

## Narrative, Practice and Reality: Historical Criticism of Ümit Kurt's Book *Antep 1915* as a Diaspora-oriented Narrative

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 <https://ror.org/020vvc407>

### Abstract

This article consists of three sections. First of all, the narrative that Armenians, who live in Western countries as a community who suffered from deprivations while migrating, have built out in the diaspora about the causes and processes of the migration has been described. Second, the criticism on the description of this narrative by Mr. Ümit Kurt, in his work *Antep 1915* which radically verifies the narrative without interrogating its validity, that attempts to reveal the factual practice likewise has been made. In the end, the fact that the life practices of Armenians in Antep mostly invalidates the arguments built out by the narrative by the memoirs of the Armenians concerning their life experiences in Antep whom Mr. Enç, as a personal witness of the migration process, encountered in the United States in his lifetime has been emphasized. Thereby, Mr. Ümit Kurt has radically adopted the narrative, that a diaspora community has produced to persevere in the diaspora, which sometimes distorts historical factuality disregarding historical documents and oral history narratives and also some more evidence. Therefore, Mr. Ümit Kurt has tried the harmonize the factuality with the narrative. In this article, a critical analysis of Kurt's book has been made in the light of historical documents. In addition, the information expressed in the book has been compared with the lived experiences of Armenians in both Antep and the United States, which Mitat Enç conveys in two works (Unending Night; Manly Talks).

### Keywords

Migration, Antep Armenians, Diaspora, Ümit Kurt, Mitat Enç

### Citation

Karadaş, Yücel. "Narrative, Practice and Reality: Historical Criticism of Ümit Kurt's Book *Antep 1915* as a Diaspora-oriented Narrative". *Journal of Sociological Context* 5/1 (April 2024), 90-114.

<https://doi.org/10.52108/2757-5942.5.1.5>

## Article Information

Date of Submission	07.01.2024
Date of Acceptance	25.032024
Date of Publication	15.04.2024
Peer-Review	Double anonymous review - Two External Reviewers
Ethical Statement	It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited.
Similarity Check	Done - Turnitin
Conflict of Interest	No conflicts of interest have been declared.
Complaints	dergi@sosyolojikbaglam.org
Funding	No external funding was received for this research.
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## Anlatı, Pratik ve Gerçek: Diaspora Temelli Bir Anlatı Olarak Ümit Kurt'un "Antep 1915" Kitabının Tarihsel Eleştirisi

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 <https://ror.org/020vvc407>

### Öz

Bu makale üç kısımdan oluşmaktadır. İlk, göç ederken mağduriyet yaşayan bir topluluk olarak Batılı ülkelerde yaşayan Ermenilerin diasporada göç sebepleri ve süreçlerine dair oluşturdukları anlatının bir tasviri yapılmıştır. İkinci olarak, Ümit Kurt'un Antep 1915 çalışmasında bu anlatıyı hiç sorgulamadan hatta en radikal haliyle sahiplenerek gerçek pratiği bu anlatı üzerinden betimlemeye çalışmasının eleştirisi yapılmıştır. En sonunda, Gaziantep'te Ermenilerin şehirdeki yaşayışlarının; yaşadıkları göç sürecinin canlı tanığı olan Mitat Enç'in ABD'de karşılaştığı Ermenilerin, oluşturulan anlatıdan hareketle kurdukları argümanları, kendi geçmiş yaşam deneyiminden hareketlere çoğunlukla geçersizleştirilmesi üzerinde durulmuştur. Dolayısıyla Ümit Kurt, bir diaspora topluluğunun, diasporada tutunmak için bazen gerçekleri çarpıtarak ürettiği anlatıyı, tarihsel belgeleri, sözlü tarih anlatılarını ve daha birçok kanıtı görmezlikten gelerek en radikal haliyle sahiplenmiş ve gerçekliği anlatıya uydurmaya çalışmıştır. Bu makalede tarihsel dökümanların ışığında Kurt'un kitabının eleştirel bir analizi yapılmıştır. Ayrıca kitapta ifade edilen bilgiler, Mitat Enç'in iki eserinde (Bitmeyen Gece; Selamlık Sohbetleri) aktardığı hem Antep'teki hem de ABD'deki Ermenilerle ilgili yaşanmışlığa dayalı deneyimlerle karşılaştırmalar yapılmıştır.

### Anahtar Kelimeler

Göç, Antep Ermenileri, Diaspora, Ümit Kurt, Mitat Enç

### Atıf Bilgisi

Karadaş, Yücel. "Anlatı, Pratik ve Gerçek: Diaspora Temelli Bir Anlatı Olarak Ümit Kurt'un "Antep 1915" Kitabının Tarihsel Eleştirisi". *Sosyolojik Bağlam Dergisi* 5/1 (Nisan 2024), 90-114. <https://doi.org/10.52108/2757-5942.5.1.5>

## Makale Bilgileri

Geliş Tarihi	07.01.2024
Kabul Tarihi	25.03.2024
Yayın Tarihi	15.04.2024
Değerlendirme	İki Dış Hakem / Çift Taraflı Kör Hakemlik
Etik Beyan	Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur.
Benzerlik Taraması	Yapıldı - Turnitin
Etik Bildirim	dergi@sosyolojikbaglam.org
Çıkar Çatışması	Çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir.
Finansman	Bu araştırmayı desteklemek için dış fon kullanılmamıştır.
Telif Hakkı & Lisans	Yazarlar dergide yayınlanan çalışmalarının telif hakkına sahiptirler ve çalışmaları CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 lisansı altında yayımlanmaktadır.

## Giriş

Ümit Kurt's book named "Antep 1915- Genocide and its Perpetrators" has been debated and interrogated a great deal, especially in Gaziantep, which has been produced as an outcome of intensive work conducted in the Armenian archives located in various cities around the world, unfortunately, could not own prime objectivity that could have overshadowed the intensive labor. The labor that has been sacrificed for the book has become null and void to a certain extent. In fact, the book could have supplemented the missing element concerning the conception of the traumas experienced by Armenians in Turkey in 1915. The work by a historian, who has preserved the prime target of being objective on/in relation to Armenian archives that have been dismissed and disregarded by institutional official historians in Turkey, could have made a productive contribution to our intellectual life. The existing resources and references have been attained and the endeavor to access them has been attempted and a great many of time has been spent, however, the book prepared by fellow Ümit could not meet the gap full of missing pieces.

We could support this argument for a variety of reasons. First of all, a conception of generalized nature cannot be produced concerning the clash based on the literature of a sector that is one of the parties in the conflict. In the end, it is not a proper logical inference to argue that the real expression of one of the sides could be the factual conception of the universal. The main database for the ground of Mr. Kurt's work is the Armenian archives. Other references constitute a kind of adorning effect, that is they do not have much relevance to the real narrative concerning Antep. Another base of reference is an interview with the grandchildren of Ali Cenani, all of which make it hard to conceive whether the interview really represents the life practices of actual figures.

Secondarily a kind of conceptual elusiveness as an indicator of divergence from objectivity emerges with the argument of defending the expressions available in Armenian archives. One of the prime dynamics of that divergence is that the association between bureaucrats available in Gaziantep who represented the government and the local notables could not have been made. On the other hand, he categorizes the local notables into one melting pot. He further argues that the mentioned sector is the perpetrator of the practices that Armenians have been exposed. However, it has been disregarded that local notables of Antep did not play an active significant role both in Antep's defense and Armenian relocation. Furthermore, there was intense tension between the local notables and a sector of the people (mostly in-city working classes), and the assigned bureaucracy. That also has been disregarded and dismissed. Calling the Armenian relocation, a massacre or genocide is not the purpose of the article in order to conceptualize how the Armenian experiences could be objectivized.

