

CHALLENGE

Issue 2 Vol.1
Free of Charge

AUGUST 2019

EXCLUSIVE

KURDISTAN: DRAWN AND QUARTERED



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ALIGNED

The virtual & Alternative UN

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WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

By Ariana Yekrangi

UN-aligned is slowly, but surely, taking its place in the world arena of politics. We are also increasingly being criticised by different sides of the political spectrum. We love constructive criticism as this helps us develop and refine our mission. However, most objections simply imply that UN-aligned is “too idealistic.” This should fuel us all the more and encourage us to create stronger unity amongst ourselves. Together, there is nothing to stop us from creating the basis for a true United Nations.

We are aware that our ambitions and dreams are not easy to achieve and that our mission is likely to take time. However, it is essential that the momentum is maintained. We feel that in the past months UN-aligned’s name has been buried under the vast amount of data on the internet; barely noticed and unlikely to be turbocharged by any search engine’s algorithms.

We think more people need to hear about UN-aligned; **this is why we are asking for your support today.**

But what can I do?

Supporting UN-aligned goes beyond donating a few pennies a month. We want you, our members, to take complete charge of UN-aligned.

Last months, UN-aligned received the generous support of like-minded individuals in various fields including: graphic design, photography, journalism and participation in recent UN-aligned projects, such as the new upcoming book about the shortcomings of the United Nations.

Adopting a cause...

We are looking for collaborators on a new book about the United Nations. The book will focus on the weaknesses that severely limit the potential of the United Nations. It will also offer a viable alternative. You can read the full analysis of the book on our website. The intention is for the book to be initially published as an e-book by Amazon, with further options to be considered at a later stage. Royalties will go towards the funding of UN-aligned activities, the accounting of which will be completely transparent. The work on the book has already began and we are delighted that two members have already volunteered to help with the project (proofreading and research). Of course, additional support would be most welcome! If you are interested, please contact us via our website or write to us at: contact@un-aligned.org

No matter what you can do, we want you. Write to us with your talents and we'll make it work.

Print out a placard and support us

You can also spread a word about us on your social media.

Simply download one of UN-aligned's posters from our website and post it on your social media using the hashtag:

#StandWithUNalignd

We are eagerly anticipating your collaboration with UN-aligned. You will be creating a better and more tolerable world for yourself, your friends and everyone around you.

YOU COULD HELP IN A NUMBER OF WAYS, SUCH AS:

Writing one or more chapters

Supporting us with research

Proofreading

Cover design

Marketing

Translating

Assisting with publication

Visit:
www.un-aligned.org/press/
for more information



UNREPRESENTED NATIONS – KURDISTAN

By Adriano Liberto

Remaining with our theme relating to the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO), in this edition we will focus on Iranian Kurdistan and the Kurds in general. You may wonder why UNPO is so important to UN-aligned; well, the answer is simple: its members, consisting of millions of people, are often victims of gross injustice. As you read, you will come across genocide and massacres. Often, we are immune to this suffering. In journalistic circles it is referred to as compassion fatigue. I dislike the terminology because ‘fatigue’ denotes a certain inevitability,

but this weariness is of our own making. We allow ourselves to become immunised through our inaction.

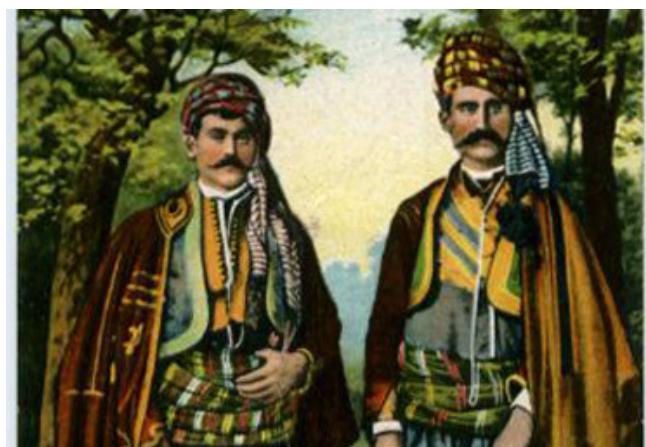
We allow people to fool us into thinking that striving to change injustice is futile Idealism. No! Idealism is not the folly; the folly is allowing injustice and violence to rule when we have the power to do something about it. Idealism is not the aberration; violence is... and the fact that we allow it. Inaction is complicity. If we do not change things for the better, who will?

