



23.5

MEMORY WALKS

Exile of Armenian
Intellectuals, April 24, 1915

Istanbul Pangaltı

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.

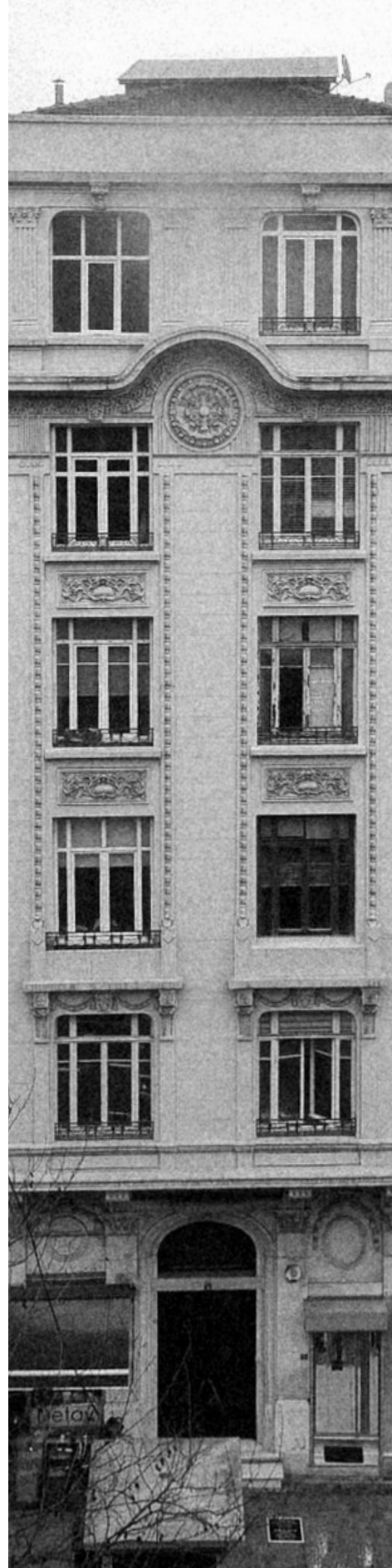
23.5 Memory Walks

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.

