



23,5

MEMORY WALKS

Exile of Armenian
Intellectuals, April 24, 1915

Istanbul Nişantaşı - Şişli

Hrant Dink Foundation

Following the assassination of Hrant Dink, the editor-in-chief of Agos newspaper, in front of his office on January 19, 2007, the Hrant Dink Foundation was established to keep his dreams alive. The foundation aims to build a fair and free society that is free from discrimination and respectful of human rights, by fostering a culture of dialogue and peace. Placing coming to terms with the past and reviving memory at the center of its work, the foundation seeks to contribute to the construction of a shared future by making silenced stories visible.

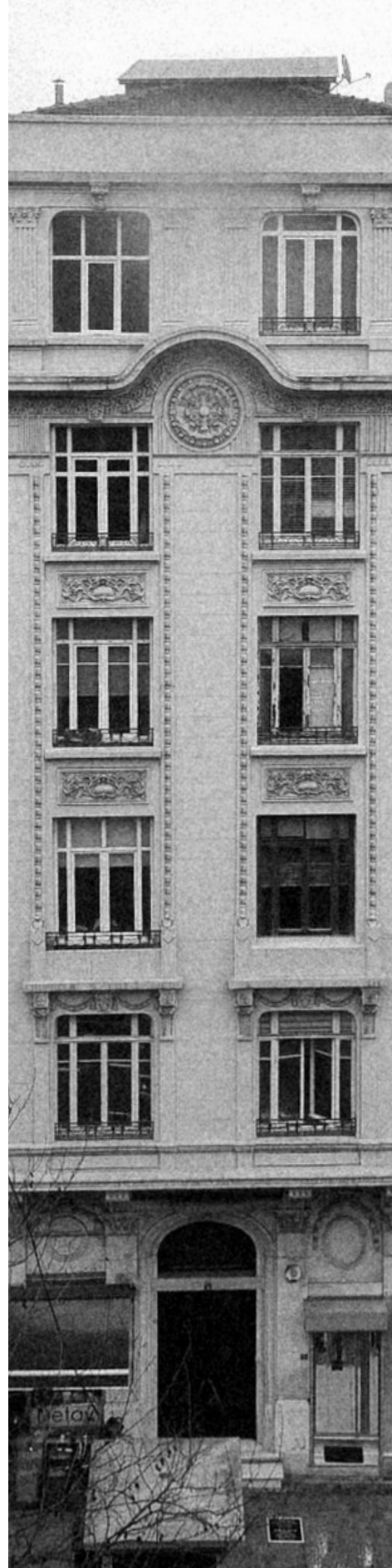
23.5 Memory Walks

Located at the very site where Hrant Dink was assassinated, the 23.5 Hrant Dink Site of Memory was founded as a dialogue platform grounded in universal values—one that remembers the past while speaking to the future, and that promotes empathy and mutual understanding. The 23.5 Memory Walks series extends this space and mission, inviting everyone to witness the past and trace the multi-layered memory of the city together.

The 23.5 Site of Memory sheds light on Hrant Dink's life and struggle, the story of Agos newspaper, the process leading to his assassination, and its aftermath. At the same time, it offers a perspective on Turkey's recent history within the context of minority rights, human rights, and democratization. Through exhibitions and various events, 23.5 also provides a space for reflection and dialogue on Turkey's collective memory.

The 23.5 Memory Walks series begins with memory tours focusing on the stories of Armenian intellectuals who were arrested in Istanbul on April 24, 1915 and exiled, and most of whom were killed. First organized in 2024 under the guidance of Nesim Ovadya İzrail, based on his book *April 24, 1915: Istanbul, Çankırı, Ayaş, Ankara* (İletişim, 2013), these tours have inspired the foundation to turn them into a permanent program. While developing the program, the foundation also made use of the Ottoman Archive document prepared by the Directorate of Public Security (BOA, DH. EUM. 2. Şb. 67/31, September 14, 1920), which lists the intellectuals to be arrested in Istanbul, newly re-translated from Ottoman Turkish. These walks aim to pause in front of the homes of the intellectuals, to remember their stories and their place in the city's and society's collective memory, and to build a dialogue with a silenced past.

The Sebat Apartment, which once housed the office of Agos and is today home to the 23.5 Hrant Dink Site of Memory.
(Photo: Deniz Ezgi Sürek)



Exile of Armenian Intellectuals **April 24, 1915**

● Police Stations



Night of Saturday April 24, 1915

Between Saturday evening and Sunday morning, 197 Armenian intellectuals were arrested in Istanbul and taken to the Central Prison.