It is necessary to specifically emphasize Antep's defense. Therein the defense was a payoff for separating Armenians from the province in 1915 until the French occupation at the same time. One of the forces of Majeure of the urban defense was the plausible cost that

an imminent return of Armenians would have brought about by the local Turkish-Kurdish-Arabic Muslim sector of society. The bureaucrats who had been assigned by the central government and the laborer sector of local people heartfully embraced the defense while a significant sector of local notables reserved considerable distance against the defense. It is significant to notify that the motor force of the defense that are the military troops which consisted of the reminiscences of the regular Ottoman army which had been recruited from the native local people of Urfa, Adıyaman, Diyarbakır, Kilis et cetera.

The tertiary dimension is the inability to make a distinction between narrative and factuality. It has recently clearly been seen that Armenians' narrative concerning the processes that involved the incidences in 1915 has significantly turned into an intellectual mainstream that has in fact been dissociated from reality.

Henceforth, the narrative in essence revives the incongruences into a consistent reality free from disorder and chaos. In the narrative, the illusiveness encapsulates the factuality, therein the reality becomes crystal-clear attaining a kind of idealism that had never been experienced. Wishfully Mr. Ümit Kurt<sup>25</sup> as a historian had had the comment of how the narrative has been invented, what the German school entails, considerable command of Herder, and the scope of *What is History* by Hallet Carr. However, his endeavor attempts to display the narrative in a form of factuality. In general, it is one of the basic problems that sociologists and historians experience while reasoning historical incidences that there is an incompatibility between narrative and factuality.

This article attempts to leave the door open in order to look into the factuality revealing leakage out of the homogeneous scope of the narrative within the framework of the novels *Never Ending Night* and *The Manly Talks* by Mitat Enç<sup>26</sup> as a member of a local notable family

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<sup>25</sup> Ümit Kurt, who was born into a family from Gaziantep, graduated from the Middle East Technical University Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences in 2006. He worked as a researcher in International Relations and Sociology Department at Keele University in England. He completed his Master of Arts Degree at Sabanci University in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. His articles on the relationships between the armed forces and politics, secularism and religion in Turkey, Turkish intellectual and political history, and the relationships between Turkey and the European Union in the journals such as *Culture and Religion*, *Turkish Studies*, *European Journal of Economics and Political Sciences*, *Turkish Journal of Politics*, *Civil Academy Journal of Social Sciences* and *Turkish Policy Quarterly*. His first book under the title *Is AKP New Right (AKP Yeni Sağ mı?)* was published in 2009 (Dipnot Publications), his book which he co-wrote with Bülent Aras and Şule Toktaş under the title *Rise of Think-Thanks: Foreign Policy and the Culture of National Security in Turkey (Araştırma Merkezlerinin Yükselişi: Türkiye'de Dış Politika ve Ulusal Güvenlik Kültürü)* (SETA Yayınlar) was published in 2010. His book under the title "*The Great Desperate Race of Turks: The Basic of Nationalism in the Homeland of Turks (1911-1916) (Türk'ün Büyük Bıçare Irkı: Türk Yurdu'nda Milyetçiliğin Esasları [1911-1916])*" was published by İletişim Publications in May 2012. His book which he co-wrote with Taner Akçam under the title *The Spirit of Codes: Searching for the Traces of the Genocide in the Codes for Deserted Belongings (Kanunların Ruhı: Emval-i Metruke Kanunlarında Soykırımın İzlerini Aramak)* was published by İletişim Publications. Plus, Kurt has many articles published in the journals *Toplumsal Tarih*, *Birikim*, *Cogito*, *Virgöl*, *Notos Edebiyat*, *Milliyet Sanat* and *Mesele* and in the newspapers *Radikal İki*, *BirGün*, and *Taraf*. His Ph.D. Studies concerning Antep Armenians continue at Clark University in the Department of History in the Holocaust and Genocide Studies Center.

<sup>26</sup> Associate Prof. Dr. Mitat Enç was born in Gaziantep in 1909. He completed his prime education there and

of Antep who had experienced both 1915 and the defense period and also based on other authors. Mr. Kurt claims that the grandfather of Mitat Enç and the majority of local notables played a significant role in the sufferings of Armenians in 1915. The grandfather of the author Mr. Mitat Enç who was the mayor of Antep by the early twentieth century as a local notable and the protagonists of the novels by Mitat Enç who were taken from real life all generate ideas about the symbiotic liaison between the local notables of Antep in general who had had the practice of living together with Armenians for centuries long and their complex network involving other social groups in particular. Thereby, the local Muslim notable inhabitants of Antep created a common cultural life with Armenians as part of the local notables. The symbiotic life and the belongings that local Armenians deserted and the grandfather of Mitat Enç borrowed while Armenians were being relocated disqualify the argument by Mr. Ümit Kurt.

### 1. Quotations From Mr. Ümit Kurt's Work

Mr. Kurt's work mainly focuses on the experiences of Armenians in 1915 on the basis of central authority. While it prioritizes the dimension of the central authority, it dismisses it, thereby it disregarding local initiatives. En quote Mr. Kurt,<sup>27</sup> "the approaches which evaluate the Armenian genocide as a verdict and its soft and perfect practice resulting from the central government and /or a power circle that acts in accordance with the center disregard the factuality that this incident evolved out of the local initiatives that played a critically important role within the foundation of action repertoire that had been consisted of utmost complicated and inconsistent processes." There is the presupposition within the quotation: One of them is a priori that cannot be interrogated, while the latter is a derivative and as-sociable presupposition. The first presupposition provides us with the certainty of genocide, that is this presupposition necessitates the ultimate acceptance of the genocide. While the second presupposition requires a derivative role for the local power. It is a fact that Armenians experienced great suffering in 1915. However, it is the prelude to a transition into the universe of narrative from factuality. On the other hand, some opposing arguments could be made against this claim. If Armenians had been exposed to that violent genocide, how have millions of Armenians from the United States, Europe, South America, Syria, and Lebanon whose hometown has been Anatolia still survived? This question is on the agenda. Furthermore, if the incidence was considered one-dimensionality, the question turns into just a result: the result of the suffering Armenians experienced. Whereas the real stand of point of the

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graduated from İstanbul Boys' Senior High School in 1929. He started at İstanbul University School of Law. Of a disease concerning his eyes, he could not resume his education there. He searched for the cure for the disease both in İstanbul and Vienna for three years and could not find any solution for it. Thereupon, he started to study special education guidance and counseling at the Vienna Higher Institute for Pedagogics. He went to the United States with a scholarship in 1936 and received his Bachelor's Degree in special education guidance and counseling in 1938 and also received his Master of Arts Degree in the same field in 1939 from Harvard and Columbia Universities. Having returned to Turkey, he worked as both an academic and administrator in different institutions and wrote a good many books on Antep.

