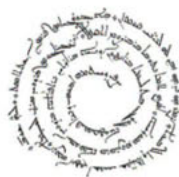


By the Light of a Candle



Analecta Isisiana: Ottoman and Turkish Studies

A co-publication with The Isis Press, Istanbul, the series consists of collections of thematic essays focused on specific themes of Ottoman and Turkish studies. These scholarly volumes address important issues throughout Turkish history, offering in a single volume the accumulated insights of a single author over a career of research on the subject.

By the Light of a Candle

**The Diaries of a Reserve Officer in the Ottoman
Army - First World War Diaries and Other
Records of the Period of 1915-1919**

By

Ragip Nurettin Ege

Translated by
Günes N. Ege-Akter

Prepared and Annotated by
Edward J. Erickson



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The Diaries and all original documents have been translated from the original Turkish. The introduction and connecting passages have been modified, sections elucidating the historical context have been added and the Diaries extensively annotated for English speaking readers.

ABOUT THE EDITORS

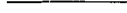
Dr. Güneş N. Ege-Akter was born in İstanbul and spent her early childhood in New York where her father Ragıp Nurettin Ege served as the first Cultural Attache to the United States of America of the Government of the Turkish Republic. After returning to İstanbul, Güneş Ege completed her high school studies at the American College for Girls. She subsequently graduated from Barnard College and obtained her medical degree from Harvard Medical School. Following post-graduate training in the United States and the United Kingdom, Dr. Ege settled in Toronto, Canada, practicing radiation oncology and nuclear medicine at the Princess Margaret Hospital affiliated with the University of Toronto. Her qualifications include FRCS, FRCR, FRCPC (RadOnc) FRCPC (NucMed). She has carried out original investigations and published extensively on the scintigraphic visualization of the lymphatic system. Following her retirement in 2001, Dr. Ege has been engaged with the family archives and has published three books. She lives in Toronto with her husband Turgut A. Akter

Dr. Edward J. Erickson retired from the United States Army as a lieutenant colonel of field artillery. During his military career he served in artillery and general staff assignments in the United States, Europe and the Middle East. He fought in the Gulf War of 1991 and in the invasion of Iraq in 2003. He returned to Baghdad, Iraq in 2007 working as Professor of Political Science at the Ministry of Defense Training and Development College. He has a PhD in history from the University of Leeds in the UK as well as two master's degrees in history and education. Dr. Erickson is widely recognized as an expert in Turkish military history and he has written four books and numerous articles about the Ottoman Army. He lives in his hometown of Norwich, New York with his wife Melanie, where he teaches world history at Norwich High School.

DEDICATION

In memory of my parents Ragıp and Nezahet N. Ege, with gratitude for carefully and lovingly preserving the family treasures, and to the memory of my sister Professor Emerita Seyhan N. Ege, who applauded my journey with the treasures every step of the way.

Güneş N. EGE-AKTER



In memory of my parents-in-law Larry and Ruth Sayles.

Edward J. ERICKSON

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The First World War Diaries and other personal documents of İlyas Ragıp which you are about to read shed further light on a tragic period of Ottoman history, through the first hand account of a Reserve Officer. How this book came about is also history, a family history and a story about fortuitous - or possibly predestined - coincidences, into which is woven my gratitude to all who have had a part in bringing this work to fruition.

My father İlyas Ragıp Nurettin, General Inspector of Primary Education, had just been appointed the first Cultural Attache to the United States of America of the ten-year old Turkish Republic at the time of my birth. Consequently our family comprising father, our mother Nezahet, our paternal grandmother Saliha, my older sister Seyhan and myself spent five years in New York, at 375 Riverside Drive, Apt. 7B, overlooking the Hudson River. With the onset of WW II, the Office of the Cultural Attache was closed and we returned to Istanbul on the last freighter to sail the dangerous waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

While our childhood was overshadowed by the anxieties of World War II, my sister and I were also aware that something very significant had happened, a rupture had occurred with the birth of the 'Türkiye Cumhuriyeti' or the Turkish Republic, which came about in 1923, whereby a rich culture had been left behind; nevertheless, not to be forgotten or forsaken. This conviction of our parents was realized when our father sat us down at a table dimly lit by a bulb, hanging from the high ceiling and shaded with blue paper to conform with wartime blackouts, and started teaching us the old Ottoman Turkish alphabet and script, which would be the keys to our heritage. As an eight-year-old I was intrigued by the script that moved from right to left and by the importance of the number of dots above and below the ripples and loops that made up the script, but I had little idea about the family treasures it would reveal for me some day.