Kurdistan: drawn and quartered

The carnage of the Great War ushered in a very different geopolitical world. The Allied powers who had won the war took on the responsibility for reshaping the world order. Not only were new nations born, but so was the League of Nations that was to deal with the political repercussions of the early decisions of the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. Of course, “Peace Conference” was a euphemism; it was more of a tribunal charged with dictating the conditions relating to the surrender of the Central Powers. Many of the decisions, such as the extortionate reparations that were imposed on Germany, were brutal and gave rise into further problems. The carving up the defeated Ottoman Empire that had existed since 1299 and comprised a medley of ethnic groups, provinces and vassal states was also ruthless in certain respects. The Kurds, in particular, were victims of a complete lack of regard to their ethnic makeup and cultural identity.

The Kurds are a people of Iranian stock, with their own traditions and languages, who have occupied the historical region of Kurdistan for millennia. Many are Muslim (Shia and Sunni), although some follow other religions such as Christianity, Yazdanism and Zoroastrianism. Kurds consider themselves the descendants of the Medes and the Kurdish national anthem proclaims as much. In the 16th century, the Kurdish area had been carved up between the Safavid and Ottoman empires, but with the Treaty of Zuhab, in 1639, the Ottomans had gained control of most of the area and held it right up until the end of World War I.

With the demise of the Ottoman Empire, the ethnic makeup of Kurdistan was completely ignored and the area was split into four. “Completely” is not quite accurate. Provisions had been made for a Kurdish state in the Treaty of Sevres in 1920, only to be clawed back by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. So now Kurdistan and its people are split into parts of south-eastern Turkey, northern Iraq, north-western Iran and northern Syria. This fragmentation denied the Kurds the right to self-determination and left them vulnerable to abuse and persecution.



TWO KURDS FROM CONSTANTINOPLE 1899

Apart from the Iraqi Kurds who now enjoy an autonomous region with its own parliament, the Kurds are still oppressed. Of course, the Iraqi Kurds too had had a rough time. Despite the fact that an autonomy agreement had been reached with the Iraqi government in 1970, by the mid-80s they were being massacred in what is now referred to as the Anfal Genocide. Tens of thousands were killed. In Syria, the slaughter is continuing as the civil war rages on with most Kurds opposed to the government of Bashar al-Assad. In Turkey, they were persecuted from the very beginning. The 1930 Zilan Massacre and the Dersim massacres of 1937 and 1938 resulted in thousands of Kurdish deaths.



ARYAN YEKKRANGI'S SKETCH OF ERDOGAN AND KHAMENEI

It is not surprising then, that the Iranian Kurds are no exception.

Iranian Kurdistan has two representatives at the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization: The Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (KDPI) and the Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan. Both are outlawed and have to operate from Iraq. The KDPI was founded in 1945 and it has been struggling for a negotiable level of autonomy since then. Throughout this time many of its leaders have been executed or imprisoned, with just a brief respite during the government of Mohammad Mosaddegh (1951-1953). In July 1989 the KDPI sent a high-ranking delegation to Vienna for talks with Iranian Government representatives. As the talks were about to begin, the so-called Iranian diplomats pulled out automatic rifles and gunned down every member of the Kurdish delegation.

A few years later in September 1992, another KDPI delegation was gunned down in a Berlin restaurant. The KDPI does not limit itself to struggling for justice for Iranian Kurds alone.

Its website states that its mission is wider:

President Erdogan's hatred of the Kurds is well testified and the Kurdish culture is suppressed to such an extent that even speaking or singing in Kurdish could well land you in prison. The Kurdish-Turkish conflict intensified since 1978 and various groups emerged seeking more autonomy, including the rebel organisation known as the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The Kurds are Erdogan's punching bag and he even goes after them in Syria.



