

WHY MELKONIAN MUST REOPEN & THE ALUMNI CALL

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By Eleni Theocharous, [Cyprus Mail](#), 23 April 2009

Dr Eleni Theocharous is an MP for the DISY party and a candidate for the European Parliamentary elections. As an active member of the Doctors of Cyprus, she has travelled on many occasions to Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh and operated on hundreds of children.

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Despite our participation in pan-European campaigns to respect multiculturalism (after all, 2008 was the Year of Multiculturalism) and despite the declarations by governments to mark the multicultural character of our homeland, a living part of our culture and the history of our country has been allowed to wither and eventually to close – the historic Melkonian school.

This school played a vital role in the past 80 years towards the support and development of the Armenian language, culture and history, as well as for the preservation of this nation's identity. It was the only institute of its kind in the whole of Europe that provided an education to Armenian students, with this education based on their heritage and the language of learning being in Armenian.

The Melkonian Educational Institute was established by the great visionary Garabed Melkonian as an orphanage in 1926 to provide shelter and protection to hundreds of survivors of the genocide. The building that housed the school until its closure – that currently houses the Aglandjia Gymnasium – is protected by the Republic of Cyprus as a part of our national heritage.

The forest that surrounds it was planted by orphans, the first inhabitants of the orphanage, to remind us all of the genocide. Each tree represents one of the many Armenian communities scattered across the world. It is therefore a holy place and a historic one that symbolises the hope that other genocides are not perpetrated in this world.

Thousands of Armenians from all over the world have studied at the Melkonian when it eventually became a school and many loved Cyprus, carrying with them the drama and the history of this island, the culture and its suffering, to the rest of the world.

Many have excelled and distinguished themselves, becoming the leaders of the Armenian communities in every country, while also contributing in various fields towards the development of the Armenian culture, education, language and national identity. Thousands of graduates have left their mark in world history by distinguishing themselves in literature, the arts and sciences and in the field of business. At the same time, they became ambassadors of Cyprus supporting the just cause of the people of Cyprus vying for a fair solution to the Cyprus problem.

Included among the many who passed through the Melkonian are Bedelian, Abcarian, Vahan Tekeyan and so many other eminent scientists, artists, musicians, teachers, writers, historians and athletes who have lived and still live among us.

Many of the students who were at the Melkonian when it suddenly closed have found themselves in a dire situation, not knowing what to do. Furthermore, the closure of the Melkonian has also endangered the Nareg elementary school because its graduating pupils who do not have a secondary Armenian school to continue to are now making other choices as regards their primary education.

All these constitute a real threat to the Armenian language, culture and civilisation. They are leading Armenians to assimilation, instead of incorporating them with their unique characteristics within Cypriot society as has happened for almost a century. Incorporation, instead of assimilation, is a fundamental principle of the European Union which is implemented in the case of migrants. Even more so, this should be the case for living communities of a member state.

It is, therefore, necessary to save the Melkonian. To help it reopen. Our devotion to the meaning of multiculturalism should be deep and sincere and addressed with actions towards every community of Cyprus. The civilisation and creativity of the Armenians of Cyprus is a benefit to us all, it is not a detriment. Nor is this something to display in museums in a few years. Equally so, the land of the historic Melkonian school is not even for sale, neither for commercial exploitation or even for prime development of luxury hotels.

A Call From Melkonian Alumni (In Armenian with Latin letters)

Sireli Melkoniantziner yev paregamner,

Melkonian Sanoutz Myoutyunner, ardashmani metch tchedesnevads SDORAKRAHAVKI hamahygagan arshavi me sguesads yen, Kovast tenelov meg etch, yergoo ankam dbeloo baymanov, Haygagan polor terteteroun, ardashmani metch yev Hayasdan, aravel Gibrossi hoonagan terteroun yevs, Hounarenov louys gue desnen sdorakrahaviki haydararoutyune, hamajoghovertagan ays vitkhari arshavov yev ashkharhaspur Melkoniantzinerou ou paregamnerou

~~atchagtzoutiamp yev masnagtzoutyamp gaguengalenk 20,000 sdorakroutyun havakel yev ghergel~~
Gibrosi Hanrabadoutyan Nakhakahin yev rnthanour tadakhazin, vorbeszi AGBUn tchi garena
dsakhel Melkoniani galvadsnere yev hamozel vor AGBUn verapana mer Sireli Melkonian Guertagan
Hasdadoutyune, nor dserakirnerov. Hajetzek panal veri hishvads (Attachments)
haghortakroutunnere ar I kidoutyun.

Hedevapar, gotch guenenk polor mer ashkharhatzriv melkoniantzi harazadneroun ou
paregamneroun, anmitchabes gayketch website) yertan ou panan www.midk.org/am, sdorakren
ou ghergen anmitchabes. Gue khentrenk oktakordsel tzer aravelakouyn mitchodsnere, heratzayn,
namag, e-mail yev miyevnouyn badkame gherguetzek tzer "face book"i tzangin ou khentrel polore
sdorakren mer vere hishvads sdorakrahavake. Touk, urakantchuret, guernak tzer endanegan
barakaneroun, paregamneroun, azkaganneroun tratzineroun oknel, yete elektonayin mitchotz
tchounin sdorakreloo yev ghergeloo.

Gue sbassenk desnel tzer tzangoutyune mer sdorakrahavin dag. Asiga, mer amenen aztetzig yev
artunavor arite bidi ella arjevoreloo mer melkoniantzyoutyune.

Hachoghoutian lavakouyn maghtanknerov,

Zohrab Shamassian
Melkonian Alumni Press Coordinator
e-mail: zohrabs@cox.net
tel. 949-855 2015