The father I remember so vividly was not a soldier nor an officer, but an educator, a biology teacher at the High School for Boys in Kızıltoprak, near Kadıköy on the Asiatic side of Istanbul. His students would often come to our home in Erenköy with its expansive garden of eight acres, which we shared with our grandparents, where he would tutor them while they picked wild flowers to study and paste in their homework scrap-books. Seyhan and I acquired gardening skills early on, were busy with piano lessons and going to school at the American College for Girls in Arnavutköy on the opposite,

European side of the Bosphorus. We were hardly preoccupied with family history and the heritage with which our parents wished to entrust us, other than with the story of our parents' twelve-year courtship, which we were old enough to regard as being quite romantic.

After finishing school in Istanbul, both Seyhan and I returned to the United States for further studies. What was foremost on everyone's mind was our future and prospective careers and not the tragic events of three decades earlier. After our father retired, he and mother established a school in the big historic house on the expansive property, an enterprise they nurtured with passion and energy while Seyhan and I, far away on another continent, were becoming respectively an organic chemist and a physician.

Our father Ragıp Nurettin Ege passed away in 1960 and our mother Nezahet Nurettin Ege continued to manage and expand the school. We were equally consumed by the demands of our own careers. It was only after our mother passed away in 1994 and I started going through the very many nooks and crannies, cupboards, chests of drawers, and steamer trunks in the historic house, built at the turn of the century, where I was born, and which had been our homestead for sixty-three years, that I came upon family treasures, some of which dated back one-hundred-and-fifty years.

My rusty old Ottoman reading skills came to life as I struggled to grasp the nature of what I held in my hands, which included three small diaries, the twelve year courtship correspondence between our parents, many other letters, documents, postcards from the student İlyas Ragıp studying in Lausanne, and stacks of photographs of boys and girls, men and women of all ages, in elaborate garments and stiff poses I had never previously laid eyes upon. I had discovered what our parents intended entrusting to us, as they diligently tutored us back during the early days of WW II.

It was with tears and a deep sense of awe that I turned over the cover of the little leather bound *Agenda Internationale 1915* and started stammering through my father's brief opening biographical sketch. I knew then that the Diary was part of our national history and that it would be my duty to see that it reached a wide audience. Undoubtedly, without my parents' foresight in providing me with the rudimentary tools, I would not have had the courage to venture forth.

After retiring in April 2001, I embarked on a journey through uncharted terrain. Other than the stamina, perseverance and discipline acquired in the course of a medical career, I was ill prepared for the task ahead. While transcribing into modern Turkish the three diaries, several letters, documents and photograph inscriptions, I poured diligently over each word and gave it my best effort. But I was not equipped for the challenge. A chance encounter in

Toronto going back twenty years blessed me with the acquaintance of the late İsmail Otar Bey. In 2002, in his ninetieth year he would generously set aside valuable hours for me every time I turned up in Istanbul with another draft, thus ensuring the accuracy I would not have been capable of otherwise. İsmail Bey followed with genuine and lively interest the gestation of *Babamin Emanetleri*. Regrettably he passed away at ninety-four years of age, six months before the publication of the book; my affectionate gratitude to him will endure in the Dedication of the book.

Even before *Babamin Emanetleri* appeared in print in Turkey, it seemed inevitable that the historiography it encompassed should be available to the English speaking public, so translating it became my next mission. While I sat at the computer, trying to bring the diaries to life in English, I was bewildered by my presumption in thinking that with no background other than my medical training and vocabulary, I could do justice to an historic and military account. Yet I sensed that the work was meant to go forward. This time fortuitous circumstances put me in touch with Lt. Col. Edward Erickson. With his familiarity with Turkey and Turkish, and particularly his scholarship regarding the Ottoman period surrounding WW I, I could not have been blessed with a more compatible co-author. Without Dr. Erickson's enthusiastic, knowledgeable and congenial collaboration, this work would probably have languished as a draft without a future.

