement, but it also delineates its contours as an idea, or a set of ideas that are not historically bounded. Transnational solidarity in politics and via cinema, or what you in the films call 'global kinship', appears as one of the key dimensions of Non-Alignment. How do you understand its presence in contemporary politics and cinema, as well as in your own practice?

Turajlić: Global kinship is something that I think is real. For those of us who are on the periphery, politically speaking, we recognise and understand each other. And I think if there is a basis for global kinship, it is there that our lives have been shaped by those forces. In that sense, I feel there's a real kinship, when I traveled to India or Mexico. When I say Yugoslavia, there was just this moment of recognition, of 'they've done to us what they've done to you'. So that's where the conversation usually begins. But how does cinema express that? In the early 2000s, I had this feeling that there was something happening in the documentary world, which was a search for forms of representing the world that will lead to that type of understanding. I think that's what made me want to enter that

ecosystem and make documentary films: that there was a language being built, which was a language of understanding, this idea that we can show our lived experiences, we can tease out the universalities of all of those experiences, and those films will travel and build some kind of global understanding.

As for my own work, there's obviously been an element of humility for me in this whole project. For some people, Stevan Labudović will always be 'the dictator's propagandist'. That's okay, but I've done what I could to have his legacy live on from a different perspective. The profundity of what Stevan's filmic images could and did achieve is such that there is no way that anything I could ever make would match that importance or level. So it was a deep lesson in humility for me. But to be able to make his story travel and live on was a huge gift and a huge responsibility.

Birdsall: While you're in the process of promoting and presenting the documentary diptych at the moment, could you tell us what's coming up next either in terms of further archive-related projects, or other iterations of the current artistic research project?

Turajlić: I'm currently working on several projects. We are in the editing phase of a documentary film about Elaine Mokhtefi, who appears in *Ciné-Guerillas* as a secondary character. We went with her to Algiers in December 2022 to film some of the final scenes for the film about her. I'm really rushing to get that done in a timely fashion, in order to present the film with her.

Then there's the series of workshops as part of the Non-Aligned Newsreels project that we're still conducting. We just did one which was so meaningful to me. There are currently more than 1,000 students in Belgrade from Africa and Asia, under a program that's called The World in Serbia, which is a continuation of Yugoslavia's previous scholarship program for the Non-Aligned countries. Together with Maja we did a workshop with these students in May 2023. I filmed their encounter with this archive, but also their experience of living and studying in Serbia, asking what they know (or do not know) about Non-Alignment and Yugoslavia and in which ways this connection between Yugoslavia and Non-Alignment countries still persists. It was absolutely magical. We're editing that as well into a video installation. The research project still continues with the workshops, but for now the focus is on finishing the film about Elaine Mokhtefi.

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