



# 1915

## MEMORY WALKS

Exile of Armenian  
Intellectuals, April 24, 1915

Istanbul Kurtuluş - Feriköy

## 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.

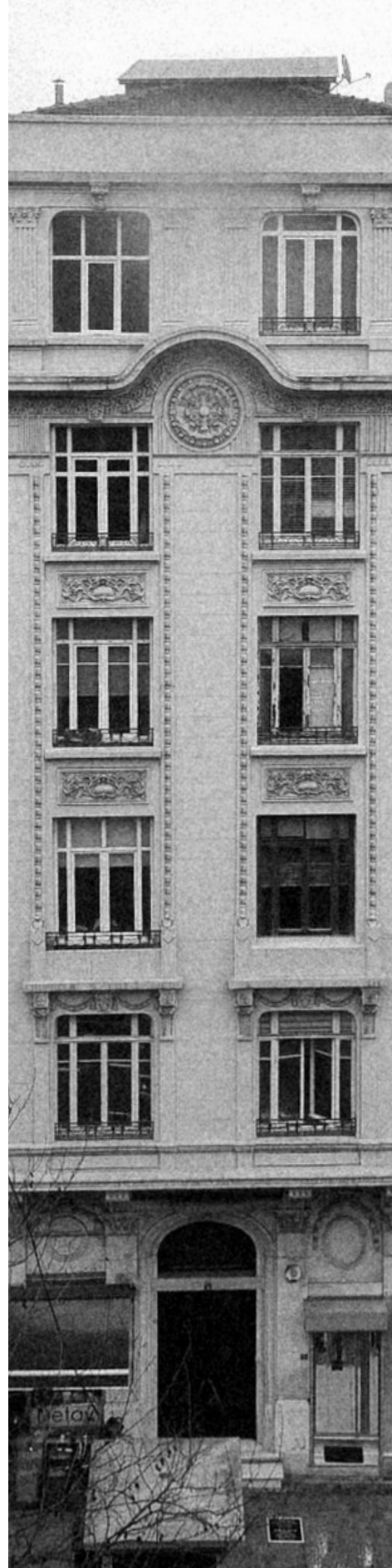
### 23.5 Memory Walks

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



## Sultanahmet Central Prison

## Sarayburnu Pier

## Haydarpaşa Pier and Train Station

### 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.

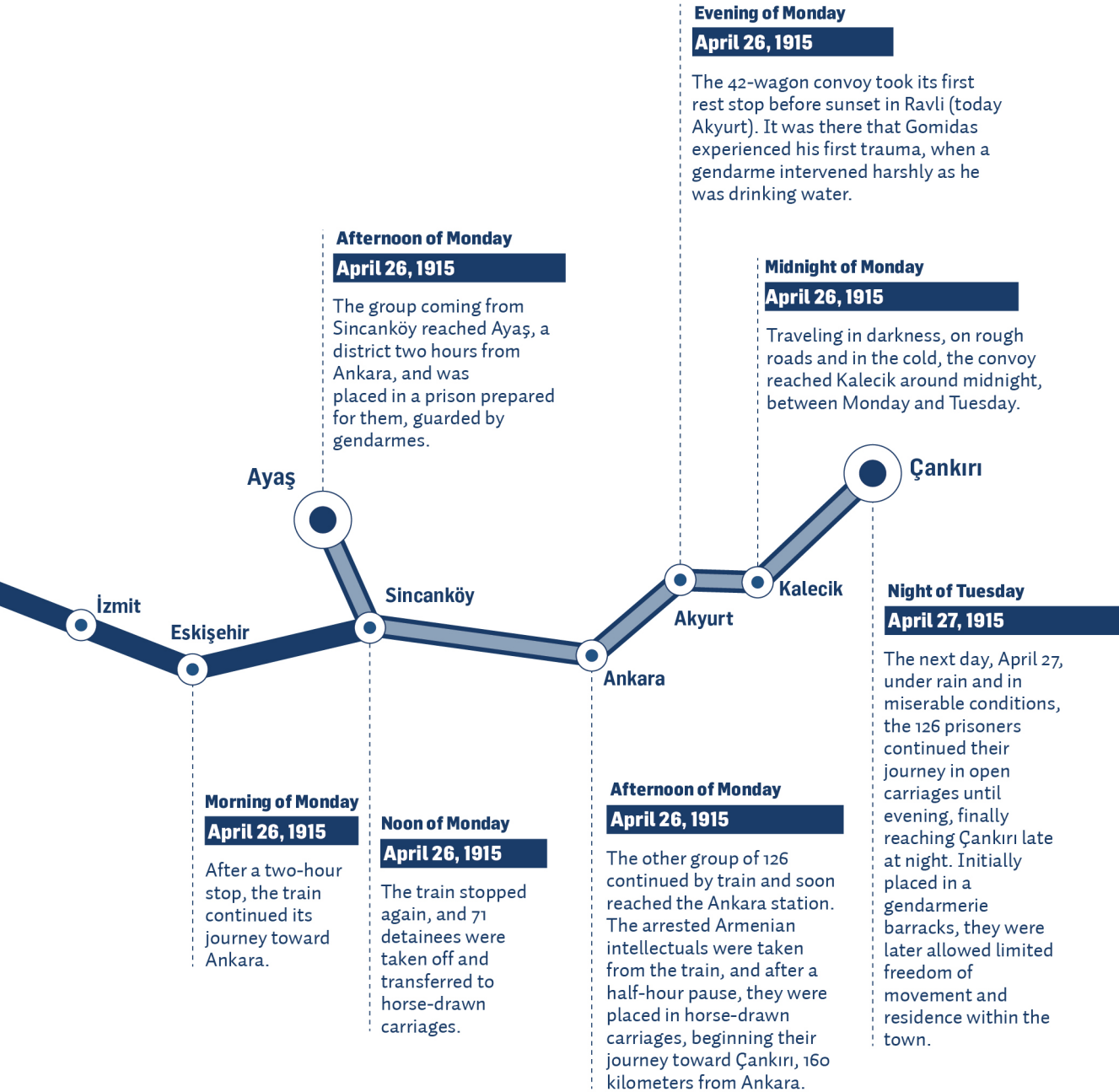
### Evening of Sunday April 25, 1915

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.

## Kurtuluş - Feriköy

Kurtuluş, formerly known as Tatavla, is one of the oldest neighborhoods of Istanbul's Şişli district, with a history spanning nearly four and a half centuries. As the first inhabited area of Şişli, Tatavla had developed into a lively neighborhood centered around the Greek Orthodox Church of St. Demetrios (Hagios Dimitrios). This district, today the final stop on the road stretching from Pangalti to Kurtuluş, was renamed "Kurtuluş" (Liberation) after the great fire of 1929.

The district's former name, Tatavla, derives from the Greek word *tavla*, meaning "horse stable," a name that also carries within it the story of the area's founding. The famous admiral of the Ottoman navy Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha brought more than ten thousand Greek captives from the Aegean and Mediterranean regions, particularly Chios Island, to work in shipbuilding. Known for their craftsmanship, these captives worked in the Kasımpaşa shipyards before being settled in Tatavla. Thus began the history of the neighborhood.

