

denied the opportunity to learn his mother tongue, he thought of himself as an Armenian, and of Turkey as his homeland. "Turkey belongs to all of us. Don't destroy Turkey," he firmly stated. And by destroying Turkey, Ohan meant discriminating against non-Muslims and disturbing the relative peace in which the survivors of 1915 are able to live today (Yalçın, pp. 125-6).

Sarkis Varpet (Sarkis Usta) was born in 1916 in a village near Aleppo, in a family of exiles from Karaman. He was four years old when his family managed to return to Karaman. He can relate stories about the plight of the Armenians during the massacres and deportations. His curiosity had driven him to ask questions of his parents and others who had gone through that experience (p. 277). Their memories had become his. "These memories, like the filmstrip of a tragic movie, remain indelible in my brain," he sorrowfully confesses (p. 279). Coincidentally, his parents had been at the same camp near Meskene with Aram Antonian,⁴⁹ whom they later met in

⁴⁹ Aram Antonian was the famous Armenian writer who was arrested together with hundreds of Armenian intellectuals on the eve of April 24 (April 11), 1915. He managed to escape and join the deportees in the concentration camp near Meskene. He had feigned a wandering madman in rags in order not to invite the suspicion of the gendarmes. But Sarkis Usta's grandmother recognized him and took him to their tent. Antonian pleaded with them not to reveal his identity and to help him escape. He told them that he had managed to lag behind and separate himself from the caravan of exiled intellectuals where everyone knew him and to join this caravan with the hope of fleeing to freedom. Sarkis' father asked a Tartar driver of a horse-drawn carriage to take this sick and crazy man, who was annoying everyone with his whining and crying all the time, to Aleppo. The coach driver agreed to take him if he would sit in the