A KURDISH WOMAN FIGHTER

"The PDKI struggles to attain Kurdish national rights within a federal and democratic Iran. Since there are other nations in Iran, the PDKI supports their struggle to achieve their national rights and regards them as strategic allies in pursuit of ending dictatorship and bringing about a federal democracy that reflects the rights and interest of the country's diverse national communities.

To this end, the PDKI co-founded the Congress of Nationalities for a Federal Iran (CNFI) with organizations representing the Azeri, Balouchi, Turkmen, and Arab nations in Iran."

The Komala Party is more recent having been founded 50 years ago. It was originally linked to the Iranian Communist Party, but it split from the party in 2000, although it still considers its agenda firmly based on socialist ideals.

This perspective is clearly stated on its website:

“

"The Komala Party of the Iranian Kurdistan is a socialist party, believes in social justice and fights against social inequalities and injustices. Komala considers itself first and foremost a defender of the rights and interests of the workers, low wage earners, women, youths and suppressed masses of the society and fights to secure their social, economical and political rights in order to ensure a better future for the support and materialisation of these rights in the society and endeavours to secure mass participation in social decisions and determinations."

KOMALINTERNATIONAL.ORG

“



Understandably, with people's lives at stake, it would be impossible to gage what sort of support there exists from Iranian Kurds for more autonomy. However, the calm must not be interpreted as a sign of contentment. Rather it is a testament to the oppressive climate in which Iranian Kurds have to live.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF IRANIAN KURDS

By Ariana Yekrangi

Recent evidence of Iranian Kurds dates back to the 14th century when the Ardalan dynasty was established with its capital rooted in Sinne, the present Sanandaj of Iran. From the 19th century on, with the start of the Qajar monarch, the Iranian Kurds slowly started to lose their autonomy over their long-held and tribally-ruled region. With the fall of the Ottoman empire and the Sykes-Picot agreement, Kurdish groups, with their diversified language and a unique traditions, began to form cross-border alliances, which has lasted to the present day. Today Kurds make up about 17% of Iran's population with the predominant percentage being of Sunni faith. Iran's official religion is Shi'a Islam, which is clearly favoured by the state.

Are Iranian Kurds pushing for independence?

Kurds in Iran have long suffered deep-

rooted discrimination.

Their social, political and cultural rights have been suppressed, as have their economic aspirations.

The first ideas of Kurdish independence started to be made by the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) in the early Pahlavi period. Towards the middle of 1979, following the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Khomeini, who considered the concept of ethnic minorities contrary to Islamic doctrine, ordered that Kurdish opposition be "crushed". The order led to a dreadful massacre which resulted in the execution of 10,000 Kurds and the destruction of many Kurdish villages and towns.

While the relationship between Kurdistan and the Iranian establishment slightly improve during the Khatami's presidency, the environment has still remained tense.



PHOTO: A KURDISH MAN WEARING TRADITIONAL CLOTHES

Iranian Kurds are first and foremost Iranian citizens and therefore, equal before the law; this, however, does not seem to be the case in reality. Kurds in Iran experience discrimination because of their religious and cultural roots and prejudice in fields such as employment, housing and education.

For many Kurds, the concept of an independent Kurdistan is more than a political aspiration. As the Journalist Abdulla Hawez puts it: "The idea of a Kurdish state is not only a political dream, it's part of an identity. Kurds have been raised to think that they deserve a state."



The Kurdish Independence problem:

The Kurdistan region is surrounded by hostile countries. The Islamic Republic of Iran does not seem to have any interest to see an independent and Israeli-backed Kurdish state. The lack of political cohesion, the fragmentation of Kurdish society along with tribal, lingual and regional diversity, contribute to the problem of a unified Kurdish state. Kurdish leadership has indeed failed to bring all the segments of the Kurdish society together, in order to create one voice which would carry the Kurds to a nationhood that they rightly seek.