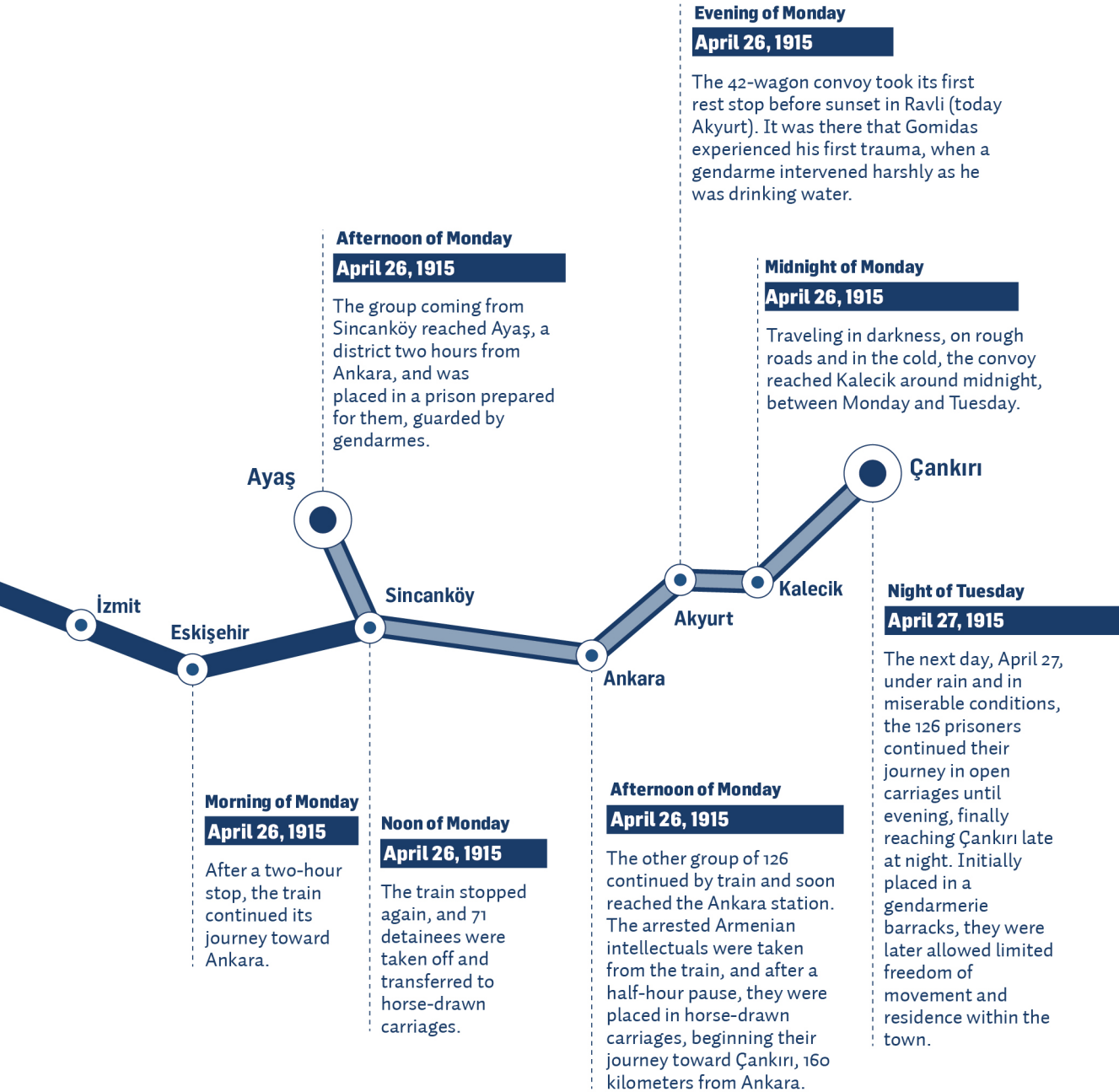
Evening of Sunday April 25, 1915

71 people, considered to be politically active or organized, were transported by bus, while another 126, whose situation was deemed "less serious," were taken on foot, both groups heading toward the Sarayburnu Pier.

Night of Sunday April 25, 1915

The Armenian intellectuals were put on a ferry at Sarayburnu and taken to Haydarpaşa, where an empty train was waiting. After a few hours of delay, the train departed for Anatolia.

