

Turkey is our homeland. We were born and raised in Istanbul. Why are they disturbing us? We don't meddle in their faith, their religion. But when they stress their *Shari'a* [or *Şeriat*, Islamic law] and proclaim that Turkey is constituted of Muslims only; then we defend our religion more fervently and wear the cross around our neck. (Yalçın, pp. 118–19)

In the case of Ohan Özant's grandchildren, apparently, the government's challenge has proven counterproductive, generating not intimidation and obedience but the contrary, a more profound feeling of ethnic identity.

This deep emotion vis-à-vis Turkey as the Armenian homeland is a common thread connecting Yalçın's interviewees. It is the sense of belonging that Turkish-Armenians can have for no place other than Turkey. Aram, an Armenian character in Elif Shafak's novel, *The Bastard of Istanbul*, best reveals this sentiment:

This city is my city. I was born and raised in Istanbul. My family's history in this city goes back at least five hundred years.... We have first managed and then badly failed to live together.¹⁵ We cannot fail again.

An anonymous article in Turkish circulated on the Internet, then translated into English and published in the *Armenian Weekly*, best portrays this feeling. The author of "To

¹⁵ This is, of course, Shafak's view of centuries of Turkish-Armenian coexistence, expressed by an Armenian character in the novel. This, however, is not the complete story of the circumstances of this coexistence (see *supra*, chapter 5, note 9, for further explanation). Citation from p. 254.