

Report by our Cyprus correspondent:

Melkonian students commemorate April 24

The Melkonian students commemorated the 90th anniversary of the Genocide with a solemn ceremony in front of the founders' statue on Wednesday, April 20, followed by an impressive evening that included the projection of highlights from new French-made documentaries, poetry reading and excerpts from memoirs, as well as two excellent plays.

The small, yet respectable crowd of former Melkonians saw students perform a scene from the "*Great Silence*" (Medz Lroutioun), a book by Berdj Zeitountsian. The student/actors performed very well on stage, where they portrayed the cunning of the leaders of Turkish society that knowingly sent Armenians to perish.

This was followed by a second presentation on stage, this time a contemporary adaptation from Fathiye Cetin's controversial book, "*Medzmayrigs*", where this young Turkish lawyer discovers her grandmother's greatest secret - that she was Armenian. The play was based on news clippings and excerpts from Cetin's book, published in the Armenian press.

The issue relates to the struggle for identity and the growing fear that hundreds of thousands if not more krypto-Christians live in Turkey today, many of whom sought to change their faith to survive or have Kurdified.

The event was NOT included in the official programme of the April 24 commemoration organized by the Cyprus chapters of the Ramgavar, ARF Dashnak, Hunchak parties and the Shahoumian communist group.

Students take Melkonian issue to Parliament

A number of day-students (the boarders were grounded) marched to the House of Representatives on Thursday, April 21, to stage their own protest about the school's closure, and caught the attention of the members of parliament with their placards "Save Our School", etc., receiving pledges of "we will help you".

The impromptu demonstration came after the "traditional" request by the community's leadership to the Melkonian students to "fill the seats" of the parliament's visitors seats, while Representative Bedros Kalaydjian addressed the assembly in his annual Genocide commemoration speech. Archbishop Hergelian and his aides and a handful of others showed up, most of whom had snubbed the Melkonian event the previous evening.

RAG sends black-shirts to Melkonian

The Melkonian students were bitterly hurt and felt insulted when they heard that the Ramgavar members of the "90th Anniversary of Genocide Commemoration Committee" refused the participation of the Melkonian students and scouts in the memorial march up Armenia Str., on the evening of Saturday, April 23.

Worse still, the local RAGs even hurled insulting remarks about the students and the school's dancing group, who had offered to participate in the April 24 commemoration.

Ironically, the mere 300-metre march, started from one end of Armenia Str., barely 80 meters from the school's front gate.

The students and scouts decided to ignore the RAG-dominated organizing committee and held their own commemoration in front of the founders' statue, with a candle-lit procession.

The students proceeded to plant 90 trees marking the Genocide anniversary their own way and held another small "hantes" in the school's auditorium. (The "official" organizing committee planted just one tree!)

On hearing this, the local RAGs must have foamed at the mouth and with Holy blessing sent a group of hot-headed youths (Dashnaks, Communists, "Independents") to "demand an explanation" from the students and "teach them a lesson" for being absent from an event of such "national importance". Tempers were raised, some of whom showed no respect to teachers of the Armenian Dept., hurling insults and using very bad language.

The students bravely defended their school, their teachers and their actions, telling these black leather-clad bravos that "they should respect the holy ground they stood on".

It was clear that the boys were not aware of the real situation at the Melkonian, they had been lied to by their leaders and left after tempers calmed.

Group 4 to protect Melkonian from Azeri insurgents?

A year after a senior student was stabbed at the Nicosia AGBU club by local Moscow-mafia type wise guys, with the Principal and Administration doing nothing to protect the students, allowing anybody and everybody to pass through the school's wide-open gates unchecked, all day or night, the AGBU Central Board in New York authorized the hiring of a 2-person security detail.

However, the three-shift Group 4 foot patrol, were not sent to protect the students from outside agents or prospective terrorists. They were there to protect the pro-closure staff and teachers, who have felt threatened in recent days due to their support of the AGBU Central Board decision (and subsequent lucrative pay off).

A recent incident, probably by Azeri terrorists, saw the windows of a school office broken. Police were brought in, but reportedly found no evidence to suggest malice. Perhaps the occupant of that office had been drunk the previous night and smashed everything in the office in order to blame the students. (Remember '*Krystalnacht*'?)

Anyway, despite the respect and admiration that Group 4 has in Cyprus, there is no assurance that these patrol guards will not peek into the dorms of the students and see young females undressing. Knowing the perverts who hired the security detail, anything is possible!