<sup>27</sup> Ümit Kurt, *Antep 1915- The Genocide and its Perpetrators (Antep 1915- Soykrım ve Failler)*. (İstanbul: İletişim Publishing House), 35.

historian focuses on reasons. And, no reason could justify and legitimize that humanitarian calamity. However, societies could suffer from the cost or enjoy the joyfulness of politicians and opinion leaders and their preferences. The liaison of the political leaders of Armenians, whereas Armenians have not been covered thoroughly, against the Ottoman administration as an influential small separatist group has turned the Ottoman administration into a kind of scapegoat amidst Europe. The real decision-makers of the Armenian relocation, contrary to claims of Mr. Kurt, are Ottoman army officers organized in the circle of the Union and Progress Party and whose origin was the Balkans and statesmen likewise, therein their reflexive reaction was comprehensible and tolerable. It is hard to conceive their reaction that was developed upon the traumatic impacts on native Muslims in the Balkans during the Balkan War, and the sufferings experienced there by Muslims. Henceforth, it is almost impossible to understand their reaction against Armenians without noting the heavy suffering by Muslims. Hithertoforth, independence movements became victorious in most of the places where Muslims had been the majority. Thereby, Muslims massively became cleared out of the Balkans before the Balkan War. This team who consisted of Balkan-origin officers desired to prevent the same process from being recurred in Anatolia through bloodshed. Because they grasped the repercussions of their misconduct in the Balkans. For instance, Mr. Kemal Tahir, a notable author of Turkish historical novels, supposes that if Abdelhamid II had been in power the verdict could not have been given. This notes and records a fact. The staff of the Union and Progress Party did not mostly consist of the ruling families of the Ottoman administration whereas they consisted of laborer middle-class families who had not internalized the culture of administration. The membership of certain social classes and unacquaintedness with the administrative culture enabled them to make very harsh and destructive decisions easily. The best illustrations of this situation are the unrealistic faulty decisions made in the Caucuses and Syrian fronts during World War I and their endeavor to relocate Armenians who are one of the ancient communities of Anatolia into other geographies depriving them of their homeland without calculating their repercussions.

The main focus of Mr. Kurt's work mainly categorizes Antep especially as 'local notables' as a city where Armenians had been living for a long but more than what they had experienced. Heretofore, the main motive of the book is proposing a background that undeniably identifies the background for the way of expressing "genocide". Mr. Kurt further makes emphasis the role of diverse groups of people and the majority of Unionists as well as all of the statesmen from a variety of Ottoman geographies played in the genocide. As quoted from him: "exceptionally the notables and local elites mobilize the masses and acted more actively and more willfully than the central acted."<sup>28</sup> He perpetuates his argument likewise: "The Unionist staff adopted the mission of convincing local elites and notables to facilitate the verdict by the central government concerning the real occasion of Antep Armenians and to keep their request from the central government insistently.

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<sup>28</sup> Kurt, *Antep 1915- The Genocide and its Perpetrators (Antep 1915- Soykırım ve Failler)*, 40.

Henceforth, Cemal Bey warned the members of the Union and Progress Club and led some other Muslims to send letters to İstanbul in a way that the letters critique, claim and complain about the Armenians” (p.54). I want to especially emphasize the expression “local notables and elite”, and “leading some Muslims” that have a totalizing scope and effect that occur in between the lines of above-mentioned quotations.

The striking arguments of the book are available in the following pages as such: “As it had been emphasized before the relocation and destruction of Antep Armenians were perpetrated by local elite and notables with active participation and strong support. The above-mentioned elite flourished in the ‘required’ sociopolitical milieu and more importantly convinced the central authority to act that way in the name of turning power into practice. It had been a critical factor that promoted to involve in the genocidal process to confiscate the wealth of Armenians here is the list of the names of duties of the perpetrators who orchestrated the relocation of Antep Armenians: Head of The Commission of Delivery Ahmet Faik Bey (Mutasarrif), other members: Bilal Hilmi (canonical judge); Hacı Fazlızade Nuri Bey and Ali Bey (gang leaders); Mollaşeyhzade Arif (head of Islamic affairs); Şeyh Ubedyet; Hacızade Ahmet from the local notables. Those who participated in the affairs of exile, massacre and booty except those from the Delivery Commission: Mustafa Efendi (Mayor), Besim Bey (Clerk for the Treasury), Kazım Efendi (officer in the Population Administration), Eyüp Sabri Bey (clerk in the Land Registration Office), Hacı Yusuf (Finance officer), Kemal Bey (Commander of the Gendarmerie), Bulaşıkzade Müftü Hacı Arif (Secretary General of the Union and Progress Club), Bülbül Hoca Efendi (former head of Islamic Affairs), Mehmet Efendi (Sheik of Pazar), Habibzade Mustafa (Islamic theologian), Batamzade Mehmed (Islamic theologian), Fahreddin Hoca (secretary of Court), Binbaşı Bekir Bey (Commander of Kızılhisar troops), Kasım Bey (military commander), Hakkı Bey (Kelloş Hakkı, secretary of military legion), Hamid Bey (doctor of municipality), Kerim Bey (Islamic Judge), Emin Efendi (Manager of Ziraat Bank), Israpzade Vahid (secretarf of Foundation), Mahmud Efendi (municipality treasury officer), Şahin Hafız Efendi (Manager of Turkish Orphanage), Talipzade Arif (clerk of mutasarrif), Fevzi Efendi, Körükçü Hafızzade Mustafa ve Hacı Sabitzade Ahmed (captain policeman); Muşluzade Mehmed (sergeant in the gendarmerie), Necip Efendi, Bazarbaşı Mehmed and Emin Efendi (treasury department officer), Nalçacı Ali (telegram office clerk), Adallal Ağa (secretary of court), Hacı Halil Efendi (commander of gendarmerie), Hacı Efendioğlu (guardian of prison), Ömer Şevki (lawyer), Ahmed Efendi (imam of Kozanlı township), Şeyh Mustafa Baba (imam of Alaybey township), Şeyh Mustafa Babaoğlu (gang leader), Hafız Ahmed Efendi (Alaybey mukhtar), Ali Cenani Bey (deputy), Rıza Bey (Brother of Ali Cenani and a former influential member of the Union Progress Club), Dayızade Sadıkoğlu Hasan Sadık (Unionist leader) and Taşçızade Abdullah (Head of the Union and Progress Club).<sup>29</sup> Here the fellow author recounts fully forty-eight names. An inference of that

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<sup>29</sup> Kurt, *Antep 1915- The Genocide and its Perpetrators (Antep 1915- Soykırım ve Failler)*, 73-74

kind could be made out of the profession of the above-mentioned names: it is necessary to remind of the following uses of relevant titles. The title bey has been used for military-administrative bureaucrats and the title Efendi is mostly used for the Islamic affairs class. Nonetheless, the author also wrote the professions of the persons. Likewise, there are thirty-one soldiers, army officers, and ordinary government officers. The majority of them consisted of mediocre- or lower-income-earning ordinary officers. It could be said that the army officers having medium ranks were the remainder of the Ottoman army and took part in gang affairs as two gang leaders. There were also one lawyer and another gang leader with a sheik title. It could be assumed that the gang leader was either from the Islamic theologians or from the countryside. There were also ten sheiks, Hodgas, and Islamic theologians having the title of head of Islamic affairs. There were also persons who had those titles who participated in nonreligious business affairs. For instance, there were mukhtars and sheik of Pazar, etc. Henceforth this mass constituted forty tree people if all of those officers-army officers, bureaucrats, gangsters were taken together. It must be considered that the practice of assigning the local bureaucracy from nonlocal officers was forcefully applied by the Unionist administration in the name of strengthening the central authority since the nineteenth century. Thereby it could be assumed that the above-mentioned officers and bureaucrats were not from Antep. The remaining five persons are as follows: Alaybey mukhtar, having the title of Koranic Reciter (probably from the Islamic theologians), Dayizade Sadik Ođlu Hasan Sadik, Taşçizade Abdullah, Hacı Ağazade Ahmet, and Mayor Mustafa Efendi. The number of those from the local notables, that is members of the Upper-income earning group of the city and having higher statuses in the traditional sense, are forty-eight persons with the best probability. And, the participation of the local notables in the relocation was that low. However is it justifiable to accuse the group whose participation is the least convening them under the same frame though having diverse strata? Furthermore, fellow Kurt counts three names in the biographies under the title of the local notables and elites as the perpetrators of the massacre Ali Cenani (İstanbul), Ahmet Faik Ermer (Bursa), Mehmet Yasin Sani Kutluğ (Halfeti-Urfa) are neither Antep local notables nor from Antep.

