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**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Garbis Kortian, Co-founder of Zoryan Institute, Passes Away**

Vienna, Austria—Garbis Kortian, one of the founders of the Zoryan Institute, recently passed away in Vienna, Austria. He was 70 years old.

“We are saddened by the loss of a colleague and a friend,” said K.M. Greg Sarkissian, President of the Zoryan Institute. “Garbis was a visionary, and as a co-founder of Zoryan, was one of the main conceptualizers of the Institute’s mission. His hallmark was to always challenge conventional thinking on any subject.”

Kortian received his Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Vienna in 1966. He was a professor of philosophy at the University of Montreal from 1968 to 1995; he then moved to Paris and taught periodically at the University of Vienna until his death. His specialty was the work of Jürgen Habermas and that of other modern philosophers and theorists, such as Theodor Adorno. He was the author of two major studies on metacritique and on Kant, both published by Cambridge University Press, one of the world’s leading scholarly presses. He also wrote and edited several other books, one of them on the art of Arto Tschakmakchian.

“Garbis achieved a truly trans-Atlantic reputation,” said Khachig Tölölyan, Professor of Comparative Literature at Wesleyan University and Editor of *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*. “His Metacritique was translated into French and many of his essays into German, and his lectures were heard everywhere, from Johns Hopkins to Vienna. He served as a bridge and a catalyst for relations between French, German, and Anglophone philosophers. And always he worried that Armenians and Armenia lacked interest in philosophy.”



Garbis Kortian at What Is To Be Asked colloquium, with hand on his head.

At its seminal first colloquium, held in Cambridge in 1984, Kortian opened the subject of “What Is To Be Asked?” with an extended philosophical discussion on what questions are of “real existential concern and interest.” He wanted to update “the notion of the intellectual” and of “modernity” to advance the diaspora’s self-understanding. His conclusion was that “What characterizes the intellectual in contemporary times is one trait above all others: critique.... in the name of truth.”

The Zoryan Institute is the parent organization of the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, which runs an annual, accredited university program on the subject and is co-publisher of *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* in partnership with the International Association of Genocide Scholars and the University of Toronto Press. It is the first non-profit, international center devoted to the research and documentation of contemporary issues with a focus on Genocide, Diaspora and Armenia. For more information please contact the Zoryan Institute by email [zoryan@zoryaninstitute.org](mailto:zoryan@zoryaninstitute.org) or telephone (416) 250-9807.