By the end of the 18th century, Tatavla had a population of around 20,000, almost entirely composed of Greeks. Outsiders were not permitted to enter the district, which was governed by a special regulation enacted in 1884. Over time, Armenians and Jews also settled there, transforming the area into a multicultural community. According to the 1913 *Annuaire Oriental* (Oriental Directory), on Hamam Street, today's Ergenekon Avenue, of the 65 locations, 24 belonged to Armenians, 14 to Greeks, 23 to Levantines, and 4 to Turks.

The 1929 fire destroyed 207 buildings in Tatavla. After the fire, the Republican administration renamed the district "Kurtuluş." During this process, many streets and avenues were also renamed — some merely Turkified, while others adopted names with nationalist overtones. For instance, Ermeni Kilise Sokağı (Armenian Church Street) became "Fırın Sokak" (Bakery Street), Aya Tanaş became "Yeni Alem" (New World), Moskof Kilise (Russian Church) became "Dershane" (Classroom), Hristodolu became "Ekşi Nar" (Sour Pomegranate), Kasımpaşa became "Bozkurt" (Gray Wolf), and Hamam Sokağı (Bath Street) was renamed "Ergenekon." These name changes reflected a mindset in the social climate of the time that aimed to erase the non-Muslim presence from the urban landscape.

The pogrom of September 6-7, 1955 also left deep marks in Kurtuluş. Following the attacks on the homes and shops of non-Muslims, the district's demographic structure changed drastically. The Greek and Armenian populations declined sharply over the years. Today, Kurtuluş and Feriköy, two neighborhoods intertwined both historically and culturally, continue to hold an important place in Istanbul's multilayered memory.

