Aleppo. He helped them return to Karaman. Sarkis Usta has numerous recollections of the prejudice and discrimination the family suffered back in their hometown, after which came the painful years of his military service. He was drafted in 1941, but because non-Muslims were not allowed to participate in military operations, he was assigned to various labor camps. Non-Muslims, called "*gâvur*-soldiers," worked as common laborers in the most dire living conditions. Even their uniforms were a different color to set them apart from regular soldiers (p. 294). Although Turkey had not declared war and did not formally participate in World War II, the government decided to conscript Armenian, Greek, and Jewish men between the ages of 20 and 40 and send them to the eastern provinces to work under strict surveillance in labor camps. The ulterior motive behind this decision was to neutralize the able-bodied non-Muslim men lest they join the Soviet army in case of the latter's attack.

Turkey had changed regime and government; Republican Turkey had succeeded the Ottoman Empire, but the policies against the non-Muslims continued unchanged. Without bothering to call them *amele taburı* (labor battalions) or to

---

back on the wooden beam holding the rear wheels together. There was no room inside the carriage. When they reached Aleppo, the crazy man was not there. The driver assumed that he had fallen off and died. But Antonian reached Aleppo and remained there until the end of the war and helped many Armenian families, meanwhile interviewing them and recording their experiences. His eyewitness accounts and memoirs published later are valuable sources for understanding the history of the Armenian Genocide. For further reading on his life and work, see Peroomian, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe*, pp. 151–72.