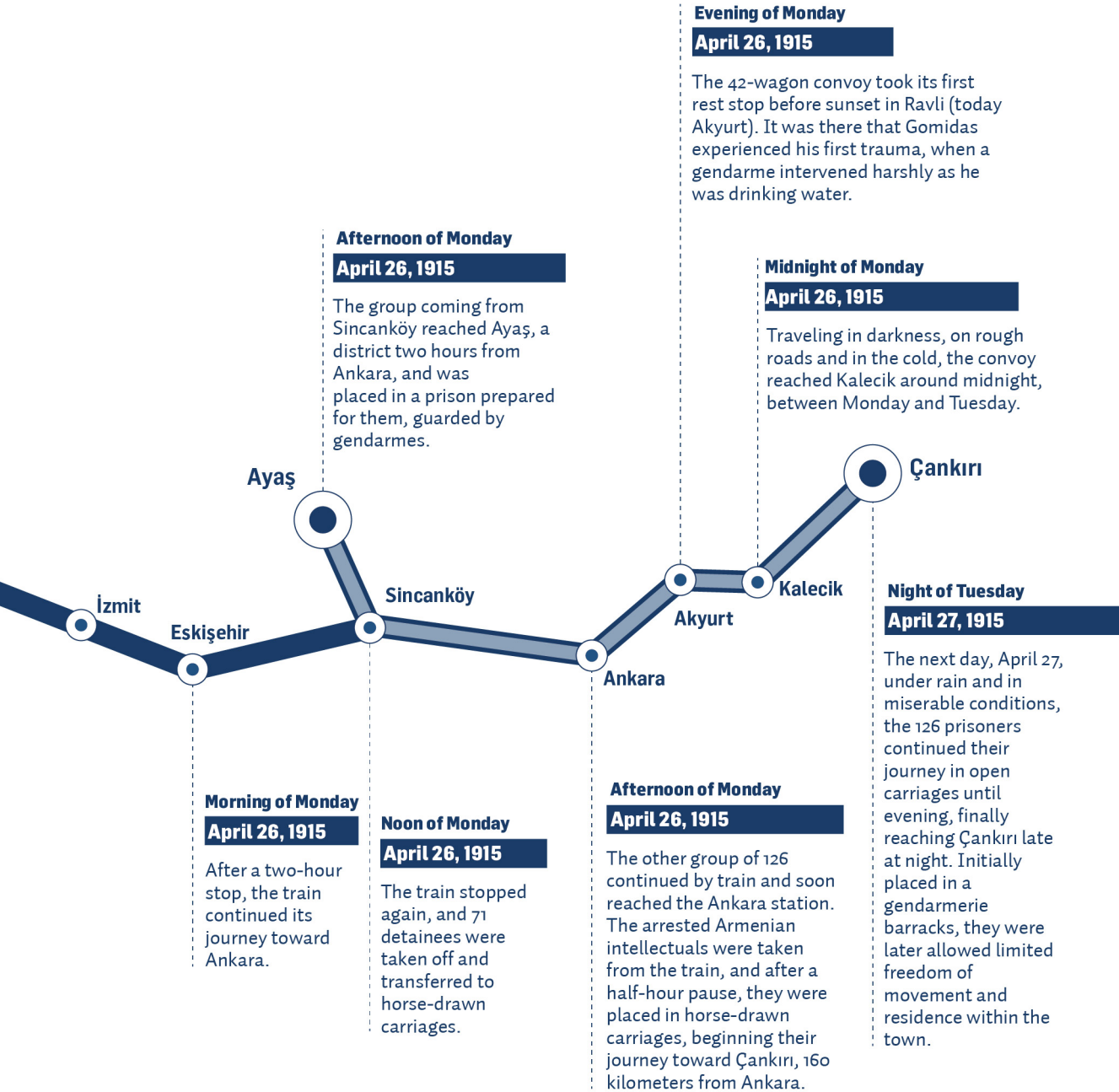
Evening of Sunday **April 25, 1915**

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.

Pangaltı

In the early 20th century, the route stretching from Galata to Şişli on the European side of Istanbul formed one of the city's most important transportation and residential axes. According to police records, the most densely populated area along this route was Pangaltı and its surroundings, with 62,427 residents. In the early 19th century, the area north of the Artillery Barracks in Taksim consisted of undeveloped green fields. With steady settlement beginning in the 1860s, the area came to be known as Pancaldi. It is believed that the neighborhood took its name from Giovanni Battista Pancaldi, an Italian from Bologna who lived there.

By the end of the century, Pangaltı had become one of the areas with the highest concentration of non-Muslim population in Istanbul. The *Annuaire Oriental* (Oriental Directory) of 1913 clearly illustrated the social structure of the neighborhood: Armenians made up 49% of the population, Latins and Levantines 27%, and Greeks 9%. Of the 1,321 people working in the area, 519 were self-employed, 408 were merchants, and 394 were civil servants. Armenians were primarily engaged in crafts such as printing, photography, and jewelry-making; Greeks ran shops such as restaurants, butchers, and coffee houses; and Levantines were prominent as bankers, architects, doctors, and diplomats.

What is now known as Papa Roncalli Street, then called Cedidiye Street and its vicinity, served as the intellectual center of the Armenian community a century ago. A short walk along these streets could lead one to the homes of journalist and writer Aram Andonian, prominent poets of Armenian literature Taniel Varujan and Rupen Sevag, or the great musician Gomidas Vartabed. However, on the evening of April 24, 1915, most of these intellectuals were taken from their homes on these very streets and exiled from Istanbul, marking an irreversible transformation in the neighborhood's social fabric.

In the following years, discriminatory policies such as the Wealth Tax, the Istanbul Pogrom of September 6-7, and the 1964 expulsion of Greeks accelerated the departure of non-Muslim population from the area. As new residents from Anatolia moved into the vacated homes, mansions were demolished and replaced with apartment buildings. Today, the memory of Pangaltı endures in the architecture of its remaining old buildings, in the Hrant Dink Foundation operating in the restored building of the Anarad Hiğutyun School, in the Getronagan High School Alumni Association across from the Mercimekian Apartment where Smpad Piurad was taken from, and in the deep traces left by the once multilingual, multicultural life that once echoed through these streets.



Anarad Hıgutyun Building
Hrant Dink Foundation

LOCATIONS

- 1 Smpad Piurad
- 2 Teodor Mendzigian
- 3 Khachig Idarejian
- 4 Aram Andonian
- 5 Sarkis Minassian (Aram Ashod)
- 6 Krikor Torosian (Gigo)
- 7 Onnik Srabian
- 8 Arisdakes Israelian (Dkhruni)
- 9 Nerses Papazian
- 10 Taniel Varujan
- 11 Rupen Sevag (Chilingirian)
- 12 Dikran Svajian
- 13 Levonig Sarkis Der Sdepanian
- 14 Gomidas Vartabed (Soghomonian)
- 15 Avedis Nakashian
- 16 Ardashes Ferahian
- 17 Iskender Karaaghajlian

- Confirmed locations
- Estimated locations



Smpad Piurad

01

At **number 3 on today's Prof. Dr. Celal Öker Street, the Mercimekian Apartment** building was the home from which educator and writer Smpad Piurad was arrested in 1915. Born in 1862 in the town of Zeytun, part of the Maraş district, Smpad Piurad received his early education there before attending the Theological Seminary (*Zharankavorats Varzharan*) in Jerusalem. His passion for learning took him to Paris to study at the Sorbonne University, but before completing his education, he returned to his hometown and began teaching in Zeytun.

Throughout his professional life, Piurad served as both an educator and administrator in various cities. At just 20 years old, he became the general inspector of 130 Armenian schools in the Zeytun region. A few years later, he founded a new school in Sis (Kozan) district in the province of Adana. During the same period, while teaching Armenian at the Central School in Maraş, he gave public lectures on weekends, encouraging especially young people to engage with literature and improve their literacy skills.