NEXT MONTH IN UNREPRESENTED NATIONS...



In the next issue of UN-aligned magazine we will be telling you all about Tibet, one of the most repressed societies in the world. Tibetans are one of China's largest and most visible ethnic groups, thanks in part to their unique culture, long history, and complicated relationship with the Chinese government and the region.

Exclusive photography for this episode will be provided by *Jonna Lappalanen*.

“WOMEN ARE ALLOWED TO RIDE BIKES – JUST NOT IN PUBLIC” KHAMENEI’S FATWA: ANOTHER NAIL IN THE COFFIN OF WOMEN RIGHTS IN IRAN

By Ariana Yekrangi



A bike campaign

In the autumn of 2015, a young environmentalist in Arak, a city with pollution levels as staggering as those in Tehran, started a “car-free Tuesday” campaign to encourage people to commute by bike. The campaign soon turned popular with municipal authorities across the country beginning to encourage residents to ride bikes and leave their cars at home.

Women cyclists, naturally, saw an opportunity to support a good cause that everybody in Iran could agree on: clean air. They thought they could cycle like other male citizens if they respected Iran's strict dress code, which requires women to cover their hair and body in public. The campaign was soon aborted after a group of female cyclists were detained in the western city of Marivan following criticism from the city's Friday Prayers leader.

The women were released the same day, but only after they signed pledges not to cycle again.

In 2016 the supreme leader Ali Khamenei appeared to settle the issue once and for all with a fatwa that did not seem to have any legal basis; banning women from cycling in public. Stating that: “women were allowed to ride bikes, just not in public.”

Not exactly Saudi Arabia, but equally disgraceful

Women in Iran are long being treated as second class citizens. They are banned from attending public sport matches, travelling abroad without the permission of their male relatives and even receiving less in insurance money than their male counterparts. The 1979 Iranian revolution seemed to have brought distressing levels of gender discrimination and misogyny. Khamenei will eventually join the ash heap of history, like all other dictators have, but the culture of feminism might prove to be more challenging to the established Iranian religious-conservatives than they could possibly imagine.

The way forward

Creating conversations about these types of issues and using peaceful civil disobedience are the next logical steps forward. The male-dominated Iranian establishment needs to understand that their outdated beliefs can no longer be forced upon a population of 81 million. It is time that Iran, and all other religious nations around the globe, understand that religion can no longer be used to promote violence, bigotry and intolerance.

UN-aligned is dedicating this piece to all the men and women who have demonstrated their courage in resisting the evil attempts of the Iranian regime to suppress their fundamental rights. They will be remembered by generations to come.

SELF SACRIFICE – SONNET 36

By Dr. Alex Libreto

Introduction by Adrian Liberto



The following article has been submitted by Alex Libreto. It discusses one of Shakespeare's sonnets. Sonnet 36 that focusses on the bard's love for a young man whom he will distance himself from in order to protect his loved one from the prejudices of his day. Centuries later and we still have such a long way to go!

Gay sex can incur the death penalty in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Mauritania, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen, but it is still illegal in 72 countries, almost half of UN member states. Apart from this appalling fact, however, people all over the world are routinely picked on, beaten and even killed by fellow citizens because their sexual identity or orientation does not

fit in with religious or traditional expectations. I wish I could change what Shakespeare and all these victims had to endure, make it right. Sometimes I believe we can, like a drop of ink in a glass of water that spreads in every direction. But this is silly idealism, they will say, and I will not argue with that. Still, though we cannot change the suffering of the past, the present, however, does belong to us. Surely, believing we cannot change the future through our present is as absurd as believing we can change the past. We just have to get on with it.

You can read more of Alex's articles on his website: alexliberto.blogspot.com



onnet 36 is one of my personal favourites because it portrays the power of love through self-sacrifice. This sonnet is perhaps the most revealing of Shakespeare's intense love for his mysterious Fair Youth. Shakespeare is here advocating a separation; a breakup for the lover's sake. He wants to protect his young friend from the gossipy claws of the Elizabethan society, a society that would frown upon their relationship.

