

**"If there is no transparency and no monetary control, checks and balances" by the membership, then I think it is time that AGBU ceased to exist.**

**Let AGBU cease to be a parochial set-up and let the management be elected by the membership as it used to be and as it befits a democratic institution.**

**If the current incumbents are not willing to do that then, I repeat, let AGBU be no more.**

I read with sadness the letters on AGBU bashing, which made me think once again about the unilateral decision of AGBU to close our beloved Melkonian. Much has been said and written on this subject and even after reading everything I could find on it, I am still of the opinion that all the reasons given by AGBU's management for the closure of Melkonian, were only excuses to justify a decision that they had taken some time ago. I feel we still do not know the real reason.

AGBU was probably the best thing that happened in the early part of the 20th century for the Armenians, who were thrown out of their own country and left mostly destitute, AGBU did effectively come to their help. Parekordzagan was then, as far as I can make out, a fair and open organization whose sole aim was the preservation of Armenians.

I, as a Melkoniantsi and also one who has appreciated the benefits of AGBU over the years, have always been anything but an "AGBU basher", on the contrary I have disagreed with some anti-AGBU people. Unfortunately, some time after its creation, AGBU was politicized to some extent, which was a pity. It should have remained above politics and simply pro-Armenian.

The final nails in the coffin of Melkonian, driven in by the current AGBU leadership, made me take a closer look at AGBU. It is now obviously a closed shop, as far as its running and administration is concerned; the membership does not know who is doing what and with what aim. I feel sure that that is not how the authors of AGBU envisaged their wonderful organization to become. I believe that they and later enhancers of AGBU, such as even the late Alex Manoukian, would totally disapprove of the current direction of AGBU. If AGBU cannot be a more open and democratic institution, "If there is no transparency and no monetary control, checks and balances" by the membership, then I think it is time that AGBU ceased to exist.

May be there is absolutely nothing untoward about AGBU's organization and management, but we are not in a position to know that. Let everything be brought out into the open and let us see that everything is as it should be. Let AGBU cease to be a parochial set-up and let the management be elected by the membership as it used to be and as it befits a democratic institution. And then our faith in it could be reinstated. If the current incumbents are not willing to do that then, I repeat, let AGBU be no more.

As I said, I am very very sad that I feel this way, but that is not my fault, is it?

Tatto Couligian - U.K.

March 17, 2005