Exile of Armenian Intellectuals **April 24, 1915**



On April 24, 1915, 197 people were arrested, and the number reached 250 with those arrested in the following days. The process of detaining Istanbul's Armenian intellectuals was completed by the end of August. The arrest and deportation of Armenian intellectuals from Istanbul, which began in April 1915, concluded by the end of August. Of the 92 Armenian intellectuals sent to Ayaş, 75 perished. Of the 158 sent to Çankırı, 99 lost their lives. In total, out of 250 Armenian intellectuals, 174 were killed, while 76 survived.

Niřantařı - Őiřli

The avenue that today stretches from Taksim toward Őiřli splits at an acute angle when it reaches Harbiye: Halaskargazi Avenue continues to the left toward Őiřli, while the road curving to the right becomes Vali Konađı Avenue. Since the late 19th century, the area between these two avenues has been one of Istanbul's neighborhoods where Turkish, Armenian, Greek, and Jewish communities lived side by side, reflecting the city's multilayered urban fabric in terms of commerce, education, and cultural life.

One of the symbols of the area is the niřan tařı (target stone) located on Vali Konađı Avenue. Erected during the Ottoman period to mark the sultans' arrow shots, this stone not only gave the district its name but also defined the historical identity of Niřantařı. Located nearby, the Harbiye Military Academy, known today as the Military Museum, was built in 1847 when the area still consisted largely of wide meadows and training grounds. However, during the reign of Sultan Abdlmeaid, when the imperial family moved first to Dolmabahçe Palace and later to Yıldız Palace, these areas were opened to settlement. Owing also to its proximity to Pera (Beyođlu), government officials and wealthy families began building mansions in the area from the 1860s onwards, transforming Niřantařı within a short time into an elite residential district distinguished by its Western-style architecture.

This new settlement also reflected the multicultural social fabric of Istanbul. Together with Pangaltı, Niřantařı had a large non-Muslim population in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among the important institutions in the area were the Armenian Catholic Mekhitarist Monastery and School, as well as the Russian Church and Hospital. According to the 1914 *Annuaire Oriental* (Oriental Directory), of the 63 residences and businesses on Sleyman Nazif Street (formerly Hacı Mahak Street) 43 belonged to Armenians, 10 to Greeks, 7 to Levantines, 2 to Turks, and 1 to Jews. During this period, the Kelekian, Shekerian, and Horasanjian apartment buildings stood out as early examples of apartment buildings in the district.

After the First World War, one of the orphanages established for Armenian orphans brought from Anatolia to Istanbul, housing 250 children, was opened in 1919 on Hacı Emin Street in the Teřvikiye neighborhood of Őiřli. Around the same time, the mansion of Marco Pasha, a Greek merchant from Crete, was left vacant when his family emigrated to Greece following the Balkan Wars. After being briefly used as the Polish Consulate in 1922, it was nationalized by the state in 1927 and converted into the Governor's Residence (Vali Konađı). The rapid spread of apartment construction beginning in the 1930s fundamentally transformed the architectural appearance of Niřantařı.



Sebat Apartment
23.5 Hrant Dink Site of Memory

LOCATIONS

- 1 Levon Ohnigian
- 2 Krikor Ohnigian
- 3 Zareh Momjian
- 4 Parsegh Shahbaz
- 5 Dikran Ajemian
- 6 Hrant Aghajanian
- 7 Jak Sayabalian
- 8 Hovhannes Kevork Keoleian
- 9 Hagop Nargilejian
- 10 Rosdom Rosdomian
- 11 Krikor Yesayan
- 12 Garabet Papazian
- 13 Sarkis Parseghian
- 14 Yenovk Shahan
- 15 Dikran Cheogiurian

- Confirmed locations
- Estimated locations

Feriköy Catholic Cemetery



Levon Ohnigian

01

Levon Ohnigian, the son of a merchant family from Sivas, was taken from his home at number 49 Kaya Hatun Street in Pangaltı (today's Hatun Street) on the night of April 24, 1915. Along with his father Krikor and brothers Aram and Karekin, Levon worked in the family's tobacco and sherbet shop in Galatasaray. He was among the hundreds of Istanbul Armenians arrested that day. The April 24 operation targeted all the men of the Ohnigian family. The father and three sons were taken from different addresses, first to the Central Prison in Sultanahmet, and then exiled to Çankırı.

Their mother submitted a series of petitions throughout May and June, pleading with the authorities for the release of her innocent husband and sons. As a result of these efforts, the order of the Ministry of the Interior dated August 4, 1915 included the names of the father and his three sons among 32 detainees who were to be released on the condition that they not return to Istanbul. However, the unsafe conditions on Anatolian roads at the time forced the family to remain in Çankırı.