Fellow Kurt recounts the role of Antep local notables and elite in the relocation of Armenians in a number of places again. As quoted from him: “Nonetheless administrative, political, local and civilian agents played a central role in this process more actively than the central authority” (p.75). “The policies of relocation and genocide against Antep Armenians were turned into practice from power hereby local elite and notables. Those local forces got richer by way of obtaining the immovables and wealth of Armenians” (p.77). Thence there are several such quotations too.

## 2. Antep and Diaspora Armenians within the Memoirs of Mr. Mitat Enç

Mitat Enç is from a family of Antep local notables.<sup>30</sup> His memoirs are collected in the trilogy (*the Mystiques of Uzunçarşı, Manly Talks, Unending Night*) that are extraordinarily significant references to know about Antep, Vienna where he went for a medical cure, and the United States where he went for education in the first half of the twentieth century. The memoirs of Mitat Enç whose grandfather was also the mayor of Antep in the early twentieth century and whose family consisted of a lawyer and local merchants. He sheds light on the demography, economics, and politics of his childhood Antep, thereby they provide a magnificent map of Antep in the socio-economic and political sense. The significance of the memoirs reflects directly Mitat Enç's experiences rather than the official records of the above-mentioned period. That is they reveal the structure of the city by way of his life history as with the terminology of the current sociological method. The two books "*Manly Talks* and *Unending Night*" are more important for our issue. Both two books shed light on those diaspora Armenians who have lived both in Antep in the United States, the relationships of Antep Armenians with Turks, the dimension of the relocation, the dynamics of the relocation, the agents who participated in the relocation actively, and those who organized the urban Antep defense.

The most striking part of *Manly Talks* is the situation of Mr. Enç's grandfather as a local Turkish notable family and his sophisticated liaison between Enç's family and Antep Armenians in economic, political, and social ways and means and his being condemned due to his relationship with Armenian and French people by those who perpetrated the urban defense during the War period. Those experiences of Enç's grandfather and later his father are typical to local Muslim notables, an experience unique to those who collaborated and led a symbiotic life with Armenians and other groups as part of Antep urban culture. As it would be later asserted, local native Muslim notables were not deemed reliable allies by the national forces who perpetrated the urban defense. Plus, they were excluded from the city in the end as long as the defense came to an end, and some part of the local families immigrated to surrounding provinces just mainly as Aleppo deserting Antep.

If we start from *Manly Talks*, the forced emphasis of Mr. Enç in 1918 when the Urban Defense did not start however World War I came to an end is the disappearance of the common symbiotic urban culture ordered among Muslims and Armenians. A typical example of this incidence is that the Armenians located in the milieu which surrounded the neighborhood of Mr. Enç's house immigrated to the districts where Armenians themselves were collected. As quoted from Mr. Enç: "For long it strikes our attention as a striking point that the surrounding neighborhood for our Armenians one by one left here and they commenced to disappear. One day any existing house has been deserted in the next morning, the windows

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<sup>30</sup> There have been local notable Muslim Turks who have been active in administrative, military, trade, and manufacturing domains in Gaziantep for centuries and so far, (Özliü, çev.: 1255).

are tightly closed; at night we were astonished upon hearing that Armenians escaped and moved to the Armenian neighborhood in Kayacik. As long as we grasped, they escaped into the neighborhood of French people, we were much more astonished. Before the first fire of war was ignited it was not long since the Urban ground was divided and thereby departed in the two from one way to another. The Street which lies along Maarif Coffee House up to the Black Cemetery of Armenians had one front but double grounded. To the west of Dortyol crossroads that is on the corner of the coffee shop, another frontline lay along Kendirli Church where there was the headquarters of French Missionaries alongside the street towards Baskarakol. The Armenian houses at the end of that road had been evacuated, their windows had been fortified by sandbags and their walls had been opened loophole holes. The face of Cinarli Mosque that surrounds the high stone wall of Kendirli Church was full of loophole holes. In spite of the preparation by Armenians, a deep rat road had been ducked that lay towards Cinarli along the backyards of Armenian houses, and gates had been opened in the front walls that separated the house line to the right. Furthermore, there are Turkish gangs the members of whom were wearing sachus on their heads. Alongside French people who allied with the Armenians, and accompanied them, were ready to fight until the day of the conflict behind the opposite loophole holes”.<sup>31</sup>

It was like again for children when the first armed conflict started with bilateral annoyances as well as greetings and sometimes bilateral blasphemies. Afterward, the gangs from the rural sectors settled in the houses that the Armenians had evacuated. “Meanwhile Salman the Black, son of the aghas of Monte Negro and who had great respect for my grandfathers, settled in the house in our neighborhood with his gang. The house had been evacuated by our Armenian tenants”(p.55). The armed conflict between the two sides turned into a war after a certain stage. The psychology of the war destroyed the rational way of thinking bilaterally. “We watched the noisy firing of Armenian houses by pouring gas oil on their roofs with our childish mood in a gay startling manner. The Armenians had allied with our enemies with betrayal. Afterward, they attacked Cinarli with French army officers, Senegalese, and Tunisian colonial soldiers in front of them however the attack failed but Armenian gangs shot bullets against the root of the minaret of a mosque, and thereby they collapsed the dome into the minaret” (p.59).

In the following pages, Mr. Enç asks these questions under the influence of one of the psychological sides of the war: “While all these happenings occurred, two enigmatic questions that never settled down in my childish mind had been recycling and thereby my childish mind had been preoccupied with those enigmas: one of them was the Armenian betrayal that was later converted into ‘the Armenian problematic’ that famous and that I witnessed how it was decadently and distortedly recounted in the places where I went for my education in the Western countries much later”(p.59). In the rest of the question, as quoted: “We as the urban Turkish and Armenian families lived in peace before the war. Trade, most of the

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<sup>31</sup> Mitat Enç, *Unending Night (Bitmeyen Gece)* (İstanbul: Ötügen Publishing House, 2017), 50-51.

crafts, and those occupations that necessitated higher education were under the monopoly of Armenians. They were the happy minority compared with the Turkish majority whose preoccupation was mostly agriculture from the standpoint of income level. As most of the tax income was acquired from Islamic tithes, they were not responsible for it. Furthermore, they did not have any responsibility for conscription. Plus, the bells of their churches reverberate over the city and they worship freely. As for their children, they were trained either in schools established by themselves or in modern schools run by Christian missionaries. They had more than they could, they shared the resources of the country as a really privileged minority. This land was neither the place that could have been called 'our land' just like those Arabs who betrayed the Balkan and Ottoman armies and thereby won victories. Seventy-two and a half nations under the umbrella of Ottomanhood for more than six centuries enabled them to grow and burgeon. From then on whenever I attempted to turn the pages of a book, a question turns over my mind: "If only those who made the history rather than those who wrote it had turned all that factuality into the sheets of history" (p.60). Within this quotation, the subjectivity of taking a side and becoming a member of that side is clearly visible. However, the mentioned subjectivity does not validate the truthfulness of all those written. The expression 'Armenian betrayal' is relatively ambitious. However, taking the Turkish-Muslim population of the period into consideration, the argument is not thoroughly incorrect. Those who consider the Armenian relocation focus on its traumatic dimension, which is only an outcome. However, real scientific research must focus on reasons, too. There was an active political stuff among those Armenians of the age who supported independence and who collaborated with the United Kingdom and the United States though they did not represent all of the Armenians. Armenian nationalism developed in a way that was against the Ottoman Empire. During World War I Armenian separatist organizations constituted a threat in terms of logistics and military operations in the back of the fronts and that was why relocation occurred from a military perspective, which is relatively militarily justifiable. In every period of history, any war whose back of the front is not reliable demographically could be subject to decisions that are militarily justifiable but sometimes not humanitarian at all to make the zone safer by military decision-makers.

