

no matter how hard they tried, they were discriminated against at school and in society. A fatal word in their mother's papers (she had no passport and no ID) set them apart and marginalized them. She was a *mühtedi*, someone who had adopted Islam later in life (Çetin, pp. 72-3).

A parallel to this kind of discrimination is revealed in Yakup's story. Yakup, an Islamized Armenian interviewed by Kemal Yalçın, did not see himself as Armenian. He had completely adopted the Turkish identity, language, religion and all, but he was denied employment because a security background check revealed that his parents were Armenians who had converted to Islam.<sup>43</sup> Yakup's father protested against this injustice: "We are not Armenians. Who is accusing us?" Yakup and his father knocked on every door, but his past and true identity, which he had tried so hard to abandon and forget, popped up and closed the doors in their face.<sup>44</sup> The job Yakup was applying for was a "sensitive" one, a secretarial position in the Adıyaman courthouse. Ironically, discrimination was not limited to Muslim-Armenians, as Meliné's husband, Keğam (Gegham), was denied the post of principal of the Armenian high school (Sourb Khach

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<sup>43</sup> There have been many occasions in Turkey when an applicant was denied a governmental job or other position because of his/her ancestry, i.e. having a converted Christian in the family tree. It is believed that the government keeps records of all the Armenians who converted to Islam in order to avoid deportation in 1915 or to escape discrimination against non-Muslims thereafter. Recent investigations show that most descendants of these Islamized Armenians have changed their registration papers in order to erase evidence of the family's conversion.

<sup>44</sup> Yalçın, *Hogis kezmov ke khayta* (2003), p. 353.