After six months of waiting, on February 26, 1916, Levon Ohnigian and his brothers were sent on a death march towards Deir ez-Zor, together with the last convoy of Istanbul Armenians remaining in Çankırı, among them Krikor Balakian. Their father, Krikor Ohnigian, due to his age and illness, was left behind in Çankırı after a bribe was paid to a police commissioner, and he died there. The three brothers, last seen working on the construction of Baghdad Railway, were never heard from again.



The house at number 49 on today's Kaya Hatun Street, formerly known as Kaya. (Photo: Can Candan)

Krikor Ohnigian

02

Krikor Ohnigian, a merchant born in 1840 in Sivas, was arrested on April 24, 1915, taken from his home in the Ohnigian Apartment on Poyraz Street in Pangaltı. The owner of a tobacco and sherbet shop in Galatasaray, Ohnigian ran his business together with his three sons, Aram, Karekin, and Levon. He was also a business partner of Hovhannes Kevork Keoleian, who was arrested on the same day.

The April 24 operation targeted all the men of the family; on that day, they were taken from different addresses, arrested, and exiled to Çankırı. Throughout May and June, Krikor's wife submitted repeated petitions to the authorities, pleading for the release of her innocent husband and three sons. Her efforts

eventually yielded results: According to the Ministry of the Interior's order dated August 4, 1915, the names of the father and his three sons were among those of 32 detainees to be released on the condition that they not return to Istanbul. However, the dangerous conditions of the Anatolian roads at the time forced the family to remain in Çankırı.

This period of waiting decisively altered the family's fate. Six months later, on February 26, 1916, Krikor Ohnigian's three sons were sent on a death march towards Deir ez-Zor, together with the last group of Istanbul Armenians remaining in Çankırı, among them Krikor Balakian. Their father Krikor Ohnigian, due to illness and his age of 75, was not included in the final convoy. According to accounts, the Çankırı police commissioner, in exchange for a bribe of 100 gold liras, issued a medical report declaring the elderly man "ill," allowing him to remain in Çankırı. Krikor Ohnigian died there, separated from his sons. The three brothers were last reportedly seen working on the construction of the Baghdad Railway but were never heard from again.

Zareh Momjian

03

Zareh Momjian was taken from his home at number 4 on Hacı Mahak Street in Pangaltı (today's Süleyman Nazif Street). As a linguist and the official translator for the Russian Consulate, he held diplomatic status, which in theory should have offered him protection.

After his arrest on April 24, he was exiled to Çankırı. His fate became uncertain amid a series of contradictory official orders. On May 27, 1915, an order was issued for his transfer from Çankırı to Istanbul. However, just three days later, on May 30, the Department of Public Security canceled this decision and demanded that Momjian be apprehended and returned to Çankırı. After months of uncertainty, it was reported on August 29 that he was being held in Ankara, and officials inquired whether he should be sent into exile. The reply from Istanbul stated that there was "no need for transfer." Finally, on October 2, new instructions were issued for him to be sent back to Istanbul "for deportation beyond the border, due to his diplomatic status."

This bureaucratic chaos was not mere incompetence, but a deadly trap. While conflicting correspondence about his fate continued between Istanbul and Ankara, the local executioners had already acted. According to the testimony of Krikor Balakian, one of the survivors of the exile, Zareh Momjian was killed near Ankara during this period of administrative indecision.



House number 4 on Hacı Mahak Street
(today Süleyman Nazif Street).
(Photo: Can Candan)

Parsegh Shahbaz

04

Parsegh Shahbaz, a lawyer and journalist born in 1883 in Boyacıköy, Istanbul, was taken from his home in the Kelekyan Apartment, number 10 Hacı Mahak Street (today's Süleyman Nazif Street) in Pangaltı on the night of April 24, 1915. Known for his enthusiastic temperament, Shahbaz studied at the Getronagan School and later at the Murad Rafaelian School in Venice. After returning to Istanbul, he worked as an editor for the newspaper Dzaghig (Flower) together with Aram Andonian. Due to his political activities, he was forced to flee to Egypt in 1903, and during the five years he spent there, he engaged in trade while also publishing the newspapers Grag (Fire) and Mdrag (Whip).

Following the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Era in 1908, Shahbaz returned to Istanbul and carried out organizational work for the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Tashnaktsutiun) in Harput. Later, he went to Paris to study law, where he also served as the Paris correspondent for the newspaper Azadamard (Struggle for Freedom). Although he was in a secure position when the First World War broke out, he chose to return to Istanbul voluntarily in August 1914 to be with his family. His decision would later earn him the ironic nickname "the volunteer" among his fellow prisoners.