When we were at a loss, Major Mesut Uyar of the Turkish Armed Forces provided the English equivalent of Turkish military terms, offered invaluable assistance, and introduced me to Sinan Kuneralp Bey of Isis Ltd.

My colleague and friend Professor Gernot P. Tilz of Graz, Austria has kindly elucidated details with regard to the two decorations İlyas Ragıp received in 1918, from the King of Prussia and from Charles, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary. It is a pleasure to acknowledge his assistance while recalling that our acquaintance came about through a mutual love of music a very long time ago at Westminster Hospital in London, England.

It is indeed auspicious that unbeknownst to me, our publisher Sinan Kuneralp Bey and I apparently were in London, England at the same time, those many years ago. His father, His Excellency the late Zeki Kuneralp was the Turkish Ambassador to The Court of St. James and I, in my humble capacity as a young oncologist-in-training, trying to serve Turkish patients coming to London to seek treatment, was privileged to have met this most distinguished and gracious gentleman who also knew my father and his many contributions.

As always, I am indebted to my husband Turgut A. Akter whose skills and patience are for me an invaluable asset. His dedication has so far seen me through three books.

So ends the story of *By The Light of A Candle* as we begin the historical account between its covers.

N. Ege-Akter

I. WHO KNOWS WHAT DAYBREAK WILL BRING

SERVICE IN THE EAST - HISTORICAL BACKDROP

War in the Caucasus

The story of the Sarajevo Crisis and events of the fateful summer of 1914 that took Europe into the First World War need not be reiterated here. Suffice it to say the alliance system did not include the Ottoman Empire and it was not dragged immediately into the war. However, the Ottomans did sign a limited scope Secret Treaty of Alliance with Wilhemine Germany on August 2, 1914 that aligned the Ottoman state with the Germans. The treaty did not require the Ottomans to enter the war and served mainly to alienate them from the Entente. Nevertheless, on the same day, the Ottoman Ministry of War declared mobilization of its military forces. Over the next three months, the empire recalled its soldiers, concentrated its poorly prepared army, and laid plans for offensive operations in the Caucasus and in the Sinai.

In the fall of 1914, the Ottoman Army comprised thirty-six combat infantry divisions and several cavalry divisions, most of which were centered around Istanbul, the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles in the First and Second Armies. The Third Army remained in the Caucasus and prepared to attack the Russians. The Fourth Army in Palestine made preparations to attack the British and rupture its communications at the Suez Canal. War broke out on November 2, 1914 and in the Caucasus the Russians launched an immediate attack on the Ottoman positions at Köprüköy. As winter closed in battles raged in the rugged terrain along the frontier north east of Erzurum.

The Ottoman Minister of War, Enver Paşa, decided to launch a bold encirclement of the Russian army along the Caucasian frontier and force it to surrender in a climactic battle of annihilation. He was inspired by Hindenburg's recent success at Tannenberg and hoped to cause a collapse of Russian morale leading to mass surrender. In this vein, he ordered two of three Ottoman army corps in the Third Army to envelop the enemy by seizing the key town of Sarıkamış. In freezing weather on December 22 the poorly equipped Ottomans began a seventy-five kilometer march and reached Sarıkamış three days later. However, instead of collapsing, the Russians reacted with alacrity and fought with determination. Rather than surrender the Russians counterattacked and caught the Third Army itself in a Russian encirclement. A disastrous Ottoman retreat followed that destroyed the two corps involved (the IX and X Corps) in the attack. Ottoman casualties were

staggering and totaled about 50,000 men of the 75,000 who had attacked. Most of the losses were in the infantry, who had borne the bulk of the fighting. The operational and tactical situation in the Third Army area on January 8, 1915 was grim. The army was short of trained men, ammunition, and much of its equipment had been lost in the retreat. As a result, over the next several months, the army rushed replacements forward, many of which were incompletely trained, but who were desperately needed at the front. The author, İlyas Ragib, a newly arrived reserve officer candidate, was immediately caught up in this chaotic situation.