In addition to being an educator, Smpad Piurad was also an active figure in the political arena. As a member of the Social Democrat Hunchakian Party, at the age of 38, he was arrested along with his wife Yevdoksia for their opposition to the sultan. He spent five years in prisons in Maraş and Aleppo. During this time, Yevdoksia lost her eyesight as a result of severe torture. After a general amnesty, Piurad returned to Istanbul and taught for a year at the Kadıköy Aramian School.

In 1896, following the raid on the Ottoman Bank, he was placed under police surveillance. He then emigrated with his family to Egypt, where he left the party and devoted himself to educational activities and social work. In Cairo, he published the *Piunig* (Phoenix) and *Nor Or* (New Day) newspapers, as well as the journal *Kaghapar* (Idea).

After the 1908 Revolution, he returned to Istanbul. Together with his son, he founded the publishing house *Zhamanagagits Madenashar* (Contemporary Publication Series), where he continued both his literary and political work. In his works, he addressed the violence suffered by the Armenian people, acts of resistance,

The former Mercimekian Apartment at number 3 on Prof. Dr. Celal Öker Street. (Photo: Can Candan)



and revolutionary struggles. Among his most notable works from this period were *Zeytuntsi Vartabed* and *Adana Kıyımı Ağıtı* (Lament for the Adana Massacre).

In 1915, Piurad was arrested from his home in what was then called Meyve Street in Pangaltı. When he was brought to the Central Prison, he was exhausted and bewildered. Mikayel Shamtanchian, who was arrested during the same period, recalled this moment in his memoirs:

Around noon, the last to arrive at the prison were the writer Smpad Piurad and the educator Hayg Hocasaryan. Piurad was the author of novels that celebrated Armenians who resisted oppression, and for that reason, everyone viewed him as a hero himself. Having been shuttled from one police station to another all night, Piurad entered the courtyard through the iron gate, bewildered and with his head bowed—it was a surprise for everyone. With an expression as if trying to solve a riddle, he shook hands with his friends, repeatedly asking, ‘You too?’ all the while wondering why he had been brought so late.

Soon after, Smpad Piurad was exiled to Ayaş. In the letters he wrote to his wife from there, it is clear that he initially maintained some hope for justice, but over time, that hope gave way to deep disappointment. That same year, at the age of 53, he was murdered in the Elmadağ valley near Ankara.

In his final letter to his children, he wrote:

I am now a dead man. Forget my body, but hold on to my words.

Teodor Mendzigian

02

The house at **number 21 on today’s Prof. Dr. Celal Öker Street, formerly known as Meyve Street** in Pangaltı, was the residence of Teodor Mendzigian, one of the hundreds of Armenian intellectuals arrested on the night of April 24, 1915. A draper by profession and known for his affiliation with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Tashnaktsutюн), Mendzigian worked in Sultanhamam, Istanbul’s commercial center, and was among the city’s respected Armenian figures, holding positions in institutions such as the Surp Yerrortutюн Church in Beyoğlu.

On the night of April 24, 1915, he was taken from his home, and exiled to Ayaş. In Ayaş, he was placed in a small and crowded cell that included other merchants, doctors, and lawyers and which detainees called “High Life.” Despite the harsh hygiene conditions, inadequate nutrition, and isolation, the prisoners established their own order within the cell and tried to hold on to life.

Information about his days in Ayaş can be found in a letter dated May 16, sent by Smpad Piurad, who was held in the same place at that time, to his family. Piurad wrote that although Mendzigian’s permit to return to Istanbul had supposedly been approved via a telegram sent by Ali Ekber Han, he was still being held in Ayaş. In the same letter, he stated that eight people shared the same cell but did not name the others. He reported that Mendzigian and his friends had submitted a petition requesting their release and were awaiting a response. A telegram had also been sent to the Armenian Patriarchate, but no reply came from there either.

In late July 1915, Governor Mazhar Bey, who had refused to implement the orders regarding the fate of the prisoners, saying, “I am a governor, not a bandit,” was removed from office. His replacement, Acting Governor Atif Bey, known for organizing massacres, ordered that a group of 30 prisoners, including Teodor Mendzigian, be taken from Ayaş. The group was taken to the Elmadağ valley near Ankara, where they were murdered by gangs affiliated with the *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* (Special Organization). Records from the Istanbul Security Directorate and the Ministry of the Interior list Mendzigian as having been sent “to a designated region” (*mintika-i muayyene*), referring to Deir ez-Zor. This phrase was a euphemism commonly used at the time to obscure the fate of those who had been killed.

Khachig Idarejian

03

Educator and writer Khachig Idarejian was arrested on the night of April 24, 1915, taken from his home at **number 172 (today number 118) on Cedidiye Street in Pangaltı (present-day Papa Roncalli Street)**. On that same night, Aram Andonian, who was arrested from the same street, described their encounter at the Pangaltı Police Station as follows:

At the police station in Pangaltı, where they took me, there were already a few “guests” who had arrived before me. Among them were Sarkis Minasian, Gigo, Khachig Idarejian, Dr. Alla[h]verdi, and others whom I did not recognize.

Andonian stated that Khachig’s arrest was not a mistake or an error, and conveyed that the person the police had originally come for was his elder brother. Having spent many years imprisoned during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, Khachig’s brother was the one sought by the authorities. Without even informing his family, Khachig told the police that *he* was the person they were looking for, effectively taking his brother’s place. Referring to his brother, Khachig said, “He has already done his duty, now it is my turn; we always walked the same path.”

