

circumstantial differences that give birth to the particular process that the sense of ethnic identity goes through.

In the course of my research, it became clear to me that the sociopolitical elements at work to create the dichotomy of these dynamics—of the Diasporan Armenian identity and of the survivors living in Turkey—are more complex in the case of the latter. These elements depended greatly on the survivors' place in Turkish society. In this regard, at one end of the spectrum I see individuals, mostly young women and children, who were rescued, bought, or kidnapped and forcibly Turkified; they continued their lives submerged in Turkish society, formed families and raised children. Then, there are families or groups of families who converted to Islam wholesale and avoided the deportations and massacres of 1915.<sup>5</sup> There are also families who clung to their identity as

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<sup>5</sup> Evidence shows that many Armenians applied for conversion to save their own and their families' lives; however, their pleas were not always easily accepted. Archbishop Zaven Der Yeghiayan, Patriarch of Constantinople (1913–1922), for example, notes in his memoirs,

In the province of Kharpert, men were not allowed to convert to Islam, and in the case when a woman applied to convert to Islam, it was required that a Muslim be available to take her as his wife.... Those [Armenians] converting to Islam in the coastal cities of the Black Sea—Trebizond, Samson, and Girason—have immediately been moved to purely Muslim inhabited areas of the interior.

*My Patriarchal Memoirs* (2002), p. 89. These memoirs were originally published in Armenian, titled *Patriarkakan hushers ev vkayutiunner* (Cairo, 1947).

Henry Morgenthau, United States Ambassador to Turkey (1913–1916), also attests to the fact that “The converts were compelled to