Ottoman Mobilization and Training

The Ottoman mobilization system was adapted from the German model that had proven successful against the French in 1870. All Ottoman men were conscripted into the active forces for periods of two to three years and then served sixteen years in the reserves and a further seven years in the territorial forces. Prior to the Balkan War of 1912, Ottoman reserves were organized into conventional divisions and army corps. However, because of their poor performance in that war, after 1913 all reservists reported to their depots and were assigned as individuals to bring the combat forces up to war strength. Under this system all Ottoman men were registered and were required to report to depots in the event of mobilization. In 1914, the Ottoman military was engaged in a massive reconstitution effort to rebuild its army, which had been badly defeated in the First Balkan War.

The Ottoman military was separated into a field army of combat forces and a system of inspectorates composed of military districts that mobilized, equipped and trained soldiers. In each military district, soldiers initially reported to depot regiments and battalions that pushed men into the combat regiments of the field army. When the war began this system transitioned into a training and replacement system that provided a continuous source of new soldiers for the army. The events of this diary concern the training and replacement system of the Tenth Military District, which had its headquarters in the central Anatolian city of Sivas. The Tenth Military District was the home of the Ottoman X Army Corps and its component infantry divisions: the 30th, 31st, and 32nd Infantry Divisions. During the 1914 mobilization, the X Corps was scheduled to completely mobilize its divisions in 29 days. However, reflecting its low readiness levels and shortages of all kinds, it actually took 42 days to mobilize its forces.

The Tenth Military District was heavily populated and by 1915 had sent 205,160 men from the year groups 1869-1893 (1285-1309) to active service in the field armies. Remaining in the personnel and training system the district had 16,048 men from the 1894 (1310) year group who it was preparing for war. Initially these men were assigned to training centers for six weeks of basic soldier training that included drill, marching, and marksmanship. From there the men were sent to depot regiments (organized into subordinate battalions) for a further fifteen days of branch specific training that included tactical training such as entrenching, patrolling and the art of the attack. The regiments in this study provided infantry replacements for the infantry divisions of the X Corps.

Sivas was a hub of logistical activity and contained hospitals, magazines, and supply dumps of food and equipment. The city of Erzincan lay one hundred kilometers to the east of Sivas and was also a logistical hub. One hundred kilometers beyond Erzincan lay the heavily armed fortress of Erzurum, the war zone, and direct combat with the Russians. Most of the population of the area was Muslim, but there was a substantial Armenian minority, some of whom were organized into revolutionary committees that were overtly hostile to the Ottoman Empire.

The Ottoman Army trained its regular officers in the German style at a military academy called the Harp Okulu. However, the number of regular officers was small and insufficient to provide either the peacetime or the mobilized forces with enough leaders to run the army. Consequently, the Ottomans selected young men of promise, usually university or academic high school graduates, and trained them as officer candidates. Upon successful completion of their training the candidates were commissioned as reserve officers (*yedek subay*) in the active army. In this capacity they performed similar duties as regular officers of the same grade. The author of this diary, İlyas Ragıp, was one of these reserve officer candidates.

Mobilization in the late summer and fall of 1914 provided, oddly, a surplus of manpower that was not immediately needed in the active force structure. Some men were actually sent home to help with the harvest and to await being called to active service with the army. Other men entered the replacement system for training in specialized skills or as officer candidates. İlyas Ragıp was registered with the Sultan Ahmed Recruiting Office (in Istanbul) and was mobilized on August 3, 1914. His unit of assignment was the Third Provisional Battalion of the Reserve Officer Candidate Regiment. It is unclear what his activities were during the fall of 1914; however, in this assignment he would have been taught the basics of officership, including leadership, drill, small unit tactics, map reading, marksmanship training, basic

administration, writing orders, and other skills necessary to command a platoon of fifty men. Upon completion of this preliminary phase of training, the candidates were then sent to the active army for further practical on-the-job training and observation to determine whether they were fit for commissioning as reserve officers. İlyas Ragıp evidently finished the preliminary officer training phase and was then assigned to the Ulukışla Depot Battalion for further processing. He was issued winter clothing (for obvious reasons) In the depot battalion, he received orders for the Ottoman Third Army in Erzurum. He was paid as a corporal and then sent on his way to the Caucasus to begin the practical application phase of his training. The military story of the diary begins with a description of his final days with his family while assigned to the Ulukışla Depot Battalion.