The other side of the issue is The Union and Progress Party. This Party had been established in the Balkans and most of its members had been from ordinary families in the Balkans. They had directly experienced the incidences of massacres and relocation during the Balkan Wars and afterward. Thereby those Unionist staff who were in power during the Armenian relocation wished the tragedy experienced by the Muslims in the Balkans would not have recurred in Anatolia, thereby they wanted to prevent that from happening. It is clear that the command of the Unionist staff keeping the tragedy in the Balkans in memory and never forgetting it made the humanitarian dimension of Armenian relocation more traumatic. Furthermore, Armenians were not absolute 'traitors' against Turks. Evidence for that can be inferred from the memoirs of Ali Nadi Ünler who had the fact participated in Antep's defense. Turkish group returning from the armed conflict with the French army

past an Armenian settlement on their way obligatorily. According to Ünler, Armenians did not attack the Turkish troops although they could have. Henceforth the Turkish troops safely passed by to the safe zone.<sup>32</sup>

In the following pages of the book, the emphasis on the wealth, the advantages of education, and the health of Armenians is made (p.61).

In the book, another strikingly interesting part occurs in the narrative of Antep's defense. Nevertheless, the family of Mr. Enç had been accused of their relationships with Armenians by the defenders until the date of defense. As quoted: "Another question which preoccupies my mind, and thereby makes me feel anguished is the change of attitude in over neighboring Muslim and Turkish native people against our long-year Armenian neighbors who weaponized against us. The first signification came to the ground when the central comity started to force my father to talk about those. The Central Comity told my father that the Ankara government which fought against the Greek Army needed money to continue to resist. Of course, the main underlying reason was the wealthy families in the city" (p.68). After 1908 when the Union and Progress party came to power, the policy of impoverishment those army officers, bureaucrats, and those wealthy sectors who had supported Abdulhamid II was practiced against those wealthy Muslim notable families who were not trusted at the same time with the same methods. This impoverishment policy can best be followed in the themes of the novel *A Fort of Wealth (Bir Mülkiyet Kalesi)* by Kemal Tahir. The grandfather of Mr. Enç, Mr. Mazlum, and his great-grandfather was asked to make payments and they were forced to make the payments. Henceforth, impoverishment in Mr. Enç family starts. En quote: "Here-tofore the grape yards and vegetable gardens surrounding the city were not able to farm, and even the villages where the war was not experienced were deadly silent and no sound if even a donkey was audible and thereby such crops were inaccessible. In spite of all of those my father paid his raised tax and thereby he collected all his belongings to get the payment. It was then narrated that those farmers who did not pay the raised tax or who could not pay it were gathered and imprisoned in the Municipality inn. And it was further narrated that they were forced to explain where their treasure was buried by way of using sticks and buttstocks. Even when we felt we could relax, another release of raised tax was on the agenda, too. And tax collectors convinced and come down upon the complaint of my father that his income resources were extinguished thoroughly" (p.69).

There was another aspect of the impoverishment imposed upon the wealthy Muslims who were not trusted by way of official sections that the defenders talked about in their own circles and family milieu but that did not have any reflection outside their own circles. This aspect was the accusation of wealthy local Muslim notables for their cooperation with the Armenians in the past and that those Muslims were traitors. This accusation was

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<sup>32</sup> Ali Nadi Ünler, *Gaziantep Defense in the Independence War of the Turk (Türkün Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Gaziantep Savunması)* (İstanbul: Kardelen Printing House, 1969) 72-73.

not overtly audible however it was asserted on their and that information could be gathered from their children. Children displayed what was thought within the family. En quote: "Over issue was the children of our own neighborhood whom we played knucklebones and marbles and hunted for sparrows with slingshots. I started to make out that there was a tendency among the members of the gang in our neighborhood to dismiss me and a tendency to leave me alone. I encountered the cause of this strange behavior at an unexpected time and way. My command on the fight with our rival neighborhood which was my favorite game at times was reacted in an offending way and my hasty insistence was retaliated by our Ökkeş "the son of Kebab House owner" with his stubborn expression as en quote: 'you are not the leader of the gang anymore. You are now together with the gıaour. Your grandfather collaborated with them own before he escaped to İstanbul, and we will never collect them in our house. Upon this challenge, I was first startled and then stunned. And afterward, with all my furious mood, I suddenly attacked him with my cursing expressions. However, I noticed that everybody in my vicinity went far from me and convened around him. I was overcome and embarrassed and returned back home" (pp.69-70).

The cause of rumors was that the Enç family had a common ground of life with the Armenians before and after the Armenian relocation. En quote: "My grandfather who was a lawyer had a lot of clients and friends of Armenians who respected him and trusted him to the utmost degree. Furthermore, during the war campaign exile, some of them delivered all their invaluable belongings to him in a good number of chests. As long as they returned back, they took them as they were intact way. I wonder if my grandfather had had such a bargain with them. Though my mind was extremely preoccupied with this recycling questions, I could not dare to ask the truth and thereby to learn it" (p.70). Concurrent attacks of neighborhood children against Mr. Enç have been perpetuated. Mr. Enç was further frustrated in that he thought he had been cleared and thereupon a cannon was thrown onwards their house. Nevertheless, the enemies, according to neighbor children, wanted to aid Mr. Enç family by allocating them gold full of a cannonball. "Ouch Ökkeş! Whereupon wasn't your grandfather who promised some things by the none Muslims! S... of the b..! Whose house has been bombed by cannons like that? Upon facing all those Ökkeş has startled and furiously attempt to spit on my face and thereupon he said: 'C... s..! Non-Muslims have thrown upon you cannon balls. It was for you to repair the house' he answered. 'S.. of the b..! If this is the case you have to come in and collect the gold out of them. They didn't agree because they were scared of being trapped and thereby being shot down. Henceforth they didn't compromise. However, one out of them supported Ökkeş and said: 'S.. of the b..! As long as the war is over, we grasped that the house had been temporary for us. 'Son, grape yard house belonged to us.' I felt very weak. I came in. As far as I understand those people who praised Haji (the caretaker of Enç's house) started to share all our belongings in their dreams during the turmoil of the war. Plus, they were those who were the guests of Haji's house before the world" (pp. 75-6). These lines reveal not only the elegy of the local Muslim notables but also the social class structure of the defense. The real perpetrator of the

defense is the poor local residents of Antep and those people had an eye on the belonging of local Muslim notables.

The status quo of the Enç family during the defense period not only reflects the experiences of a family but also reflects the elegiac experiences of a wealthy social stratum, that is wealthy local Muslim notables having a higher urban status and richness. The narrative of Mr. Enç also necessitates a social class analysis of Antep's Defense.

### 3. Antep Defense

The title requires such an introduction, that is a must. Antep Defense is a heroic epic and any despising attitude displayed against the will of the nation would be the ignorance of human destruction that any war results in. It is a great achievement to make a decision to war by society and to perpetuate in spite of all elegiac tragedies in a certain period of time. It is even necessary to experience war for a better understanding of military will, strategy and tactics. The war in our near neighborhood, that is in Syria and Iraq reminds us not to despise that fact. Therefore, Antep Defense which is the expression of a will of war must be considered as an indicator of military will.

Nevertheless, appreciating the defense does not mean not making a realistic analysis of it. Such an analysis would go beyond the official sense of history available in Turkey concerning the structure of the defense. The factuality contradicts the official sense of history in the following two points:

1-The defense was not conducted by the total will of Antep residents. The social class map of the urban population determined the social class character of the defense.

