

The process of negotiating memory continues. Today the Turkish citizenry is being introduced to “Armenian claims,” Armenians as traitors who conspired with the enemy to topple the Empire, Armenians who covet Turkish land. And this is not only in the history books. Every time the government’s policies are criticized from within, every time the government feels threatened or whenever the country is on the verge of a political upheaval, the minorities are the ones who carry the guilt and suffer punishment: “Armenians have begun to organize.” “*Gâvurs* are going to open their churches again.” “Armenians are going to demand the return of their ancestors’ properties.”⁷ These political games played on the Turkish population have always worked to wind them up against Armenians. The recent trend among Islamized Armenians to officially renounce their faith and return to Christianity⁸ is being exaggerated and pointed up as a treacherous movement, and that becomes further fuel for ultranationalists’ warnings about the danger facing the Turkish people. This phenomenon is especially linked to the secularization and westernization of the country under the pressure of the European Union, which the ultranationalists vehemently oppose.

⁷ This is a strategy that is often discussed in political analyses. In Yalçın’s *You Rejoice My Heart*, it is Hajji Ibrahim who describes the situation. See p. 340.

⁸ Researching Turkish sources, Ruben Melkonian quotes Erhan Bashruit and Hakan Giuven to list examples of Muslims of Armenian origin who have returned to Christianity and assumed Armenian names and surnames. See Melkonian, “‘Tsptial’ hayeri kronadartsutiune,” *Hanrapetakan* 3 (2007), and “‘Tsptial’ hayeri het kapvats,” *Hanrapetakan* 4 (2007).