## LOCATIONS

- 1 Stepan S. Kiurkchian
- 2 Vramshabuh Arabian
- 3 Kegham Parseghian
- 4 Baruyr Arzumian
- 5 Mgrdich Stepanian (Tavatian)
- 6 Shavarsh Krissian
- 7 Varteres Atanasian
- 8 Samuel Tomajanian
- 9 Der Vartan Kahana Karageozian
- 10 Krikor Agopof

● Confirmed locations

● Estimated locations



Anarad Hıçutyun Building  
Hrant Dink Foundation

Prof. Dr. Celal Öker

Selbaşı St.

Poyraz St.

Zafer St.

Süleyman Nazif St.

Kuyunculu İnan St.

Rumeli Ave.

Şairi Nigar St.

Hacı Mansur St.

Hrant Dink St.

Rumeli Ave.

Abide-i Hürriyet Ave.

Ergenekon Ave.

Bozkurt Ave.

Kurtuluş Ave.

Savaş St.

Çobanoğlu St.

Gediz St.

Çobanoğlu St.

Kuyuluhağ St.

Savaş St.

Şahadet St.

Lala Şahin St.

Evranoszade St.

Ortanca St.

Ortanca St.

Baruthane Ave.

Kuyu St.

İnci İli Döbeç Ave.

## Stepan S. Kiurkchian

01

Stepan S. Kiurkchian, the owner of the Yeprad (Euphrates) Agency in Babiali, as well as a bookseller and publisher, was arrested on the night of April 24, 1915, taken from his home at **number 5 Dolapdere Avenue in Pangaltı**, and brought to the Central Prison in Sultanahmet. Originally from Eğin (Ağn, today Kemaliye), Kiurkchian was a young and well-known intellectual who ran a publishing house in Babiali, then considered the heart of Ottoman press life.

A member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Tashnaksutiun), Kiurkchian had become an open target in the political climate of the time. When the wave of arrests began, his name appeared among the first detainees. Writer Yervant Odian recalls in his memoirs that among the names he heard that night was “the bookseller Stepan Kiurkchian.”

At the time of his arrest, Stepan Kiurkchian was only 28 years old. Because of his political affiliation, he was sent to Ayaş Prison, where the conditions were especially harsh. After being taken there, no further trace of him was ever found.

## Vramshabuh Arabian

02

Vramshabuh Arabian, a master gunsmith born in Malkara, was arrested on the night of April 24, 1915, taken from his home in the **Korukadın Apartment in Dolapdere**, Beyoğlu.

At the age of 20, Arabian joined the Tashnaksutiun party and went to Bulgaria. Following the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Era in 1908, he returned to Istanbul like many other Armenian revolutionaries. A year later, he served in the Ottoman army as a weapons expert. At one point, he was sent by his party to Sana'a, Yemen, where he wrote articles under the pen name “Vram” for the *Azadamard* (Struggle for Freedom) newspaper, the publication of the Tashnaksutiun party. Returning to Istanbul in 1915, Arabian became a target because of his political background, despite his service in the Ottoman army. After his arrest on April 24, he was sent to Ayaş Prison and later killed near Ankara.



Vramshabuh Arabian. (Teotig, Hushartsan: *Abril Dasnëmegi*, O. Arzuman, 1919, p. 38)



Mesaxori (Orta Köy) Fountain, built in 1799 by Mihrişah Sultan, mother of Sultan Selim III, also known today as the Sefa Square Fountain. (Melisinos Hristodulu, *Tatavla Tarihi*, istos Yayinevi, 2013)



Feriköy Police Station. (İstanbul University Rare Works Library, Abdülhamid II Collection)

## Kegham Parseghian

03

Kegham Parseghian, an educator, writer, and editor of the newspaper *Azadamard* was born in 1882 in Gedikpaşa, Istanbul. He was taken from his home on **Dolapdere Avenue** in Pangaltı on the night of April 24, 1915. After graduating from the Getronagan School, he went to Paris, where he took social and political science courses for a year. Upon returning to Istanbul, he published his first literary works in various magazines and newspapers, and soon became a columnist and editor for daily newspapers such as *Surhantag* (Messenger) and *Azadamard*. At the age of 22, together with prominent literary figures Hagop Oshagan and Gostan Zarian, he founded *Mehyan* (Temple), a magazine that pioneered the symbolist movement in Armenian literature.

