

COMMENTARY:

Recently, we read several articles published here and there, we did not reprint them on our website, because they were written by non-Melkoniantisis. We considered them to be nothing but paid mercenaries. If they had known better, they would have stayed in the dark out of self respect.

Lately it has been quiet. Suddenly, the silence is broken by Paul Kousharian, a devoted Melkoniantisi, he belongs to the class of 1958, who dares to sign an “Open letter to Melkonian Alumni” as founder of California Melkonian Alumni, squeezed between the columns of “Nor Gyank”. We copy the betrayal of a former co-founder, an old combatant, who has a change of heart, with no filial sentiment at all.

Dear Melkoniantisi,

I am writing this letter with a sad and heavy heart. The pending closure of our school saddens me as much as anybody else yet, I want to bring to your attention the following facts:

The pending closure of Melkonian Educational Institute (MEI) is an irrevocable decision by AGBU, based on several studies and evaluations sanctioned by the AGBU Central Board. It is not a decision taken lightly.

Available MEI funds and funds raised with the sale of MEI property will be used for the benefit of the Armenian communities worldwide and will only be used to glorify the name, work and sacrifices made by the Melkonian brothers and nobody else’s.

Some Melkonian alumni have started a smear campaign against AGBU under the pretext of fighting the closure of MEI. These people have called for the “destruction” of AGBU in the Armenian media and have made shameless personal attack against the AGBU leadership. These people fall in several categories:

1. The absolute majority are former MEI students who sincerely believe that the school should not be closed but are misled into this smear campaign against the AGBU by a few hot heads.
2. Others have a personal vendetta against AGBU.
3. Some might have political considerations in weakening AGBU.

It is a shame that some of you are supporting this sad and un-Armenian activity with your hard earned funds. These funds are used freely by a few for traveling around, wining and dining and lodging in fancy hotels without consulting you. In the long run, this smear campaign will fail and the funds provided by you will be wasted in lieu of being used to help Armenian institutions and other worthwhile causes.

In conclusion, please keep in mind that the AGBU cannot “lose”. If AGBU “loses”, it means needy Armenians are losing, as AGBU’s capacity to help will be reduced.

Please THINK before contributing to this shameful activity.

Sincerely, Paul Kousharian
Founder, California Melkonian Alumni

End of the open letter by co-founder of AGBU-California Melkonian Alumni. He resigned few years ago. At the same time, Paul was a member of the previous AGBU’s Southern California District Committee.

Allow me to question some of the points.

- Paul is sad and heavy hearted.

How can we alleviate your pain? Of course by keeping Melkonian’s doors wide open.

- Closure of MEI is an irrevocable decision by AGBU, based on several studies and evaluation.

Why is it irrevocable? You mean to say that Louise Simone and 16 Board members are infallible?

Even US government with all its might and the best intelligence service made a mistake when their evaluation on Iraq’s WMD proved to be wrong. The US president admitted that they were wrong. Why the leaders of AGBU can not reconsider and admit likewise their mistakes for the sake of the future of our children. Is it too difficult to comprehend? They are opportunist and they don’t want to miss the train.

- Available funds of MEI and funds raised with the sale of MEI.

Do you know Paul, how much funds are available and how much it should be? You are an investor and you know more or less the mechanism of good investment, especially, AGBU spends thousands annually for such services. Let’s say, for the sake of argument, if you had five million back in 1925, how much you would have right now. Don’t bother to answer. This is not a test, but I hope AGBU has implemented the terms and the conditions of the Melkonian Will for the sake of their reputation. Where did all the money go?

Melkonian was not established so that one day the trustee will have free hand to sell the properties and dispense the proceeds at will. You better ask AGBU what went wrong, instead of doing bad counseling to your fellow Melkoniantsis.

- Smear campaign against AGBU misled by few hot heads.

We have said million times that it is all about the people who have hijacked the glory of AGBU. They are at fault, admit it, no body is going to take away your medals. What was the purpose of founding the alumni?

Let me refresh your memory, in case you are suffering from the early symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.

- *To bond all individuals who have attended or graduated the MEI.*
- *To continue the legacy and the mission of Melkonian brothers, by preserving and promoting national pride, national heritage and deep appreciation of Armenian cultural values.*
- *To support and help the MEI Board of Directors and the administration to achieve their goals.*
- *To help them financially and morally to maintain and enrich the students' educational and cultural programs.*
- *To assist MEI by establishing a Melkonian Alumni Endowment Fund and AGBU Central Board in New York as custodian. (Still we have to decide how to dispose of these funds, time will tell).*
- *The Alumni, with the cooperation of MEI administration, shall authorize AGBU to disburse annual income proceeds from the Fund for Educational purposes in MEI, (AGBU is already at fault), and finally,*
- *In order to perpetuate MEI mission and its existence, worldwide alumnus will assist in implementing programs with the Central Board of AGBU to transform MEI into a financially viable, self-sufficient educational institution.*

Well, my friend, people who have written the above lines, should we call them "hot heads"? Do you remember, when, together we were spending long hours to write our By-Laws? Were we "hot heads"? Why did we bother? We knew all these years that AGBU was the custodian of MEI. Why this sudden change of heart? Did we sin against AGBU? No. Should we question the decision of AGBU regarding our Alma mater? Yes, of course. We are not color blinded people! We can tell what is right and what is wrong. We know very well that only the weak will succumb and be the prey of the powerful. Wake up! We don't have any vendetta against AGBU. It will be their fault, not ours, if the glass walls break one day.

- It is a shame that some of you are supporting this un-Armenian activity and funds are used freely for traveling, dining and lodging in fancy hotels.

To preserve the House that sheltered us and gave us the decency to be good human beings, you call it a shameful and un-Armenian act? You must be out of this planet. You're brainwashed. I pity you. You are one of the few "empty heads" Melkoniantsis. Rest assured my friend that all contributions are meticulously spent and all expenses incurred by the Good people, comes from their own pocket. Whatever you're saying applies to the leaders of AGBU, don't copy and paste.

- In conclusion, please keep in mind that AGBU cannot "lose", if AGBU "loses", it means needy Armenians are losing, as AGBU's capacity to help will be reduced.

You see, now you're breaking my heart, needy Armenians will perish. What about losing our next generation? Our children living in the European Union and the Middle East will have no where to go except foreign schools for their education. They will be Armenians who can not speak their own language and they don't know anything about their culture and history. Will it be enough to feel like an Armenian?

If AGBU loses, don't you think that our nation will be the winner? I say unto you, if you can not foresee this, then you are a hopeless case. May God help us all? Under the umbrella of "Azkabahbanoum" AGBU leaders have already closed many schools, mainly in the Middles East. Why they did not open schools in Armenia instead? The fate of Melkonian Education Institute will be the same, if we let them.

At the end of the letter, Paul suggests:

- Please THINK before contributing to this shameful activity. Sincerely, Paul Kousharian.

Melkonian taught us too many things and surely one of them was to be sincere to yourself. There is an old Armenian saying: "Don't throw stone into the well that quenched your thirst". Why it has become so difficult to emancipate the mind of few from bondage?

Dear Melkoniantsis and friends, every time we come across a wall, if it is a low one, we jump and we continue our journey, if it is a high wall, we walk around it. We have to prevail, and it has to be crystal clear in our minds that if we sit idle, we will get nowhere. Everybody has to contribute financially. No excuses!