

Ninos Aho's "The New Assyrian" and Our Indifference

Fred Aprim
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Many decades ago, the pen of the great poet and thinker [Ninos Aho](#) cited for us a poem titled "Atouraya Khata" (The New Assyrian). His words were those of a true Assyrian nationalist. His message was clear, "*we are not Nestorians, Chaldeans, Jacobites or Presbyterians - we are [Assyrians](#)*". He spoke about a revival in the Assyrian thought. He knew his people and his message was clear. He walked in parallel in the footsteps of earlier great minds of Prof. Ashur Yusuf Bet Kharput, [Naum Faeq](#) and [William Daniel](#) who condemned ignorance, emphasized education and loved Mother Assyria. These great minds told us that ignorance and backwardness are mental construct that must be dismantled.



Ignorance and backwardness make the person think that he, his person and his pride are being attacked whenever he reads something that goes against his own belief or thinking. Additionally, nationalist thinkers teach us that sectarianism is a mental disorder. A sectarian person loses sight of pragmatic and sensible concepts that are behind knowledge, reason and fruitful and constructive dialogue. It is like reading an article, which we disagree with its content and instead of referring to logic, truth, facts and knowledge to address that point of disagreement, we opt to attacking the person who wrote the piece, belittling, and slandering him.

Our problem, as George Orwell puts in [Animal Farm](#), is that we have too many sheep in society that lack the courage, will, and own mind to make up their own decisions based on facts, logic and science. We are our own enemy, because we have allowed the influence of the church to overshadow our better judgment. Do poets, writers and politicians deserve to be stonewalled and out-casted because of their views on religion, for example? Ignorance and backwardness makes the person vulnerable against the aggression of the enemy and weak in any attempts to defend meaningful values.



We have a better chance to advance the Assyrian cause by learning from Rabi Ninos Aho's [The New Assyrian](#). We will live a better free life by studying Yusuf, Faeq, and Daniel with an open mind, irrespective of their views on faith or their opinion regarding religion. We have allowed the church to control our lives for a hundred generations and forgot how to be real Assyrians. It is no wonder that we have

remained were we are. It is no wonder that the Kurds have expanded and advanced their cause on our historic lands in northern Iraq ([Occupied Assyria](#)). George Orwell once wrote, *"who controls the past controls the future, who controls the present controls the past, perhaps by rediscovering the past we will gain the control of the present and make a better future for all our children"*. By being ignorants and sectarians we have allowed the Kurds to control the present and by doing so, they have changed historic facts, controlled it and are in the process of claiming Saggs' *The Might That Was Assyria*, as their own under our own eyes.

All that I have is the thought inside of me and I just cannot ignore or oppose it, but share it. Despite the oppressive policies of the chauvinistic Kurdish leaders against the Assyrians in Iraq, the church leaders have refrained from exposing them. Why am I singling Kurdish leadership and their policies? Because the Kurds have been, and continue to be, the biggest threat to the Assyrians' existence and presence on their own ancestral lands. A look-back at the Assyrians' history in Hakkari, Turkey, proves it. Any study of the number of the Assyrian villages in northern Iraq from the time Iraq was created in 1921 until today proves it. Furthermore, any study of the dwindling population of the Assyrians in northern Iraq since 1921 until today enforces that undeniable statement. But some will argue that we, as advanced society, must honor the separation of church and state. If that is the case, then the church leaders must stop praising the Kurdish leaders or become a propaganda for the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Why should we be hesitant from, or afraid of, stressing this well known fact about the church leaders in Iraq? Deep down we are all aware of this fact, but the majority of us do not admit it, because the various congregations are fearful for their status in the community from the reprisal of the various church leaders.

It is my fear that we will have new generations of Assyrians that live in the free West, but lack the courage to speak the truth out of fear of the church, complimentary respect for the clergy or because of instructions from their parents or elders. This fear is compounded by the overemphasized treatment of the media for the religious figures, regardless of their personal history, standing, values, or deeds.

While the media must abide by and foster credibility, objectivity and neutrality; however, we must first and foremost honor and protect the truth and fear no one for saying it. Aho spoke of [the New Assyrian](#) who will carry weapons and liberate Assyria, but while that exact act could face many difficult challenges in today's world considering the geopolitical situation in the Middle East, however, our bigger weapon is our pen and our mind and perhaps that is what Aho was hinting to after all. So honor Ninos Aho, Prof. Ashur Yusuf, Naum Faeq and William Daniel, love and fight for Assyria first and the church next and be courageous enough to say, protect and defend the truth for the truth will set us free.