

## **DISTINGUISHED ACADEMICIAN FADEY SARKISIAN MAKES PLEA TO HELP ARMENIA'S BELEAGUERED INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY**

Armenian National Science and Education Fund (ANSEF) hosts reception for director of Armenian Academy of Sciences at Diocesan Center in NYC

By Florence Avakian

New York, NY>Members of the New York-New Jersey Armenian intellectual community had the privilege of meeting Academician Faday Sarkisian, Director of Armenia's Academy of Sciences, at headquarters of the Diocese of the Armenian Church on the evening of Saturday, May 13. The special reception held in the Diocesan tahljij was sponsored by the Armenian National Science and Education Fund (ANSEF), which is on a crucial mission to help Armenia's endangered scientists and scholars.

Since Armenia's independence almost ten years ago, a very large number of people have left the country due to the dire economic conditions. The goal of ANSEF is to prevent the "brain drain" of scientists, scholars and educators>especially the young intellectuals who are the future of the Motherland.

In welcoming the guests (which included Armenia's Ambassador to the United Nations Dr. Movses Abelian) the dedicated chairman of the Armenian National Science and Education Fund Dr. Tavit O. Najarian explained that ANSEF was created to improve the deplorable state of affairs in the scientific and cultural endeavors in the newly independent Armenia. This scholarly community is the most neglected sector of society in Armenia over the past decade, he pointed out, adding that a committee was formed 18 months ago to initiate the ANSEF fund. To date, approximately \$225,000 has been invested in the Fund, with an additional \$175,000 in pledges to be paid within a five-year period.

The guest of honor was introduced by the Very Rev. Fr. Krikor Maksoudian, one of the original organizers of the committee along with Dr. Edgar Housepian and Prof. Harut Barsamian. He noted that if the Academy of Sciences>the most eminent educational institution in Armenia>were to find an analogous institution in the United States, the latter would have to encompass all the graduate schools and studies in this country. The Academy of Sciences in Armenia was in a very close relationship to the USSR's Academy of Sciences during the Soviet era, he noted.

Academician Faday Sarkisian was described as a giant who has been very helpful to our people since the 1940s, and has been actively involved in Armenia's national, scientific and academic life, as Prime Minister for 14 years, as President of the Council of Ministers, and as Director of the Academy of Sciences after the death of Professor Victor Hampartsoumian. Instead of retiring, Academician Sarkisian, with all his talents and in every way, is serving Armenia. It is an honor to have him among us, Fr. Maksoudian said.

## Help Preserve the Life of Armenia's Academics

Here in the United States, Fr. Maksoudian forcefully declared, we must find a way to preserve the life of the academics in Armenia.

Greeted with thunderous applause, the eminent academician explained that he had traveled to Syria, Lebanon, Washington, DC, and now New York on this mission. Instead of tiring me, this trip has inspired me to work harder, said the guest of honor whose fresh face and robust bearing belie his 76 years. He noted that he had met with the Armenian communities in Syria and Lebanon, and that in Syria 20,000 people had traveled long distances to pay their respects to the martyrs in Deir Zor.

As a small republic, our academics and intellectuals were among the best, ranking third after Russia and the Ukraine. And during that time, we helped the diasporan communities with textbooks and other ways to advance the Armenian language and culture. Now we don't have these advantages, and we need your help, he stated with genuine concern.

## Keeping Intellectuals in Armenia

Sarkisian's crucial point was that scholars and scientists in Armenia must receive compensation for their work and have their books published. And what is most important is to keep the young intellectuals in Armenia, and prevent the brain drain of the youth. Many of our intellectuals have won many international awards. Even in these very difficult times, the level of our intellectuals has not fallen. The only way for Armenia to stand on its feet is for its people to work and be compensated for their work, he declared, emphasizing each word.

In the last ten years, because of the traumas that have hit Armenia, including the earthquake and its aftermath, the crisis in Artzakh, and the continuing blockades by Turkey and Azerbaijan, available resources for scientific research and scholarship have been significantly reduced. This desperate situation has forced some scholars to emigrate, or go into other disciplines. This "brain drain" is having disastrous results on the development of Armenia.

The Armenian National Science and Education Fund (ANSEF) was formed as a "call to arms" to protect and improve this endangered scientific and intellectual community in Armenia. ANSEF intends to build an endowment fund of \$10 million, which will generate income every year to support its grants.

The objectives of ANSEF are to provide financial and other material resources to support scientific research, advanced technology development and scholarly work in the Republic of Armenia. This goal includes facilitating collaboration between Armenian scholars and scientists and their colleagues throughout the world, and having them participate in the international exchange of ideas.

The Armenian National Science and Education Fund (ANSEF) operates under the auspices of the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), the humanitarian aid and development arm of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. For more information, contact FAR at 630 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10016, or call (212) 889-5150.