While he was in the Balkans at the outbreak of the First World War, he chose to return to Istanbul voluntarily, driven by a sense of responsibility, even though he could have remained safe in Europe. After his arrest on April 24, his friends later recalled that he was surrounded by a silence filled with despair. Those who knew him said that he had been aware beforehand that the Committee of Union and Progress was preparing blacklists targeting intellectuals, and that he seemed to have foreseen the approaching catastrophe. Aram Andonian described him as follows:

Even before his arrest, Kegham Parseghian was overcome with despair. He knew that lists were being prepared in different districts of Istanbul and that the addresses were being confirmed in official offices across the city. He had an intuition not only that he would be arrested, but also that he was destined for a tragic end. Among his friends, he was the most despondent one that day — silent, withdrawn, and unable to utter a word.

After his arrest on April 24, Parseghian was sent to the Ayaş Prison. At the end of July 1915, he was taken from the prison with a group of 30 detainees and murdered in a valley in Elmadağ, near Ankara.



Pangaltı Dolapdere Avenue.  
(Photo: Can Candan)



Kegham Parseghian.  
(Teotig, *Hushartsan*, p. 26)

## Baruyr Arzumanian

04

Baruyr Arzumanian, born in Arapkir in 1878, was taken from his home in Şişli's Bozkurt neighborhood at what was then **number 32 Eşref Street (today's 30-32 Seval Apartment on Eşref Efendi Street)** on the night of April 24, 1915. After receiving his education at the Yeghnikian School in Erzincan, Arzumanian settled in Istanbul, where he began his commercial career as a broker in textiles, zinc, and hardware at the Asmaaltı Camlı Han in Tahtakale.

The course of Arzumanian's fate had begun long before April 24. His name appeared in the records of the Istanbul Police Department as a weapons smuggler. This was due to the allegation that he had supplied weapons to Mgrdich Yeretsian, one of the 20 Hunchak members who were later executed on June 15, 1915. He was repeatedly interrogated before *Divan-ı Harp* (Court-Martial) on this charge.

After his arrest, Arzumanian was sent to Çankırı, where he was held for about four months. By order of the Ministry of the Interior dated August 4, he was included in the second convoy of 24 people scheduled to be sent to Deir ez-Zor. The convoy departed from Çankırı on August 19, and Baruyr Arzumanian was killed in Elmadağ, near Ankara, sometime after August 24.



Number 32 Eşref Street  
(today's 30-32 Seval Apartment on Eşref  
Efendi Street). (Photo: Can Candan)

## Mrgdich Stepanian (Tavatian)

05

Mrgdich Stepanian (Tavatian), a merchant born in 1864 in Nukhi (Caucasus), was taken from his home at **number 46 on Baruthane Avenue in Feriköy (today's number 34 İskender Apartment)** on the night of April 24, 1915. Having joined the Tashnaktsutiun party at a young age, Stepanian took part in the Armenian-Tatar clashes of 1905. Following the investigation initiated against him, he crossed into Iran and settled in Anzali.

However, internal unrest in Iran and Russia's intervention, which led to the persecution of Armenians who supported Russia, forced Stepanian to return to Istanbul in 1911. There, he continued his commercial career in Şişli, where he established a Russian lemonade and soda factory named Neptün. After his arrest on April 24, he was sent to Çankırı. Although, as an Iranian citizen, he should have been deported, he was subjected to the same treatment as the other Armenian detainees. By order of the Ministry of the Interior dated August 4, he was included in the second convoy of 24 people who were to be sent to Deir

ez-Zor. The convoy departed Çankırı for Ankara on August 19, and Stepanian was killed in Elmadağ, near Ankara, sometime after August 24.

Months after his death, on October 17, 1915, the Ministry of the Interior requested his return to Istanbul in order to deport him to Iran, but by then he was already dead. The Ankara Governorate replied that there was no information indicating that Mgrdich Stepanian had ever arrived in the city.

## Shavarsh Krissian

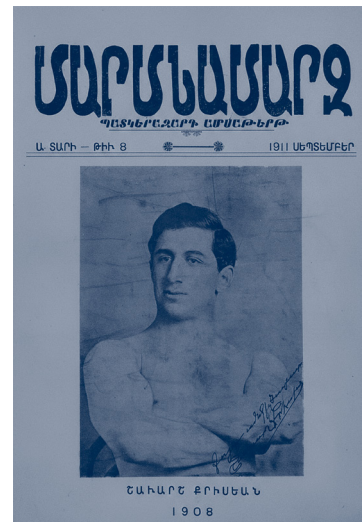
06

Shavarsh Krissian, a physical education teacher, writer, and journalist born in 1886 in Beşiktaş, was taken from his home at **number 30 Kasımpaşa Street in Şişli (today's Alin Apartment on Bozkurt Street)** on the night of April 24, 1915.