After his arrest, he was first taken to the Central Prison in Sultanahmet, then sent to Ayaş. While most of his friends hoped that their detention was a mistake and that they would be released after trial, Shahbaz was pessimistic. According to Andonian, he said, "I don't think they arrested me just because I was a party member." After learning that he was to be taken to Harput to be tried before the Court-Martial (Divan-ı Harp), he described his connection to Harput in a letter to his sisters as follows:

I don't know why they are taking me there. I have no ties to that city. Six years ago, when the new constitution was proclaimed, I was there for only a few days while publishing Arevlk (East). I walked arm in arm with the Unionists, and gave one or two lectures. That's all.



Parsegh Shahbaz. (Aram Andonian, Exile, Trauma and Death - On the Road to Chankiri with Komitas Vartabed. Gomidas Institute - Tekeyan Cultural Association, 2010, p. 44)

In the same letter, he stated that he was unable to continue the journey due to wounds on his feet and stomach pain, that he had bribed the guards to be allowed to rest, and that he did not believe he would reach Elazığ alive.

Upon his arrival at the Mezre Prison in Harput, a false sense of camaraderie developed between Shahbaz and the prison warden of the time, Hasan Efendi, based on their shared Masonic ties. Hasan Efendi, who had promised to use his influence to secure Shahbaz's release, told him that he would have to pay a bribe in order to obtain permission for his freedom. Filled with hope, Shahbaz handed over his last money, his watch, and his wedding ring. Yet towards the end of July, he was taken from his cell at midnight and stabbed to death with bayonets by the gendarmes. His body was dragged and thrown into a pit near the American Hospital. Left exposed for a while, it was covered with earth later that night by Armenian women at the hospital.

Dikran Ajemian

05

Dikran Ajemian, a member of the Court of Appeals, was arrested on the night of April 24, 1915, after being taken from his home at number 22 Bekçi Street in Pangaltı (today's number 38 Zafer Street). His position as a senior jurist within the Ottoman judicial system did not protect him from the wave of arrests. As part of the operation that targeted the political, cultural, and professional leaders of the Armenian community, Ajemian was taken from his home and brought, along with other intellectuals, to the Central Prison in Sultanahmet.

Following the classification process carried out there, he was transferred to Ayaş Prison, where detainees considered more "dangerous" by the authorities –typically those known for their political affiliations– were sent. The fact that a high-ranking judge was treated as a political prisoner and sent to a facility with harsher conditions of isolation, despite the absence of any concrete charges, stands as one of the clearest examples of the arbitrary and sweeping nature of the operation.

After about two months of imprisonment in Ayaş, Ajemian's fate changed with a telegram order from the Ministry of the Interior dated June 27, 1915. The telegram stated that Dikran Ajemian had been "transferred by mistake" by the police directorate and ordered his release. The same order also secured the freedom of Krikor Siurmeian, printer Harutiun Asadurian, bookbinder's apprentice Mgrdich Garabedian, and journalist Piuzant Bozajian. Following this decision, Dikran Ajemian returned to Istanbul.



Vali Konağı Avenue. (Photo: Can Candan)

Hrant Aghajanian

06

Hrant Aghajanian, a merchant and sarraf (money lender) born in 1887 in Garin (Erzurum), was taken from his home — number 9 in the Horasancıyan Apartment at 24 Mahak Street in Nişantaşı (today's Aydın Apartment on Süleyman Nazif Street) on the night of April 24, 1915. After graduating from Merzifon American College, Aghajanian spent three years in the United States engaged in trade before returning to Istanbul, where he and his brother established a textile trading company in Sultanhamam.

During a search of his home, officials found a notebook showing that he had donated 25 liras to the Inter-Party National Liberation Organization in Cairo, Egypt, as well as a letter sent to him by the same organization. The letter, dated October 19, 1914, contained instructions for “the swift dispatch of former Erzurum Deputy Karekin Pastermadjian to the Caucasus” and for “the recruitment of volunteers for the Caucasian liberation army.” These documents led to accusations that he was a member of the Hunchak organization and had attempted to incite rebellion against the state.

After his arrest, he was sent to Ayaş. However, due to the documents found in his home, the investigation against him was expanded, and on May 10, 1915, he was recalled to Istanbul to be tried before the Court-Martial. Following the trial, he was sentenced to death on October 8, 1915, on the charge of “attempting to remove part of the Ottoman territories from the authority of the government.” After the Sultan's approval of the decision on December 30, Aghajanian was executed by hanging alone in Beyazıt Square on January 18, 1916.