At the end of July, Khachig Idarejian was among a group of thirty Armenian intellectuals from Istanbul who were transferred from Ayaş to Ankara. The group was murdered in a valley near Elmadağ, close to Ankara.



Aram Andonian

04

The house at what is now **number 87 Papa Roncalli Street (Feza Apartment), formerly number 115 Cedidiye Street** in Pangaltı, was the residence from which journalist, writer, and historian Aram Andonian was arrested and exiled on April 24, 1915. Born 41 years earlier in Beyoğlu, Andonian was a prominent intellectual of his time, known for his work as a journalist, writer, and historian. Growing up in the city's vibrant intellectual environment, he became one of the leading figures in the Armenian-language publishing world of the early 20th century. He wrote articles and served as editor for the daily newspaper *Luys* (Light), which covered the political and social events of the period, and the literary and cultural magazine *Dzaghig* (Flower). He also produced his own literary works.

Because of his intellectual profile, Andonian was among the hundreds of Armenian intellectuals and community leaders arrested in Istanbul on April 24. He was taken from his home on Cedidiye Street, he was exiled to Çankırı, and later, on August 19, transferred with a group of 24 prisoners to Ankara. On August 20, during the journey, he fell from the cart and broke his hip, after which he was taken to Gureba Hospital in Ankara. The rest of the group of intellectuals were killed on the Nenek Plateau in Elmadağ close to Ankara. Andonian's injury, and consequent hospitalization, saved his life.

During this period of exiles and massacres, Andonian bore witness to the unfolding events and managed to survive under extremely harsh conditions. He first went into hiding in Aleppo, and when the city later came under British control, he began collecting survivor testimonies through the newspaper *Hay Tsayn* (The Armenian Voice). Bringing together numerous significant documents, most notably the telegrams he received from Naim Bey, one of the Ottoman officials of the time, Andonian compiled a collection of materials that would later have a profound impact on Armenian Genocide Studies.

After the end of the war, Andonian gathered these documents along with his own testimonies. The best-known of these works, *The Memoirs of Naim Bey*, also referred to as the "Andonian Documents." With this book *Medz Vojire* (The Great Crime; *Cürm-ü Azam* in Turkish), Andonian's main objective was to create a



Aram Andonian.
(AGBU Nubar Library, Paris)

historical record of the events of 1915 through primary sources composed of personal testimonies and official documents, and to prevent their erasure from memory.

Andonian spent much of the later part of his life in Europe, particularly in Paris, where he became the director of the Nubar Library, founded by the Egyptian philanthropist Boghos Nubar Pasha. The library remains an invaluable archive of Armenian history and culture. Andonian passed away in Paris on December 23, 1951.

Sarkis Minassian (Aram Ashod)

05

The building at **number 88 on Papa Roncalli Street in Pangaltı, formerly number 118 on Cedidiye Street**, was the residence of Sarkis Minassian, one of the first Armenian intellectuals arrested on the night of April 24, 1915.

Born in 1873 in the village of Çengiler in Yalova, Minassian began his education in Bardizag (Bahçecik), Izmit and later continued at the Getronagan School in Istanbul. He pursued higher education in Geneva, where he graduated from the School of Political and Social Sciences. It was during this period that he became known by the name Aram Ashod.

He began his journalism career at the age of 23 with the newspaper *Troshag* (Flag). A few years later, he joined its staff and contributed articles on the Ottoman Empire. In 1905, he became the editor-in-chief of the *Hairenik* (Homeland) newspaper in Boston. After returning to Istanbul, he worked as an editor for the newspaper *Azadamard* (Struggle for Freedom), where he focused particularly on educational content. Around the same time, he also taught Armenian and philosophy at the Esayan School in Pera.

Aram Ashod was an active figure within the Tashnaksutiun. He attended the party's Fourth General Congress in Vienna in 1907 and represented the party at the Congress of Ottoman Opposition held in Paris that same year. During the Fifth Congress, he was elected to the leadership of the Turkey branch of the Eastern Bureau, which was responsible for the Ottoman provinces. Later, at the Eighth Congress, he became the director of the Armenia Bureau. Closely following political developments, he viewed cooperation with the Young Turks, especially in the post-Second Constitutional Era, as a necessary strategy for maintaining political balance and ensuring the safety of the Armenian people.

On the night of April 24, 1915, he was taken from his home on Cedidiye Street and sent to Ayaş Prison, accused of political affiliations. About a month later, a telegram signed by the Minister of the Interior Talat Pasha ordered that he be transferred to a military court in Diyarbakır. Among those in the same convoy were Agnuni, Rupen Zartarian, Karekin Khajak, Harutiun Jangiulian, and Nazaret Daghavarian.

While traveling from Urfa to Diyarbakır, the group was attacked in the Karaçur area near Siverek by an armed band known to be affiliated with the Special Organization and operating with the knowledge of the Governor of Diyarbakır, Dr. Reşid. The accompanying gendarmes did not intervene. Sarkis Minassian was killed in this attack at the age of 42.