The poet does not want to tarnish the youth's good name if his feelings for him become public. There must have been a triggering specific incident that put the two men in the limelight, risking a damaging scandal. Shakespeare does not seem worried about his own reputation. His only concern is to protect the reputation of his beloved friend, who is still young and untarnished. Although the two evidently love each other, Shakespeare decides that the best thing to do is to separate and not see each other any more.

Separation, he feels is the only way to protect his friend's honour:

**I may not ever-more acknowledge thee,
Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee
shame...**

Shakespeare seems to blame himself for the unfortunate situation and reluctantly decides that the two must not be seen together in public.

He starts the poem with a very powerful line that focuses on two essential core aspects, the breakup and the oneness of their love. It is a paradox, in that separation ("twain") is juxtaposed with the inseparable ("undivided" and "one").

**Let me confess that we two must be twain,
Although our undivided loves are one:**

Shakespeare continues this narrative by accepting to bear the brunt of their disgrace in order to save his friend from being stained by scandal ("blot"). He says that despite the wicked forces that compel them to separate, their love will always endure. Sadly, their separation will deprive them of sharing those magical moments together.

**So shall those blots that do with me
remain,
Without thy help, by me be borne alone.
In our two loves there is but one respect,
Though in our lives a separable spite,
Which though it alter not love's sole effect,
Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's
delight.**

In the final sestet of this sonnet Shakespeare takes the blame and reiterates that he cannot publicly greet his lover, as he doesn't want to undermine the youth's reputation by bringing shame on him. He halfheartedly asks the young man to ignore him, should they meet in public. The poet cannot let his friend risk losing his good name.

However, Shakespeare ends the sonnet with a powerful final couplet emphasising that his love is so deep that he is one with his lover, as is the young man's own good name is one with his.

The desperate measure that Shakespeare has taken to defend the good name and reputation of his lover is the epitome of self-sacrifice in the name of true love. It is overwhelming.

**Let me confess that we two must be twain,
Although our undivided loves are one:
So shall those blots that do with me remain,
Without thy help, by me be borne alone.
In our two loves there is but one respect,
Though in our lives a separable spite,
Which though it alter not love's sole effect,
Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's
delight.
I may not evermore acknowledge thee,
Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee
shame,
Nor thou with public kindness honour me,
Unless thou take that honour from thy
name:
But do not so, I love thee in such sort,
As thou being mine, mine is thy good
report.**

UN-ALIGNED MAKES NEW FRIENDS

By Ariana Yekrangi

July marked an exciting month for UN-aligned. In our journey to find like-minded organisations to cooperate with, we were glad to find Stop Ecocide. We announce our full support and respect for what they do, which is to make ecocide a crime.

If you would like to see UN-aligned collaborating with your favorite NGOs and organisations, send us a recommendation; we are always keen to find more friends and partners.



**EARTH
PROTECTORS**



We encourage all of our UN-aligned members to become an earth protector by signing up at
stopecocide.earth

FANCY A SHORT QUIZ?

A COPY TO THE ANSWERS OF THIS QUIZ ARE AVAILABLE AT THE END OF THE MAGAZINE.

For suggestions and feedback please write to us at contact@un-aligned.org

01 True or false?

1. Eleanor Roosevelt was the nice of President Theodore Roosevelt
2. Russian President Vladimir Putin was a KGB agent before entering politics
3. Indira Gandhi was the niece of Mahatma Gandhi
4. The Rastafari Movement consider Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia the Messiah of the Bible and God incarnate
5. Umberto II, the last king of Italy was executed by the Fascist regime shortly after the start of WWII.