Number 9 in the Horasancıyan Apartment at 24 Mahak Street in Nişantaşı (today's Aydın Apartment on Süleyman Nazif Street). (Photo: Can Candan)



The crossroads where Süleyman Nazif Street and Zafer Street intersect. (Photo: Can Candan)

Jak Sayabalian

07

Jak Sayabalian, a writer and translator born in Konya in 1880, was taken from his home at number 59 on what was formerly Bekçi Street, now Şafak Sokak in Pangaltı on the night of April 24, 1915.

His father's position in the Konya Governor's Office allowed him to become familiar with state bureaucracy at an early age. After studying at the Berberian School in Istanbul and the American College in Izmir, he returned to his hometown of Konya, where he worked for five years as a translator at the British Consulate, even serving as acting consul for a year and a half. This experience revealed Sayabalian to be not only an intellectual, but also a multifaceted figure with connections to diplomatic circles.

His first novel, *Arachin Serë* (First Love), published in 1906, marked his entry into the literary world. About three years later, he settled permanently in Istanbul, began working as a journalist, and assumed the directorship of the magazine *Shehbal* (Wing). Also known for his sensitivity to the social issues of his time, Sayabalian prepared reports between 1910 and 1912 for the Association for the Protection of Widows and Orphans, established after the 1909 Adana Massacre. During this period, he served on the board of the Ottoman Armenians Publishing Society alongside prominent figures of the time, such as Krikor Zohrab. In the same period, his respected standing within the community was further reinforced when he was elected as a delegate for Konya to the Armenian National Assembly.

After his arrest, Jak Sayabalian was taken to the Central Prison in Sultanahmet. There, he reportedly looked sadly at the tray of food sent from his home, unable to touch it. His act of distributing the meal to his friends, his throat tight with emotion, was later recounted in Piuzant Bozajian's memoirs as a poignant reflection of his despair. From there, he was sent to Ayaş and was eventually killed near Ankara. The final response from the Ankara Governorate, dated August 31, to the persistent appeals of his wife, Akabi Sayabalian, who emphasized his innocence and demanded his release, stated that Jak Sayabalian had been sent from Ayaş to the so-called "designated region" (*mıntika-i muayyene*), referring to the Aleppo and Deir ez-Zor regions of Syria.



Jak Sayabalian.
(Teotig, Hushartsan: *Abril Dasnëmegi*,
O. Arzuman, 1919, p. 24)

Hovhannes Kevork Keoleian 08

Hovhannes Kevork Keoleian was taken from his home at number 50 Köleyan Apartment on what was then Bekçi Street, now Şafak Street in Pangaltı, on the night of April 24, 1915. Originally from Eğin, Keoleian was a merchant active in Istanbul's commercial life. He was a business partner of Krikor Ohnigian, who ran a tobacco shop in Pera-Galatasaray and, like himself, was arrested on April 24 along with his three sons.

After his arrest, Keoleian was sent to Çankırı, like many other Armenian intellectuals. His name appeared on the list of 32 individuals ordered by the Ministry of the Interior on August 4 to be released on the condition that they would not return to Istanbul. However, this official decision was not enough to ensure his survival.

Despite the order for his release, his fate remained uncertain. Accounts of his death are contradictory: According to one source, he was killed near Ankara after being released; according to another, he simply disappeared.



The Köleyan Apartment at number 50 on today's Şafak Street. (Photo: Can Candan)

Hagop Nargilejian 09

Having taken over the pharmacy in Şişli-Osmanbey founded by his father, Maksud Garabed, in 1878, military pharmacist Hagop Nargilejian was arrested on the night of April 24, 1915, taken from his home at number 185 Büyükdere Avenue, located very close to his workplace. He was one of the well-known pharmacists of the period, producing medicines known by his own name, such as Fitinli Maksud Şurubu (Maksud Syrup with Phytin) and Terpestezin Ampulleri (Terpestezin Ampoules).

When he was brought to Haydarpaşa Train Station along with other intellectuals, he was still wearing his military uniform. During the wait at the station, some soldiers, mistaking him for an officer, saluted him. Witnessing this scene, a police chief furiously approached Nargilejian, threw down the plate of sucuk (sausage) he was holding, and shouted: "You, enemies of our nation and state, are no longer worthy of such respect." Shortly afterward, he was taken to the restroom by a civilian officer, and once certain that no one was watching, the epaulettes were torn from his uniform.

Nargilejian, who had been sent to Çankırı, remained there only for a short time. He was among the first group of eight individuals released by order of the Ministry of the Interior on May 7, 1915. Leaving Çankırı on May 11, he returned to Istanbul on May 14. Having managed to survive, Nargilejian continued his profession in Istanbul after the war.