PAPA
RONCALLI
SOKAĞI 14-158
081 (0817)

Papa Roncalli Street. (Photo: Can Candan)

Krikor Torosian (Gigo)

06

The Lui Apartment at number 28 İcadiye Street, today known as Babil Street, in Pangaltı, was the home from which satire writer Krikor Torosian was arrested on April 24, 1915.

Born in 1884 in Eğin (present-day Kemaliye), Torosian moved to Istanbul as a child, where he began his education. His first professional experience was as a shop assistant, but it soon became clear that his true talent lay in literature and satire. At a young age, he began gaining recognition through his articles published in the newspaper *Lila*. He later wrote humorous pieces for the newspapers *Manzume-i Efkâr* (Course of Ideas), *Dzaghig*, and *Arevelk* (East).

Krikor Torosian was widely known by his pen name “Gigo.” In Istanbul’s vibrant cultural scene, he stood out particularly for his satirical wit. At the age of 25, he decided to publish his own magazine, also titled *Gigo*. The magazine was published during the March 31 Incident and the 1909 Adana Massacre but was soon shut down. Undeterred, Torosian revived the magazine under different names such as *Gindo*, *Guguk*, and *Zurna*. Although he had no direct political affiliation, his works included social criticism, which made him one of the most distinctive voices of his time. His story illustrates that the Armenian intellectuals targeted in 1915 were not only politically active but also culturally influential and multifaceted individuals.

On April 24, 1915, he was taken from his home and brought first to the Pangaltı Police Station, then to the Central Prison in Sultanahmet. After a short period of imprisonment there, he was sent with other Armenian intellectuals from Haydarpaşa Station by train to Anatolia. Upon arriving in Sincanköy, near Ankara the prisoners were divided into two groups. Torosian was placed in the group transported by carriages to Ayaş.

The Ayaş Prison, a former military barracks, was crowded, dirty, and unsanitary. 71 people, including doctors, poets, educators, and publishers, were held under these conditions. As he was leaving, he told his friends, “We’ll see each other when things change.” At the end of July, Gigo was among the 30 people transferred from Ayaş to Ankara. On July 31, the entire group was killed in a valley near Elmadağ valley.



Krikor Torosian.
(Teotig, *Amenun Daretsyoysé* 1910, V. &
H. Der Nersesyan, 1910, p.299)



Onnik Srabian

07

The building at **numbers 53-55 on Babil Street in Pangaltı, formerly İcadiye Street**, is recorded in history as the house where Onnik Srabian lived and was arrested on the evening of April 24, 1915. Born in 1878 in Erzincan, Srabian received his early education there. In his youth, he worked as a clerk for a time before moving with his family to the city of Filibe (Plovdiv) in Bulgaria. There, he engaged in trade and also shaped his political identity by joining the ranks of the Tashnaksutiun. His years in Plovdiv were also when he met the publisher Partogh Zorian, with whom he would later share his life and destiny in Istanbul.

He returned to Istanbul during the relatively liberal atmosphere of the Second Constitutional Era. Together with Partogh Zorian, he founded the Onnik-Jirayr Bookstore and the Lusaghpiwr (Source of Light) Publishing House, which quickly became important centers of Armenian intellectual life. There, he not only engaged in commercial activity but also undertook a mission dedicated to the educational and cultural development of his community. He fulfilled this mission by publishing works such as *Meghraked* (River of Honey), a series of textbooks prepared by the well-known writer Rupen Zartarian, and *Yergrakordzi Paregamë* (The Farmer's Friend), a practical handbook for those engaged in agriculture.

On April 24, 1915, Onnik Srabian was taken from his home and arrested along with hundreds of Armenian intellectuals, politicians, clergy, and community leaders targeted by the Committee of Union and Progress. Following his arrest, he was sent to Ayaş, near Ankara, along with other party leaders deemed dangerous due to their political identities. About four months later, a group including Srabian and several prominent Hunchak leaders were taken from Ayaş to an area near Ankara, where they were killed.

Arisdakes Israelian (Dkhruni)

08

The house at **number 77 on Bayır Street** in Pangaltı was the home of Arisdakes (Aris) Israelian, one of the Armenian intellectuals arrested on the night of April 24, 1915. Born in 1885 in Gümüşhane, Israelian began his education at the Murad Rafaelian School of the Armenian Catholic Community in Venice, and later studied agricultural engineering in Boston, United States. During his years in Boston, Israelian did not limit himself to academic studies; he also became involved in political activities as a member of the Tashnaksutiun and wrote for *Hairenik*, an influential newspaper among the Armenian diaspora, addressing issues faced by Armenians abroad. At times, he used the pen name “Israel Dkhruni” in his writings for this publication.

Returning to Istanbul at the age of 25, Israelian stood out as an educator, teaching at various Armenian schools. He also contributed significantly to the intellectual debates of his time as a writer for *Azadamard*, a prominent socialist-leaning newspaper.

In the midst of these discussions and his intellectual work, five years after his return to Istanbul, Israelian was taken from his home on the night of April 24, like many other Armenian intellectuals in Istanbul. His arrest began on Bayır Street and continued in Çankırı. After this period of exile, he was transferred on August 19, 1915, to be taken to Bursa. In November 1916, he was sent to Konya. After that date, like many Armenian intellectuals of his time, his fate remains unknown.