2-The basic motivational forces majeure of defense are not only the occupation by the French who had been labeled as the enemy. Another motivational force majeure of the defense is, as effective as the following element, the cost of Armenian relocation in 1915 that must be paid.

When the attitude of Antep's local notables has been analyzed in the light of those two points: If one of the motivating agents of the defense is the cost that must be paid by such, how about the reluctance of Antep's residents to participate in the defense? May the cause stem from the question "I did not take part in the relocation, and then how come should I pay the cost?" Because the frequent emphasis of those authors who experienced the defense is the distant approach of the Antep local notables. For instance, the staff who made the decision of the defense and the staff who was against it all give clues concerning the topic from the standpoint of their social profiles. Those people who made and backed the defense verdict mostly consisted of bureaucrats. The founders of the Antep Association of Defense of Rights are as follows: "Dr. Hamit, Mr. Ragip who was the correspondence officer, Mr. Avni secretary of the (Military) Regiment, Mr. Mahir who was the telegram officer, Mr.

Kuşçuzade Hamdi who was the judge.”<sup>33</sup> The social base of the Association of Islam that was either kept a distance or was directly against the defense was larger. The participants of a meeting of the Association of Islam that aimed that resisting the defense are as follows: “Bulaşıkzade Arif Efendi who was the head of religious affairs and from Islamic theologians, Bülbülzade Hacı Abdullah Efendi who was also from Islamic theologians, Kepkepzade Şakir Efendi (whose surname was Kepkep) also from Islamic theologians, Mustafa Efendi (whose surname was Ocak) who was a Mavlevi sheik, Şuayipzade Ubeydullah Efendi (whose surname was Göksel), Hacı Hanefizade Abdullah Efendi who was from the local notables, Fazlızade Nuri bey (whose surname was Elgin) also from local notables, Mısırzade Arif Bey (whose surname was Kutlar) also from the local notables, Müftizade Hayri Efendi (whose surname was Atay) also local notables, Zafizade Mazlum Efendi (whose surname was Enç) (The grandfather of Mr. Mitat Enç) also from local notables, Israpzade Şefik Bey (whose surname was Barlas) also from local notables, Dayi Ahmed Agha also from local notables, Überizade Kâmil Bey (whose surname was Ayas) also from local notables, Dr. Muhacir Bey whose surname was Barlas) also from local notables, Hasan Sadık Bey (whose surname was Dai) also from local notables.”<sup>34</sup> This list almost includes all the prime figures of Antep local notables. An important part of this local notable families immigrated to various cities, primarily Aleppo during and after the defense.<sup>35</sup> The anecdote that Ünler cites in relation to the tension between the defenders and those local notables and Islamic theologians who resisted to defense was very interesting. “Kılıç Bey negotiated with the Committee (Committee of the Association of Islam) for a long. Later on, Kılıç Bey decided to make Muhtar Göğüş, Dr. Hamdi Uras, Celal Kadri Barlas bey, their friends, and their family circles extradite out of the city, and reside in Maraş. Dr. Hamid and Muhtar Bey convened and made Kılıç Bey quit the idea because they claimed extraditing them would be a heavy punishment and would lead to disagreement on the defense front; furthermore, they claimed that those people were not against the defense, and plus they donated cash for the defense.”<sup>36</sup>

In the oral narratives, this attitude of Antep local notables was either disregarded and thereby they were tried to be protected from being dishonored or they were accused of being traitors. It is questionable whether going beyond those arguments is possible. If we accept the attitude of notables, could that result have stemmed from being against the relocation or being neutral about relocation? Might the Muslim Antep notables have not wanted to share ‘the cost’ of the defense as they did not accept the relocation or even be

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<sup>33</sup> Ünler, *Gaziantep Defense in the Independence War of the Turk (Türkün Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Gaziantep Savunması)*, 17.

<sup>34</sup> Ünler, *Gaziantep Defense in the Independence War of the Turk (Türkün Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Gaziantep Savunması)*, 22.

<sup>35</sup> Ünler, *Gaziantep Defense in the Independence War of the Turk (Türkün Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Gaziantep Savunması)*, 22.

<sup>36</sup> Ünler, *Gaziantep Defense in the Independence War of the Turk (Türkün Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Gaziantep Savunması)*, 45.

against it? There is no reliable reference on this topic that we have. There is a need for profound oral history studies or archives work.

Even the attitude of Antep local notables before and during the defense refutes the argument by Mr. Ümit Kurt that 'Antep local notables played an active role in the relocation.' If only Mr. Kurt who accessed Armenian archives in a variety of countries had not searched for perceptive points that had provoked the enmity between the two sides. If only he hadn't done that. Instead, he could have searched for further protective measures by Muslim Antep local residents that were taken by them to preserve the common urban lifestyle that also had protected the Armenian population at times. Nevertheless, there are a good many Armenian families who converted to Islam in order only to be protected from relocation, and furthermore it was still impossible for Muslim local notables not to have any information concerning those families if the Muslim local notables had wanted the Armenian families who converted to Islam to get rid of that nuisance. Otherwise, they could have been displayed such families by the public, and thereby they could have been punished. One of the best indicators that signify the remorse in the Muslim public vote in general and in local notables in particular caused by relocation is the articles of relevant regulation dated 10 April 1918. According to the concerning articles of the regulation, it was notified that those Rums (Greeks in Anatolia), Armenians, and Arabs beyond the age of sixty could have returned on the provision that the cost was to be paid by the government.<sup>37</sup> It is for sure that those articles of regulation could not have compensated for the sufferings of Armenians and Rums. However, even the existence of such regulations denotes that there was no compromise between Muslim decision-makers and the Muslim public vote about the Armenian relocation.

#### 4. Perceptions and the Factuality

The memoirs of Mr. Enç are also very significant for the experiences he lived with the non-Muslims who were immigrants from Turkey to the United States where Mr. Enç went for education. Nevertheless, he conceives the dialogs between himself and Rums and Armenians who experienced the relocation and the Rum migration exchange in the Ottoman period as his force majeure for his creative motivation. And thereby, this signifies that the distance between factuality and perceptions is wide open. The non-Muslims who immigrated to the United States have distorted the factuality and thereby they have displayed the unlived experiences as if they had happened. Henceforth, they became the side of manufacturing perception as they could influence American public opinion likewise. There is no reason not to trust what Mr. Enç narrates. Examples concerning the details of his years in the United States available in his novel *Unending Night* have been given. Though more limit-

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<sup>37</sup> Yunus Emre Tansü - Mehmet Bozaslan, "Ayıntap Instance, the Implementation Following 1915 Transfer and Residence Code (1915 Sevk ve İskan Kanunu Sonrası Uygulamaları: Ayıntap Örneği)" Available in the Prize for Mitat Enç (Mitat Enç Armağanı), ed. Timur Demir vd., 1/381 (Gaziantep: Bilgin Kültür Sanat Publications, 2019), 279-280.

ed, there are also examples concerning the topic in *Manly Talks*.