Rosdom Rosdomian 10

Born in 1861 in Gyumri (then Alexandropol), carpet merchant Rosdom Rosdomian was taken from his apartment –number 5 in Uğurlu Apartment at 216 Büyükdere Avenue (today's Uğurlu Saray Apartment at number 114)– in Şişli on the night of April 24, 1915. Having come to Istanbul at the age of 18, Rosdomian successfully represented a Caucasian trading company for twenty years. He later established his own business and became an international carpet merchant, well known in commercial circles across America and Europe. He was known among his peers as a “model of kindness and integrity;” a man who worked with people of all backgrounds and had no affiliation with any political party.

However, a case of mistaken identity changed his fate: His name was confused with that of Rosdom (Sdepan Zorian), one of the leaders of the Tashnaksutiun. Because of this similarity, he was arrested and sent to Ayaş, where he was placed in the room that the prisoners called “High Life,” which mostly housed businessmen, lawyers, doctors, and merchants.

Rosdomian was also a Russian citizen. For this reason, the Italian and American embassies appealed to the Ottoman authorities to learn of his fate. In response to these inquiries, the Istanbul Police Department requested that a new investigation be carried out regarding Nerses Papazian, Rosdom Rosdomian, and Vramshabuh Samuelof, who were being held in Ayaş. However, no reply was ever given to the embassies.

Although it is known that Rosdom Rosdomian was killed near Ankara, his fate was never officially disclosed by the authorities.



Rosdom Rosdomian.
(Teotig, Hushartsan, p. 42)

Krikor Yesayan 11

Krikor Yesayan, an educator, poet, and translator born in Van in 1883, was taken from his home at the Zülüflü İsmail Pasha Mansion in Şişli on April 24, 1915. He began his education at the Yedikule Orphanage in Istanbul and graduated from Galatasaray High School. After graduating, he taught mathematics and French in Armenian schools and later worked for a time at the Ragıp Pasha Coal Mine in Ereğli.

A member of the Tashnaksutiun, Yesayan devoted his intellectual efforts to poetry and translation. Writing under the pen name, “Krikor Nor,” he composed poems and translated significant works such as

Rupen Zartarian's *Tsaykaluys* (Twilight) and Levon Shant's *Hin Asdvadznerë* (Ancient Gods) into French, contributing to the recognition of Armenian literature in Europe. While being held at the Haydarpaşa Train Station after his arrest, he became angry at another detainee's conciliatory attitude toward the Unionists and shouted, "Say it in Turkish so they can understand too!"—an incident remembered as a reflection of his uncompromising character.

At the Central Prison, he tried to keep his spirits high by playing games made from makeshift cards fashioned out of razor blades and paper, together with his friends Gigo and Yenovk Shahen. Following his arrest, he was sent to Çankırı. Following several months there, he was included in the second convoy of 24 detainees who were said to be sent to Deir ez-Zor on August 19, 1915. The convoy was murdered near Elmadağ, close to Ankara, on the road toward Yozgat.

Garabet Papazian

12

Writer Garabet Papazian was taken from his home in Nişantaşı on the night of April 24, 1915. According to Ottoman archival records, Garabet Papazian, the son of Agop Papazian, was taken to Çankırı. Like many Armenian intellectuals arrested on April 24, Papazian's fate remains unknown. No further information about him has been found.

Sarkis Parseghian

13

Sarkis Parseghian (Shamil), an educator and politician born in the Caucasus in 1875, was taken from his home in Nişantaşı on the night of April 24, 1915. Born Boghos Odabashian, Parseghian pursued higher education in Geneva and Paris before dedicating his life to the Armenian Revolutionary Movement. As a member of the Tashnaktsutiun, he engaged in political activities in Bulgaria and was arrested by the Tsarist police during the "Potorig" (Storm) operations in Sochi in 1903. However, he soon escaped with the help of his comrades and fled to Iran.

After spending a year in Iran, he moved to the Muş-Van region, where he played a key role in strengthening the Tashnaktsutiun organization. During the five years he spent there, he became known by the nickname "Vana Sarkis" (Sarkis of Van). He was also among the founders of the newspaper *Ashkhadank* (Labor). At the age of 24, he married Berjouhi in Istanbul, then returned to Van, where he took on the supervision and inspection of Armenian schools in the region. He later continued this work in Giresun. From 1913 until his arrest, he carried on his political activities in Istanbul.