Nerses Papazian

09

Like many prominent thinkers, writers, and politicians of his time, Nerses Papazian was also taken from his home on the night of April 24, 1915, and exiled to Ayaş. His house was located at **number 50 (today number 34A) on what is now called Papa Roncalli Street**, which at the time also housed Elmadağ Police Station.

Nerses Papazian was born in 1872 in the city of Akulis in the Caucasus. He came from a clerical family; his father, Mesrob Shustag, was a clergyman. Among his siblings were the writer Vrtanes Papazian and Tashnaksutiun politician Vahan Papazian, who would later become a deputy for Van. Nerses spent his childhood in Van. He began his education at the Armenian Orphanage in Yedikule, Istanbul, and continued at the Ardash Theological Seminary in Izmit. After graduating from this seminary, he became known as *Der Mashdotz*.

His clerical duties took him to the United States, where he completed his higher education at Columbia University in New York.



The building at today's number 34A on Papa Roncalli Street.
(Photo: Can Candan)

During this time in America, he became close to the Tashnaktsutiun circles. At the end of this period, he published a collection of poems and prose entitled *Trakhd Marteghutyan* (Paradise of Humanity) in Istanbul. He later returned to the Caucasus but was exiled by the Russian government for opposing its policies toward church property. Papazian then went to Tehran, where he served as the spiritual leader of the Armenian community for two years. However, he resigned from this position because his political leanings conflicted with his clerical duties.

In late 1906, he took over the management of the newspaper *Hairenik* published in Boston. Following the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Era, he returned to Istanbul and took part in the propaganda work of the Tashnaktsutiun. Around the same time, he became the editor of the Armenian section of the *Azadamard* newspaper, a position he held until February 1915. He also worked as a teacher at the *Arti Varzharan* (Modern School) in Istanbul and provided legal consultancy within the community by handling marriage and divorce cases according to church laws.

On the night of April 24, 1915, Papazian was taken from his home on Papa Roncalli Street and exiled to Ayaş. Shortly afterward, he was transferred to Ankara, where he was killed. Because he was a Russian citizen, the American Embassy requested information from the Ottoman government regarding Nerses Papazian. However, no information was provided about his fate. The authorities never officially confirmed that Nerses Papazian was killed near Ankara.

Taniel Varujan

10

The old Karavela Apartment located on Nalbant Street in Elmadağ, formerly numbered 14 and today 20, went down in history as the place where Taniel Varujan, considered one of the leading poets of Western Armenian literature, was taken during the arrests targeting Armenian intellectuals on April 24, 1915. Born as Taniel Tchboukkiarian in 1884 in the village of Prkinik, Sivas, he received his early education in his village before continuing his studies at the Mekhitarist schools in Beyoğlu and Kadıköy in Istanbul, and later at the Murad Rafaelian Mekhitarist School in Venice. His educational journey later took him to Belgium, to the University of Ghent, where he studied literature, sociology, and economics. His encounter with Western literature and socialist ideas during this period profoundly shaped his literary identity and intellectual outlook.

In his poetry, Varujan explored themes such as national identity, the pagan Armenian heritage, nature, labor, and social justice. His major works include *Sarsurner* (Shivers, 1906), *Chartě* (The Massacre, 1907/1908), *Tseghin Sirdě* (The Heart of the Nation, 1909), *Hetanos Yerker* (Pagan Songs, 1912), and *Hatsin Yerkě* (The Song of the Bread, 1921), published posthumously. Alongside intellectuals such as Gostan Zarian, Kegham Parseghian, and Siamanto, he co-founded the *Mehyan* (Temple) movement, which sought a revival in Armenian culture, and published the *Mehyan* magazine in line with this goal.

Beyond his literary work, Varujan was also an educator, serving as a teacher and principal at the Sivas Aramian School, Armenian schools in Tokat, the Getronagan School in Galata, Istanbul, and the Surp Krikor Lusavorich School in Beyoğlu.



Taniel Varujan. (State Museum of Literature and Art after Yeghishe Charents, Yerevan)

This multifaceted life was cut short during the arrests of Armenian intellectuals on April 24, 1915. Varujan was arrested in his home at the Karavela Apartment and exiled to Çankırı. On August 26, 1915, he was taken together with Rupen Sevag and three other Armenian intellectuals under the pretext of being transferred to Ayaş. However, near the village of Tüney in the Kalecik district on the road to Ankara, they were murdered by a bandit leader named Halo and his band. It is believed that with his death, six notebooks filled with poems, said to have been written during his exile in Çankırı, were also lost or destroyed.

Rupen Sevag (Chilingirian) 11

The house **onced numbered 16 and now 22 on Nalbant Street in Elmadağ**, Istanbul was the center of the productive life of Rupen Hovhannes Chilingirian –better known as Rupen Sevag- as both a writer and a physician. Born in 1885 in the Silivri district of Istanbul, Rupen Sevag completed his primary education at the Azkanazian School in Silivri and continued his studies at the American College in Bardizag (Izmit). Around the age of 20, he graduated from the Berberian School in Üsküdar, Istanbul.