04 Who wrote the following novels?

- The God of Small Things
- One Hundred Years of Solitude
- Maurice

05 What are these African countries now called?

1. Upper Volta
2. Zaire
3. Dahomey
4. Gold Coast
5. Rhodesia

08 Name the Greek counterparts of these Roman gods:

- Venus
- Minerva
- Bacchus
- Mars
- Jupiter

09 In which of the above museums would you find:

- The Mona Lisa
- The Night Watch
- The Birth of Venus

02 Why is Vasily Arkhipov considered a hero?

03 How many symphonies (conventionally numbered) did these composers complete?

- Beethoven
- Mozart
- Chopin

06 What do these acronyms stand for?

- NASA
- WHO
- IMF
- UNESCO
- FIFA

07 What is kintsugi?

10 Name the European city where would you find these art galleries:

- The Louvre
- The Tate Modern
- The Uffizi
- The Prado
- Rijksmuseum

Join UN-aligned

The world is changing rapidly; and so will our perception and fabric of life. Idealism is often used as a term of contempt, but creative people understand the power of imagination. We need to visualise and formulate a better world in order to make it a reality. This is the essence of UN-aligned.

UN-aligned was created with the goal of uniting our globe by a federal world order, which is based on the core principles of a shared humanity and a shared planet. It was this aim that united Adriano Liberto and Ariana Yekrangi to create this beacon of change.

Join our global movement today and be the change you want to see. Our membership is completely free of charge.

As a member you can:

Organise and manage a cell or parish

Enjoy complete & free access to our premium benefits including: language courses, our virtual library and so much more

Contribute to our newsletter

Be part of a like-minded community

Visit un-aligned.org/register for more information



Quiz Answer Sheet

1. True or false?

- Eleanor Roosevelt was the nice of President Theodore Roosevelt (T: she was also the wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt)
- Russian President Vladimir Putin was a KGB agent before entering politics (T: he was a KGB Foreign Intelligence Officer for 16 years)
- Indira Gandhi was the niece of Mahatma Gandhi (F: she was the daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India; her husband Feroze Gandhi was no relation to Mahatma Gandhi)
- The Rastafari Movement consider Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia the Messiah of the Bible and God incarnate (T)
- Umberto II, the last king of Italy was executed by the Fascist regime shortly after the start of WWII. (F: he abdicated in 1946 following a referendum on whether to retain the monarchy)

2. Why is Vasily Arkhipov considered a hero? (During the Cuba Missile Crisis, the crew of a Russian submarine had assumed that a nuclear war had already started and wanted to launch a nuclear strike against the US navy. For the attack to go ahead, all three senior officers would have had to vote in favour, but Arkhipov refused to do so, thus averting a catastrophic nuclear war.)

3. How many symphonies (conventionally numbered) did these composers complete?

- Beethoven (9)
- Mozart (41)
- Chopin (0)

4. Who wrote the following novels?

- The God of Small Things (Arundhati Roy)
- One Hundred Years of Solitude (Gabriel García Márquez)
- Maurice (E. M. Foster)

5. What are these African countries now called?

- Upper Volta (Burkina Faso)
- Zaire (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
- Dahomey (Benin)
- Gold Coast (Ghana)
- Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)

6. What do these acronyms stand for?

- NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)
- WHO (World Health Organization)
- IMF (International Monetary Fund)
- UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)
- FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association)

7. What is kintsugi? (A Japanese art of mending broken pottery with golden or similarly embellished lacquer)

8. Name the Greek counterparts of these Roman gods:

- Venus (Aphrodite)
- Minerva (Athena)
- Bacchus (Dionysius)
- Mars (Ares)
- Jupiter (Zeus)

9. In which of the above museums would you find:

- The Mona Lisa (Louvre)
- The Night Watch (Rijksmuseum)
- The Birth of Venus (Uffizi)

10. Name the European city where you would find these art galleries:

- The Louvre (Paris)
- The Tate Modern (London)
- The Uffizi (Florence)
- The Prado (Madrid)
- Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam)

Credits

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Publisher:

UN-aligned, The Alternative UN

Editor in chief:

Adriano Liberto

Art Direction/Design:

Canva

Logo:

Amaya Libreto

Graphic design from Erdogan:

Aryan Yekrangi

Exclusive reporting in this issue:

Alex Libreto

Published in Helsinki, Finland

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