After receiving a comprehensive education in Istanbul, Paris, and London, Krissian returned to Istanbul in 1911 with a degree in physical education and began publishing *Marmnamarz* (Physical Education), a monthly magazine in Armenian that became the first sports magazine of the Ottoman Empire. He worked to promote modern sports culture among Ottoman Armenians, encouraged the founding of sports clubs, and organized the first Armenian Olympic Games on May 1, 1911.

Krissian's efforts extended beyond the Armenian community, contributing to the Ottoman Empire's international representation in sports. At his initiative, two Armenian athletes, Vahram Papazian and Mgrdich Mgrian, represented the Ottoman Empire at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics Games. Upon his return from Stockholm, Selim Sırrı (Tarcan), who had represented the Ottoman Olympic Committee, wrote a controversial article stating: "My eyes filled with tears. While all nations were represented at the Olympics, the Turks were absent." In his magazine, Krissian responded harshly to Selim Sırrı:

There are those who write articles assuming we cannot understand an article published in Turkish. Two Armenians went to Stockholm. These two individuals were there not because they were Armenians, but because they were Ottomans. They also wore uniforms bearing the Ottoman crescent. They sought to represent the Ottoman Empire in sports. Those who watched them applauded not because they were Armenian, but because they were Ottoman. Why don't you mention the names of these two Ottomans?



Shavarsh Krissian, on the cover of the September 1911 issue of *Marmnamarz* magazine.

A supporter of the Tashnaksutiun, Krissian was arrested on April 24 and sent to the Ayaş Prison. Even there, he continued to organize regular gymnastics exercises to help the detainees maintain their physical health. In the last days of July, he was among the group of 30 intellectuals transferred from Ayaş to Ankara, and at the age of 29, he was killed in a valley near Elmadağ.

## Varteres Atanasian

07

Varteres Atanasian, born in 1874, was taken from his home at **number 29 Kasımpaşa Street (today's Ferah Apartment on Bozkurt Avenue)**, in the district where he served as *muhtar* (headman) of Şişli's Feriköy neighborhood, on the night of April 24, 1915. Atanasian had an official identity as a neighborhood administrator in the Ottoman administrative system, while also maintaining a political identity as a member of the reorganized Hunchak party.

After his arrest, Atanasian was sent to Çankırı, like many other intellectuals. About four months later, his name appeared among the 32 detainees who, by order of the Ministry of the Interior dated August 4, were to be released on the condition that they not return to Istanbul. However, as the journey back was too dangerous, he was forced to remain in Çankırı.

After a six-months of waiting, on February 26, 1916, he was sent on a death march to Deir ez-Zor, together with the last 16 Armenian intellectuals from Istanbul who remained in Çankırı, among them Krikor Balakian. He did not survive the journey, which took him on foot as far as the Syrian deserts.





M. Samuelides' Chicago Grocery in Şişli, Istanbul, with signs and shop windows showing writings in Armenian, Greek, Ottoman Turkish, English, and French. (Calumeno Family Collection and Archive)

## Samuel Tomajanian

08

Samuel Tomajanian, a yarn merchant and broker, was taken from his home at **number 2 on Kuyulubağ Street in Feriköy (today's number 2-4 Akay Apartment)** on the night of April 24, 1915. His workplace was in Sebhian Han in Çakmakçılar, and he was a well-known tradesman in Istanbul's commercial circles. He also had a political identity, known for his affiliation with the Hunchak party.

After his arrest, he was first sent to Çankırı. After being held there for about two and a half months, he was included in the first convoy of 50 detainees to be sent to Deir ez-Zor, by the order of the Ministry of the Interior dated June 29, 1915. The convoy departed from Çankırı toward Ankara under gendarme escort on July 11, 1915.

After being held in the Ankara prison for about a month, the 45 surviving prisoners were merged with a group of Armenians arrested in Ankara at the time. Together with this convoy, Samuel Tomajanian was killed near the village of Beynam, a few hours away from Ankara, on August 14-15, 1915.