Although his literary talent had already drawn attention during his school years, his interest in natural sciences and the guidance of his teachers led him to pursue higher education at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Lausanne. His years in Lausanne, however, shaped him not only in the medical profession but also in the field of literature. So much so that, during this period, Rupen Sevag published poems in Armenian in which he experimented with new narrative forms by blending lyrical expression with social



The building at former number 16, now number 22, on Nalbant Street. (Photo: Can Candan)

themes. While pursuing his literary and educational life in Lausanne, he met Helen Appel, a German citizen who would later become his wife. Despite strong objections from his family, they married and later had two children, Levon and Shamiram.

Shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, Sevag decided to leave his life in Switzerland behind and return to Istanbul to practice medicine. With the onset of the war, he was enlisted as a medical officer in the Ottoman army. After a brief period of service on the Gallipoli front, he was assigned to the military hospital in Bakırköy, Istanbul. At the same time, he was active in the Armenian Medical Association and taught nursing courses at the Taksim Esayan School, alongside figures such as Vahram Torkomian and Nazaret Daghavarian. His medical observations and ethical reflections were published in a series of essays titled “Pages from a Doctor’s Diary.”

Sevag was not only a physician but also a prolific literary figure, producing works of poetry, prose, drama, and historical fiction. Alongside his lyrical poems, he wrote about social ruptures such as the Adana Massacre of 1909. Although he was formally not affiliated with any political party, he contributed to



Rupen Sevag and his wife Helen Chilingirian.
(Mayda Saris, *İzi Kalır Hatıraların: Şair Babaya Özlem*, Aras Yayınevi, 2007, p. 278)

socialist-leaning publications such as *Nor Hosank* (New Current). His home became one of the meeting places for Armenian intellectuals of diverse ideas during the period, and he maintained a close friendship with the poet Taniel Varujan. Although his name was not initially on the list of those arrested during the roundups of April 24, 1915, he was taken into custody about two months later. While he was first to be sent to Ayaş, the persistent efforts of his wife Helen Appel and mother-in-law through the German Embassy succeeded in changing his place of exile to Çankırı. There, he continued to practice medicine and soon earned the respect and affection of the local population. Thanks to the determined efforts of his wife and diplomatic contacts, the Ministry of the Interior eventually granted him permission for free residence.

However, before this order reached him, on the morning of August 26, 1915, the group, including Taniel Varujan, was taken away under the pretext of “transfer to Ayaş” and was murdered in a planned attack near the village of Tüney.

Dikran Svajian

12

Dikran Svajian was arrested on the night of April 24, taken from the **Karavela Apartment on Cedidiye Street** in Pangaltı, today known as number 6 Papa Roncalli Street. Very little is known about Svajian, who worked as a jeweler broker. Records indicate he was taken to Ayaş, after which no further trace of him was ever found.



Elmadağ Avenue, former Nomiko Apartment. (Photo: Can Candan)

Levonig Sarkis Der Sdepanian

13

The building located on Elmadağ Avenue in Pangaltı, believed to correspond to **number 4 today, was known as the Nomiko Apartment**. Levonig Sarkis Der Sdepanian, who was arrested on April 24, 1915, also resided in this building. Originally from Erzincan, Sdepanian, was a merchant and broker who conducted his business in Sirkeci, one of Istanbul's commercial centers, at the Asmaaltı Camlı Han on Ebusuud Avenue. Sdepanian was also a relative of Onnik Srabian, a bookseller and publisher arrested in the same roundup of 1915. This connection illustrates how it was common for multiple members of the same family to be detained and how the arrests extended beyond individuals with explicit political affiliations.

On the night of April 24, Sdepanian was taken from his home and sent to Çankırı. After being held there for some time, he was among the 50 people transferred to Ankara on July 11. He remained in custody in Ankara for several weeks before being included in a convoy linked to the local Armenian Apostolic Church community. Together with this group, he was executed in a desolate valley near the village of Beynam, a few hours outside the city.

According to another account, however, Sdepanian was not killed in Ankara but survived and returned to Istanbul. Unfortunately, no definitive evidence of his fate has ever been found.

Gomidas Vartabed (Soghomonian)

14

The building **once numbered 47 and now 87 on Cumhuriyet Avenue in Elmadağ**, Istanbul, was the place where the renowned musicologist and composer Gomidas Vartabed was arrested and sent into exile on April 24, 1915.

Born as Soghomon Kevork Soghomonian in 1869 in Kütahya, Gomidas lost his mother when he was one year old and his father at the age of ten, after which he was raised by his grandmother. Although he did not speak Armenian at the time, he was admitted to the Kevorkian Theological Seminary in Etchmiadzin at the age of twelve. His powerful voice caught the attention of Catholicos Kevork IV and he was introduced to Armenian music there. At around the age of 24, he was ordained as a priest under the name “Gomidas,” and two years later received the title “Vartabed.”

Shortly after receiving the title of Vartabed, he was awarded a scholarship that enabled him to study in Germany, where he attended the University of Berlin, specializing in musicology and philosophy. After three years, he completed his doctorate. During this period, he conducted extensive research on Armenian folk and church music, collecting and transcribing nearly three thousand folk songs. Around the same time, he also published a collection of Kurdish folk songs. His studies and the lectures he gave across Europe brought Armenian music international recognition, and his work was praised by contemporary composers such as Claude Debussy.