Parseghian was among the first to be arrested on April 24 and was sent to the Ayaş Prison due to his political background. Shortly afterward, he was murdered near Ankara. Following the war, his wife, Berjouhi Parseghian, continued the family's political legacy by serving as a member of parliament in the First Republic of Armenia.



The old Büyükdere road, now known as Halaskargazi Avenue, which was once part of the Pangaltı district.
(Rinaldo Marmara, Pangaltı: 19. Yüzyılın Levanten Senti, Şişli Belediyesi, 2001, p.24)

Yenovk Shahen

14

Yenovk Shahan, a theater director and actor born in Bardizag (Bahçecik), İzmit, in 1881, was taken from his home in Nişantaşı and arrested on April 24, 1915. One of the most prominent figures of the Istanbul theater scene, Shahan, began his stage career at the age of 26 with Mardiros Mnakian's Ottoman Drama Company. A year later, he joined the Azad Tadron (Free Theater) group, where he soon took up directing. He received widespread acclaim for his performances as Cassio in Shakespeare's Othello and Shylock in The Merchant of Venice.

A member of the Tashnaksutiun, Shahan tried to lift the spirits of his fellow prisoners with his cheerful demeanor when brought to the Central Prison, treating the situation as though it were a scene on stage. Even in exile, he remained devoted to his art, reciting Siamanto's poems during small gatherings organized among the detainees. Yet despite his resilience and optimism, Shahan shared the same fate as the others. At the end of July 1915, he was included in a group of 30 intellectuals transferred from Ayaş and was murdered in a valley near Elmadağ, close to Ankara. Yervant Tolayan, a fellow actor and close friend who survived the April 24 arrests, later described the last time he saw Shahan in his memoirs:

Unfortunately, our unfortunate friend, [...] I last saw him in 1915 at the train station in Ayaş [Sincan]. He was among the other Tashnaksutiun intellectuals who had been sent into exile. Together with them, he was banished into the depths of Anatolia and never returned. The devoted young man, who loved theater dearly, had left his steady job to dedicate himself entirely to theater, yet among Armenian actors, he had known nothing but suffering. He was there because he saw the renaissance of Armenian theater in the Tashnaksutiun movement and because of his political beliefs. Unfortunately, he was a staunch Tashnaksutiun member. He had even tried to crack my head open a few times for not being one. Thus, the great actor Yenovk Shahan died under uncertain circumstances.

Yenovk Shahan. (Teotig, Hushartsan, p. 36)



Dikran Cheogiurian

15

Born in Gümüşhane in 1884, writer, poet, and educator Dikran Cheogiurian was taken from the Nigoghosian School in Teşvikiye, Nişantaşı, where he also resided, at what is today 20 Güzelbahçe Street, on the night of April 24, 1915.

Having lost both parents at an early age, Cheogiurian spent his childhood and adolescence in orphanages. At the age of 14, he came to Istanbul from the orphanage of the Surp Asdvadzadzin Armenian Monastery, known as Garmir Vank (Red Monastery), in Ankara. There, he received his education at one of the leading institutions of the time, the Berberian School in Üsküdar. After graduation, he taught history, geography, and literature at the Cemaran School in Üsküdar, contributing to the education of a new generation of students who, like him, came from difficult circumstances.

Alongside teaching, Cheogiurian was deeply interested in literature. He began his literary career in 1905 with essays published in Masis newspaper. The following year, he published *Jampus Vray* (On My Way), a work recounting his travels and observations in various European countries with large Armenian communities. That same year, he compiled his Armenian stories under the title *Hayreni Tsayner* (Voices from the Homeland). In 1911–1912, together with Mikayel Shamdanjian, he published the literary journal *Vosdan* (Capital), in which he translated works by European writers such as Maupassant, Ibsen, and Bernard Shaw. He was also known for his short novels *Herose* (Hero) and *Vankë, Vartabedi më Orakirë* (Monastery, A Priest's Diary).

After his arrest on April 24, he was sent to Ayaş. At the end of July, he was among the group of 30 intellectuals, including his friends Kegham Parseghian and Siamanto, who were taken from Ayaş to Ankara. At just 31 years old, he was murdered in a valley near Elmadağ.

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23.5 MEMORY WALKS

Exile of Armenian Intellectuals, April 24, 1915: Istanbul Nişantaşı - Şişli

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cover photo

The old Büyükdere road, now known as Halaskargazi Avenue, which was once part of the Pangaltı district. (Rinaldo Marmara, Pangaltı: 19. Yüzyılın Levanten Semtı, Şişli Belediyesi, 2001, p.24)

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