Mr. Enç writes in this way: "Even the Armenians and Rums who were born and grown up in the United States have the tendency to make the Turkish massacre as the culprit for their blind eyes caused by disease and their legs and arms that they lost in an accident"<sup>38</sup> "For instance, a Rum girl student whom I met at an American university where I studied for a while narrated me that her parents had migrated into the United States from Trabzon and she had been born there and had lost her eyes due to a childhood disease. One day I learned that that girl would have given a conference and thereby I went to participate in the conference. The main theme of the conference were the genocide attacks by Turks. Somewhere in her speech she unashamedly asserted that they were Turks who had blinded her eyes with hot iron. With astonishment and furiousness, I visited the dean very fast and urgently and asked him to give me an opportunity to make a speech in reply to the Armenian student girl adding that that is compulsory. He tolerated me and gave me the opportunity. I first emphasized the audience that there was a contradiction between what she told me and what she told the audience. And then I talked like that: 'She didn't either tell the truth to you or to me that young unlucky lady'. I later talked about the memoirs of war and then talked about the women and children who had been assassinated by the snipers located in the minaret of Ayiboğlu mosque."<sup>39</sup> Having told this memoir Mr. Enç adds this comment: "It has been three generations since this frenzy of taking revenge and nurturing grudge started and the generations are alive. Those of them who started the frenzy are alive and are hunchbacked and furthermore, the light of their eyes is gone out and they walk likewise. However, those lies have turned into so big rent of income that... Growing the seeds of hatred in the hearts of every generation and thereby assaulting Turks and causing bloodshed of them are made part of greater interest and manipulating them likewise and going much beyond a sort of jam of lies."<sup>40</sup> Enç's writings are a good example how smaller or bigger lies added to the Armenian relocation have been combined with factuality and thereby how a perceptual reality has been produced out of the factual reality. The perceptual reality has turned into a big rental gate using American and Western oriental subconscious of public opinion as its target audience. The first generation was aware of the difference between factuality and fiction. However, the latter generations have been under the hegemony of a narrative that reflects fiction as factuality.

Mr. Enç strikingly expresses the emotional breakdown of first belt diaspora Armenians: "I noticed that the offense and grudge of all Rums and Armenians whom I got introduced in those years had suddenly softened and disappeared. Under this foul core lies sharing the same homeland and nostalgia for her and thereby their faces suddenly shine as long as they get introduced to me furthermore those who were in the same region displayed increasing

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<sup>38</sup> Mitat Enç, *Manly Talks (Selamlık Sohbetleri)* (İstanbul: Ötüken Publishing House, 2007), 63.

<sup>39</sup> Enç, *Manly Talks (Selamlık Sohbetleri)*, 63-64.

<sup>40</sup> Enç, *Manly Talks (Selamlık Sohbetleri)*, 64.

levels of friendship and close ties and they are heart bound intimate and close. They have kept on asking me about the ice-cold water of İncirlişar and Kavaklık picnic (*share* in accordance with Antep accents of Turkish language) areas and the fruits of Dutluk as big as a finger. When I expressed all those feelings, they were so willing to remember all their memoirs in Antep with profound nostalgia missing their glorious past in Antep. Near the American College in the vicinity of Watertown (in the United States), there were a good many numbers of Armenians. This town was in a well-founded and comfortable location like in an Anatolian township in the countryside with bakers, kebab house owners, and big roasters full of a variety of food ranging from bacon to patisserie in all of which a variety of Anatolian dialects are spoken. One day in a small diner where I went for dining, the owner asked for my order in Turkish. Upon that question, the customer at a nearby diner table attempted to chat in the Armenian language. As long as I said that I didn't speak their language, he asked me where I was from with Antep accents of the Turkish language. Upon my positive answer, he whirled around me and sat nearby. I felt that he would have almost caressed and embraced me with affection, care, and nostalgia. He came nearby 'When did you come here fellow?' he asked. I answered him 'Four months ago'. 'How? Unbelieving Turks exiled all Armenians in Antep long ago. How could you yourself survive so far?'. He is embarrassed to agree with the answer 'I am a Turk, not an Armenian,' and thereby he said: 'Once I have used to it, I can't help using it... In this region speculating in this way and talking likewise is very common' he apologizes. And then not taking my being late into account, he made me narrate on the homeland he has had nostalgia for a very long. Unfortunately, these people have been captivated by their personal narratives concerning the disasters that they have made up and exaggerated for obtaining the care and aid of the countries where they went having escaped from Turkey. Almost all of them could not even think about their being misused for the interests of others."<sup>41</sup> This opinion of Mr. Enç has some dilemmas within itself for it is limited by his experiences in Antep. Nevertheless, he is far from what Armenians experienced in the whole Anatolian land. It is necessary not to disregard the trauma experienced by the nation many sectors of which had been exiled from their homeland. Even the nostalgia for Anatolia in those Armenians whom Mr. Enç met in the United States principally signifies the painful dimension of their experiences. However, the main striking point in the narrative by Mr. Enç is that his narrative reveals a new fictitious narrative made up of a combination of lies and facts. He further clarifies that this new fictitious narrative has been displayed as factual and accepted by public opinion likewise.

The book in which Mr. Enç narrates his memoirs in the United States in the most comprehensive way is *Unending Night*. Thereby, Armenians in the United States have been frequently told about in his work. A striking example concerning the topic develops by the occasion that Mr. Enç comes to study at Perkins University. The tailor of the Campus is an immigrant Armenian from Malatya. The principal tells Mr. Enç that Ms. Kelleciyan who is

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<sup>41</sup> Enç, *Manly Talks (Selamlık Sohbetleri)*, 67-68.

the tailor detests Turks and warns him not to become her customer at all. "the day after I came to Perkins Mr. Gibson who was principal significantly emphasizes that I shouldn't ask Ms. Kelleciyan for tailoring and ironing and I should ask for those from his wife. In this way, he explains the life order and rules at school."<sup>42</sup> According to the explanation by the principal, the cause of hatred was that Ms. Kelleciyan's husband and children were killed during the relocation by Turks. One day, Ms. Kelleciyan visits Mr. Enç room. "One day my door has been knocked. A women's voice belongs to the woman who slightly opens the door and talks in this way: 'You are welcome. Isn't there anything for tailoring and ironing? Then she narrated that they had immigrated to the United States from Malatya adding that she also had two daughters who are sales assistants in a store. Upon the warning by the principal, I hesitated to relax and talk about myself. However, she unexpectedly demonstrated an intimate attitude and she invited me to her house in the vicinity to eat the authentic food of my homeland likewise... 'Ms. Kelleciyan intimately said that she cooked authentic food from my homeland just for me. The servant Maria assisted Ms. Kelleciyan in serving the food. Mr. Gibson who had some liability for the food service hastily told me not to eat the food at all for she may have added some poison into the food and thereby I became suspicious about it. However, I couldn't help eating the so deliciously irresistible smell of the meadow stuffed with mince and yogurt and then I ate all of it. I joked and took the spoonful full of yogurt 'In case there is a danger you should call for an ambulance'. The stuffed meadow was really magnificent. For a while, I anticipated whether there is any pain in my stomach or whether I had diarrhea. As long as I felt confident for Mr. Kelleciyan, I went to the ironing room and thanked her by heart. 'Hopefully one Sunday, I shall cook your Turkish meatballs with cracked wheat. And you could get introduced to my daughters likewise'. She talked about the good old days and continuously emphasized the apricot and pears of Malatya. Mr. Gibson could never grasp the cause of these intimate close ties. And thereby he said with astonishment, 'That woman was furious about Turks until you came here. However now there is no one dearer than you and I can never understand it.'<sup>43</sup> The first belt of the Armenians in the United States has developed a fictitious narrative. Being aware of the fictitiousness of the narrative, close ties which stem from the homeland of Turkey emerge as long as they encounter a Turk, and hence, they embrace him with care and affection.

The fictitiousness of the argument by Ms. Kelleciyan that her husband and children were killed by Turks was directly explained to Mr. Enç by herself. "I visited Ms. Kelleciyan's house with a box of candies and there I had Turkish meatball with cracked wheat and in proper circumstances, I came to ask her what happened to her husband. With deep regret and sorrowfulness, she replied 'in a younger age he passed away and they diagnosed his death as a heart attack. I apologized to her for reminding her of her husband's death. Her daughters were grown up in the United States. They kept on asking me insistent questions

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<sup>42</sup> Enç, *Unending Night (Bitmeyen Gece)*, 164.