In his late thirties, Gomidas settled in Istanbul, where he founded a 300-member choir called *Kusan* (Minstrel) and gave numerous concerts. He befriended notable figures from Turkish literary and political circles, including Mehmet Emin Yurdakul and Halide Edip Adivar. During these years, he began working on what would become his most important work, the *Badarak* (Divine Liturgy).

On April 24, he was taken from his home, arrested, and sent to exile in Çankırı. The destruction and violence he witnessed during his journey into exile deeply affected his mental health. Prominent figures of the time intervened on his behalf, leading to his release two weeks later, after which he returned to Istanbul. Upon his return, however, he found that his personal belongings and archives had been looted. These events caused



The building on Cumhuriyet Avenue, formerly No. 47, now No. 87. (Photo: Can Candan)



Gomidas Vartabed in his house at number 47 (now 87) on Cumhuriyet Avenue. (Kurken Kasparian, *Gomidas Vartabed (1869-1935)*, Sarkis Khaçents, 2009, p. 253)

an irreparable psychological breakdown. The following year, he was hospitalized in Istanbul, and a few years later transferred to a psychiatric hospital in Paris, where he spent the remaining 20 years of his life, completely withdrawn from music. He died in Paris at the age of 66.



Gomidas's house in Pangaltı before it was demolished. (Kasparian, *Gomidas Vartabed*, p. 205)

Avedis Nakashian

15

Although its exact location is unknown, it is known that the house where Dr. Avedis Nakashian was arrested on April 24 was located on what is now called **Cumhuriyet Avenue**. This house was also close to that of the musician and composer Gomidas Vartabed. Born in 1867 in Antep, Nakashian completed his primary education at the American College before deciding to pursue a medical degree. After approximately seven years of study, he graduated at the age of 27 and settled in Istanbul where he worked as a surgeon in state hospitals. He gained recognition for his thesis on typhoid and for his work during the cholera epidemic of 1912.

On April 24, he went to the police station with the police officers who came to his home. After spending the night there, he was transferred the next morning to the Central Prison. That same evening, his name was read among those to be sent to Ankara, and he was sent to Ayaş, which after 1915 came to be known as the “cemetery of Armenian intellectuals.” The Unionist administration regarded those sent there as “political prisoners.” However, according to the surviving testimony of Dr. Avedis Nakashian, of the 71 prisoners, only 24 were affiliated with the Tashnak or Hunchak parties; the remaining 47 were teachers, writers, doctors, lawyers, and publishers with no political connections.

In the Ayaş Prison, the detainees established a system of self-organization, dividing themselves into food groups and electing an executive committee. Within this structure, Nakashian served as the “Minister of Procurement.” Accompanied by guards, he would go to the market to obtain essential supplies, an opportunity that also allowed him to gather news from the outside world.

When he was informed towards the end of July that he would be released, he was stunned by the surprise. After his release, he stayed in Ankara for several days, working as a physician to earn money to return to Istanbul. He arrived in Istanbul on July 19 and soon began working as a military doctor at Gülhane Hospital. In 1917, he sent his family to Bulgaria and soon emigrated there himself. After the Armistice, he returned to Istanbul and opened an ophthalmology clinic in Taksim. Later, he emigrated to the United States, continuing his medical career in New York.

As one of the few intellectuals who survived Ayaş, Dr. Nakashian wrote his experiences, leaving behind a valuable eyewitness account. He died in 1955 in Aleppo.



Dr. Avedis Nakashian in the Ottoman army. (Avedis Nakashian, *A Man Who Found A Country*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1940, p. 232)

Ardashes Ferahian

16

Although the house where Ardashes Ferahian was arrested on April 24, 1915, is not known, records show that he lived on **Dericiler Street in Sinemköy, Şişli (present-day Eskişehir neighborhood)**. At the time of his arrest, Ferahian was only 25 years old. Born in Muş, he was a young journalist and intellectual. After graduating from Yeprad (Euphrates) College in Harput, he came to İstanbul and continued his education at the Faculty of Law. During this period, he joined the Social Democrat Hunchakian Party and worked as a chief correspondent for the party's publication, the *Gaydz* (Spark) newspaper.

Following his arrest, Ferahian was sent to Ayaş, where he shared the fate of other imprisoned Armenian intellectuals. Historical records indicate that he was killed near Ankara.

Iskender Karaaghajlian

17

Arrested at the age of 31 on the night of April 24, 1915, Iskender Karaaghajlian, lived in a house on what is today **Lalezar Street in the Eskişehir neighborhood**. At that time, the area was known as Demirhane Street in Sinemköy, Şişli. Karaaghajlian, known as a bookbinder (*mücellit*) by trade, was arrested and sent to Ayaş along with other Armenian intellectuals. He was later transferred from there to the vicinity of Ankara, where he was killed.



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23.5 MEMORY WALKS Pangaltı

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23.5 MEMORY WALKS

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cover photo

Harbiye İstanbul (SALT Research, Tahsin İspiroğlu Collection)

Istanbul, October 2025



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