The house at number 2 on Kuyulubağ Street (today number 2-4, Akay Apartment). (Photo: Can Candan)

## Der Vartan Kahana Karageozian

09

Der Vartan Kahana Karageozian, born in 1877 in Kumkapı, Istanbul, was taken from his home at **number 31 Kuyulubağ Street (today's Akay Apartment)** on the night of April 24, 1915. This was the same district where he served as the priest of the Feriköy Surp Vartanants Church. After his arrest, he was sent to Çankırı, where intellectuals considered to have less dangerous political profiles were held.

Around the fourth month of his detention in Çankırı, his name appeared among 32 individuals listed in the Ministry of the Interior's order dated August 4, 1915, which announced that they would be released on the condition that they not return to Istanbul. However, this decision did not open a clear path to freedom: at that time, the roads of Anatolia were extremely dangerous for Armenians, and the vast majority of those released chose to remain in Çankırı.

This uncertain waiting lasted for about three months. Finally, on November 9, 1915, a group of nine people, including Mikayel Shamdanjian and lawyer Kasbar Cheraz, left Çankırı hoping to reach Izmir. However, the group was not permitted to enter Izmir. As a result, Der Vartan Karageozian headed to Uşak, where he remained until the end of the war. He was granted permission to return to Istanbul one day before the signing of the Armistice.

## Krikor Agopof

10

Krikor Agopof, a typesetter for the *Azadamard* newspaper, the publication of the Tashnaktsutiun party, was taken from his home at **number 38 Çeşme Street in Pangaltı (today known as Ortanca Street)** on the night of April 24, 1915. After his arrest, he was sent to Çankırı, where he was held for about two and a half months.

By an order dated June 29, 1915, he was included in the first convoy of 50 people planned to be sent to Deir ez-Zor. About ten days later, when the convoy, under gendarme escort, arrived in Ankara, it was decided that Agopof, being a Bulgarian citizen, would be separated from the group. While the other detainees in the convoy were held and later killed, Agopof was sent back to Istanbul and deported to Bulgaria on July 25, 1915.



Tatavla, 1923.

(Orhan Türker, *Osmanlı İstanbulu'ndan  
Bir Köşe: Tatavla*, Sel Yayıncılık, 1998)

## Bibliography

Andonian, Aram. *Exile, Trauma and Death - On the Road to Chankiri with Komitas Vartabed*. Gomidas Institute - Tekeyan Cultural Association, 2010. **1, 3, 6**

Balakian, Grigoris. *Armenian Golgotha: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1918*. Vintage Books, 2010. **6**

Balakian, Peter. *Black Dog of Fate: A Memoir*. Basic Books, 1997. **3, 4**

İzrail, Nesim Ovadya. *24 Nisan 1915: İstanbul-Çankırı-Ayaş-Ankara*. İletişim Yayınları, 2013. **full text**

Odian, Yervant. *Accursed Years: My Exile and Return from Der Zor, 1914-1919*. Gomidas Institute, 2009. **1**

Papazyan, Vahan. *Anılarım (İm Huşeri)*. Öteki Yayınevi, 2024. **6**

Teotig. *Amenun Daretsoytsë 1909* [Everyone's Almanac]. V. & H. Der Nersesian, 1909. **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7**

Tuğlacı, Pars. *Tarih Boyunca Batı Ermenileri, c.3, 1891-1922*. Pars Yayın, 2004. **6**

## 23.5 MEMORY WALKS

Exile of Armenian Intellectuals, April 24, 1915: Istanbul Kurtuluş - Feriköy

### project curator and advisor

Nesim Ovadya İzrail

### project coordinator

Ayfer Bartu Candan

### researchers

Narod Avcı, Rudi Sayat Pulatyan, İrem Sıla Şen, Karin Şeşetyan

### translation from Ottoman

Duygu Coşkuntuna

### editors

Zeynep Karababa, Mehmet Polatel

### design and mapping

Yasemen Cemre Gürbüz

### contributors

Nayat Karaköse, Cemre Kumla, Deniz Ezgi Sürek, Zeynep Taşkın

### cover photo

Tatavla, 1923. (Orhan Türker, *Osmanlı İstanbulu'ndan Bir Köşe: Tatavla*, Sel Yayıncılık, 1998)

Istanbul, October 2025



Anarad Hıçutyun Building, Papa Roncalli Street, No: 128

Harbiye, 34373 Şişli, İstanbul

T: 0212 240 33 61

F: 0212 240 33 94

info@hrantdink.org

www.hrantdink.org



GALVANIZING  
DIASPORA  
GRANTS PROGRAM