<sup>43</sup> Enç, *Unending Night (Bitmeyen Gece)*, 165.

about whether their mother told the truth about the beauty and welfare of the homeland. They were two well-spoken typical American girls. As long as I felt more self-confident I couldn't help reiterating Mr. Gibson's discourse. Ms. Kelleciyan smiled with an expression of apology, and thereby she explained the following: 'It has been a tradition that it is embarrassing for Rums and Armenians in the United States not to speculate about Turks. I can't help telling all those stuff due to the nostalgia for homeland'(Enç, 2017: 165). It has been a significant example of how this group of arguments that have been recurring by the awareness of their falsehood has been turned into factuality.

The discourse of a native Armenian lawyer's father sheds light on the Armenian issue in Turkey by the early twentieth century. "He immigrated into the United States with his young wife and with his own will when Abdulhamid II was de-thrown. He was speaking in a kind of redundant and slightly hesitant Ottoman Turkish. He had got a bit richer through his jewelry business and his only son had studied law at Harvard University. He lived in a two-story well-furnished house with a garden. His wife cooked me a marvelous İstanbul meal with Turkish soup, Turkish pastry, and baklava. After the meal, we delightedly had Turkish coffee and within the flaw speech, the emphasis turned to the Armenian exile. I told my story to the tailor of the school. He philosophically sighed and told afterward: 'son in our language there is a saying "if the crime becomes a fur, nobody wants to wear it". Even if my relatives kept on saying that the exile's responsibility is over our shoulders, nobody cares about them. They keep on arising pity for them by sobering and complaining. This is the repercussion of their comfort in Turkey. They had the best variety of crafts and trades. They lived in the best houses and ate marvelous food. As long as the Ottoman Turks were fighting against the seven world arbiters on three continents, they did not have conscription, and they enriched their wealth. What could have the Ottoman administration done when a few pirates with confused minds kept on crying for so-called Armenia? They were been exposed to what they deserved! How could the Ottoman administration let those staff of gangsters establish Armenia by donating land for it? Do they suffer from misery and poverty in Turkey? Their incomes, cars, schools, and hospitals were better than those of others in Turkey. However, they keep on feeling the nostalgia of the so-called fountains, fruit gardens, and farms they left behind. Worse than those all is that they feed the grudge and furiousness in their children. If their issue is Armenia, Russians have one, let them go there!'"<sup>44</sup> This quotation is the signifier of one-sided reading of Armenian relocation. Furthermore, it gives a clue about how perception has been manipulated.

Within the memoirs of Mr. Enç, it becomes comprehensible that there are differences between the first belt of diaspora Armenians who had experienced the relocation and the latter generation who have been under the influence of the narrative. Ms. Kelleciyan and the father of the lawyer who has been quoted can make the distinction between factuality and fictitious narrative. However, the generation who did not experience the facts has been

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<sup>44</sup> Enç, *Unending Night (Bitmeyen Gece)*, 165-166.

under the influence of the narrative more. Nevertheless, their attitude is more hostile. An example of that is another Armenian whom an Armenian named George, who had immigrated to the United States from Aleppo, encountered in his store. "I recalled George under the shutter. He smiled and let me in: 'Come, come there is Turkish raki and let us hang on drinking a few more!'. He thereby took me to the dining table and introduced me to two others at the table. Afterward, he explained to them it had been three to four months since I had come from Turkey. I noticed that they were almost the same age by inferring from their voices and the ways they speak. It could be grasped out of their insistent emphasis on chaste girls and women in their speeches that they were single. George joked: 'This man is a bit womanizer, in each time he hangs out with another woman. One of them has noticed that our conversation has too much turned around that issue and changed it with his lisping voice: "Hold your horses, not much has been left! In near future, we will protect our country which you captured with the Red Army. There was tension by the table. Therefore, George tried to calm them down. Thereby I peacefully asked which region of Turkey they had immigrated to the United State from. He said he was born and grew up in the United States however he wouldn't be able to help to take revenge for his ancestors. As long as his aggression speeds up, my rage has become to disappear even though I was circumscribed by three Armenians in a deserted street late at night."<sup>45</sup> The hostile mannerism of the second belt who did not experience the process of relocation can easily be signified for the lines above clearly and comprehensibly.

Mr. Enç writes the following as an individual of the local notable Antep family and about the common life culture between Armenians and Muslim Turks adding that this culture has been preserved even after the relocation though being destroyed to an extent: "In my room, I couldn't keep remembering my childhood years lived among and vicinity of the Armenians. There was a crowded Armenian minority in our neighborhood. Our cook was sister Nassuya, our doctor was Mr. Hosep who took care of our patients, our tailor was Mr. Adıgüzel and our copperware was sworn by Master Garoch. We, as Muslim Turkish children, played with Armenian children a variety of games including knucklebones, and marbles, and hunted for birds with slingshots in the division of the house separated for men. In their Christian feasts our houses were full of painted eggs, and pastry in large amounts, and in our Muslim feasts, we shared our food with Armenians. My grandfather was both a shareholder and lawyer for their companies. However, there were also things that separated us from them. Armenian women had burned hair, had mantillas over their shoulders and they walked around their faces open. However, our Muslim Turkish women didn't stride any street without sheets and their faces have always been covered. On Sunday, they went to worship in large groups as long as the bells of the church on the Kayacik side of the nearby mountain opposite our houses toll and they were always well-dressed and good-looking at times. They visited the parts of our houses separated for men as long as they had a business

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<sup>45</sup> Enç, *Manly Talks (Selamlık Sohbetleri)*, 167.

affair with us in the daytime. During the exile when First World War I, some of them delivered their belongings in chases and baskets and they took them back with nothing missing when they returned. There was nothing overtly hostile among us. In spite of all those as a result of the defeat of Turkey, they collaborated with Britons and French people when they occupied Antep, and furthermore, they attempted to take hegemony over us, and later on, they started to fire and war against us. Therefore, who should complain about whom? One of the dynamics of their hostility may be, in my opinion, they were separated from their roots and were exiled abroad.”<sup>46</sup>

## Conclusion

Societies suffer from the verdicts by their political decision-makers and opinion leaders and however, sometimes the verdicts bear fruits. Unfortunately when the time in 1915 the Armenian community in Anatolia paid the price of the verdicts by the political decision-makers and opinion leaders in influential positions. The same applies to Turkish society, too. The relocation verdict in 1915 has been a problem for the Republic of Turkey in both domestic and international domains for more than a hundred years. As available in all great events of societal transitions, reservation, objection, and refusals in Armenian relocation both in Armenian society and Turkish society have been disregarded in the two basic narratives (Turkish and Armenian official historians/ standpoints). Furthermore, the process has been considered as much as two opposite but homogenous attitudes allow.

The book by fellow Ümit stands on the Armenian official historian side of the two opposite sides. Therefore, it doesn't go beyond supporting the Armenian narrative concerning the relocation instead of producing the expression of factuality. The book dismisses the role of political position, the tensions which stem from the differences between the classes of Muslims, and the role of these tensions on the attitudes concerning relocation. The book argues that the Muslims in Antep especially local notables actively participated in the relocation.

The memoirs by Mitat Enç, shed light on the tensions which stem from the differences between Antep Muslim notables and the locus and role of Antep Muslims during the relocation process, all of which must be synchronically conceived both in the Armenian relocation and with the Armenian relocation. Nevertheless, the expression of Mr. Enç invalidates the narrative available in the book by Mr. Kurt concerning the local notable Muslims. Furthermore, the stories which Mr. Enç quotes from first-belt Armenians who immigrated to the United States necessitate the interrogation of the Armenian official historical argument on the basis of the genocide-massacre.

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<sup>46</sup> Enç, *Unending Night (Bitmeyen Gece)*, 167-168.

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