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HOLY TRINITY ARMENIAN CHURCH

• RIGHT REV. VAZKEN KESHISHIAN, RECTOR  
RECTOR'S OFFICE 964-3286

PARISH OFFICE 924-6514  
AUDITORIUM 923-0081

June 19, 1979

Mr. Alex Manoogian  
President of the AGBU  
Masco Corporation  
21001 Van Born Road  
Taylor, Michigan 48180  
USA

Dear Mr. Manoogian:

It has come to our attention that the AGBU is considering extending financial aid to the so-called "Holy Cross Armenian Day School" of Toronto. No doubt the AGBU is guided in this instance as in other instances by its philanthropic philosophy.

Unfortunately, we have to differ with the AGBU in this instance and we would like to present some of the background of this "school" as to why any help to it or to its sponsors at this time will not benefit our community.

The "school" was founded by parishioners who could not abide by the decisions of the majority of the Parish Assembly and the elections of the Parish Council of 1978. They could not abide by the lawful decisions of the Primate and the Diocesan Council with regard to the status of Bishop Aris Shirvanyan in our Diocese.

The so-called school was founded with the sole purpose of keeping Bishop Aris Shirvanyan in Toronto and their aim was not even camouflaged by their repeated statements in this regard as well as by making

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Bishop Aris Shirvanian the principal of the school and paying him the same salary as he was receiving as pastor of our church.

Incidentally, Bishop Aris Shirvanian could have stayed as Pastor of our church as no one pushed him out or squeezed him out. Either he did not want to stay on as Pastor because he lost his other position of Vicar or he was persuaded by laymen to step out and be the front man for controversial activities in the Parish.

Bishop Aris Shirvanian was asked by the Catholicos to return to Etchmiadzin in November 1978 which he did not do. He was again asked to return at the end of March 1979. At that time he took three individuals with him where they erroneously conveyed the idea to the Vehapar that Bishop Aris Shirvanian had undertaken a pedagogical mission in this community by establishing the first Armenian School in Toronto. In this way, they convinced the Vehapar that Bishop Aris Shirvanian's stay in Toronto was essential to the end of the scholastic year in June 1979. Of course, upon their return the deputation used the Vehapar's blessings for the "pioneering" school, a fruit of their deception, to trumpet the fallacy that the Catholicos had "recognized" their school and Bishop Aris Shirvanian's important "mission".

This community has had a weekly Armenian school for 25 years with at present 260 pupils and 16 teachers, all volunteers. Of course, the Armenian Relief Society has had a Summer School for several years and a private Armenian Day School has existed for about 5 years as well.

If financial aid is to be based on need in Toronto, this will only open the Pandora's Box. Of course, if financial need was so acute for the "Holy Cross School", Bishop Aris Shirvanian's deputation to Etchmiadzin in March 1979 should not have been funded from the Holy Cross School/Church funds.

We feel the sponsors of that "school" are not after a few dollars of aid from the AGBU. We feel they want the "recognition" of that "school" from an august body like the AGBU or "recognition" from your person. We have no doubt that they will endeavour to use such "recognition" to plead with the Catholicos to have Bishop Aris Shirvanian stay in Toronto to carry his "mission".

We have nothing personal with Bishop Aris Shirvanian. However, his prolonged presence in Toronto will just prolong the turmoil that this community has been subjected to for 18 months, a turmoil personified by Bishop Aris Shirvanian.

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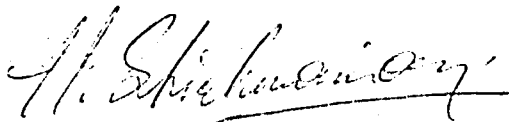
For over a year the sponsors of the "Holy Cross School" led a most unChristian campaign to boycott our church to the extend of many of them coming to church and not putting a penny in the collection plates. The latter was a programmed campaign which would be considered childish if it were not so vicious.

Perhaps, the AGBU with its major building campaign just getting started would want to pacify these individuals to recruit their help for the major tasks ahead. Under normal circumstances, this kind of approach would be admirable. However, considering the enmity that these people have created with the majority of the parish members who happen to be the majority of the AGBU members as well, this kind of approach could be counterproductive. It would be admirable of the AGBU to satisfy all elements within its ranks. Unfortunately, due to the happenings of the last 18 months, we don't feel this is possible.

Holy Trinity Armenian Church took a heavy responsibility both financial and moral in deciding to tie its future as part of an AGBU - Church Complex. It was not an easy decision as not all members were in favour. There being no Antelias affiliated church in Toronto, our church serves all adherents of the Apostolic faith. The decision to relocate our church beside the AGBU Centre was not favourably received by sympathisers of that group. The ramifications, hence, of this move are yet to be seen. Nevertheless, the wishes of the majority had to prevail and the Parish Council acted accordingly. We just hope that the AGBU will similarly take a definite stand for the peace and good order of our community and for the generation of enthusiastic support for the forthcoming Church-AGBU Centre Complex.

Respectfully yours,

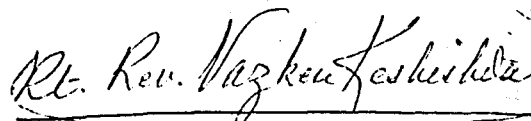
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