Historical Context

There are very few First World War diaries from lower ranking Ottoman officers in print today. The most well known and readily available are Gallipoli 1915, Bloody Ridge (Lone Pine) Diary of Lieutenant Mehmed Fasih (printed in English by Denizler Kitabevi, Istanbul 2003) and Çanakkale Raporu (Gallipoli Report) by Binbaşı (Major) Halis Bey (printed in Turkish by Arma Yayınları, Istanbul 1975). Both of these diaries deal with combat operations in the frontline trenches and offer insights into how Ottoman officers planned and fought the war at battalion level and below.

The diary of İlyas Ragıp presents a different face of the Ottoman Army at war in that İlyas Ragıp was assigned to depot or training regiments in the Caucasian theater. It offers an important contribution to the extant historiography by illuminating how Ottoman officers in the training camps trained their men for assignment to combat divisions. In this regard, İlyas Ragıp's diary compliments the diaries of Mehmed Fasih and Halis Bey. This diary is important because it provides a picture of how Ottoman officers worked on a daily basis that is vastly at odds with the contemporary western view of these men. All too often Ottoman officers are characterized in western histories as lazy, corrupt, and unprofessional. Clearly this was not the case with İlyas Ragıp (or Major Halis and Lieutenant Mehmed Fasih for that matter) and he was a representative member of his class.

İlyas Ragıp was a hard working and honest officer, whose activities show a willingness to take responsibility for his men in training them for combat. He was also scrupulous in financial matters and he was diligent in keeping up the records of his men. Throughout this period, he worked hard to

prepare his conscripts by training them in individual skills such as marksmanship and in collective tactical skills such as patrolling and offensive operations. As any officer would, İlyas Ragıb was proud of their successes and records this in his diary. He was acutely concerned over the ever-present problem of desertion, which plagued his regiment as well as the army as a whole. He was intensely patriotic and was clearly a nationalist. Often İlyas Ragıb gave lectures and classes on Turanism and contemporary Turkish politics to his peers and to his men. He trained his men hard and he marched, shot, and maneuvered with them. Likewise, he was inoculated, waited for mail, and was interested in news of the war. İlyas Ragıb appears to have been immersed in his work as an officer in the Ottoman Army.

There was also a lighter side to this man and he enjoyed music, playing backgammon, and occasionally imbibing too much alcohol. He liked to read, he had a wide circle of friends, and he often thought of his family and wrote to them. İlyas Ragıb mourned the loss of his comrades and deeply felt the loss of his younger brother. Like all soldiers he was frequently hungry and eating was always something to savor. He was a keen observer of the land through which his duties took him, he was a part of many historic events, and he met quite a number of notable people. In essence, İlyas Ragıb was a typical soldier of the First World War and his diary reflects the idea that Ottoman soldiers were not so different from British, French, German, or Russian soldiers.

In events not recorded in the diary occurring later in February 1918, İlyas Ragıb was awarded the German Army's Iron Cross, which indicates that he continued to perform his duties in a creditable manner. After the war, he became involved in the nationalist resistance movement in southwestern Turkey and his written words reveal how committed he was to the cause of liberation. İlyas Ragıb was a combat veteran of the Balkan Wars and the First World War and a participant in the nationalist resistance during the War of Independence. He did his duty and served his country in arduous circumstances which in the final analysis and as this diary shows, marked him as a man of honor and courage.

Edward J. Erickson

Soap Box Carried by Ottoman Officers
Note diary entry May 28, 1915



Fig. 1a. Frontal view with hook on lid



Fig. 1b. Open soap box shows perforations at the bottom
for the drainage of water.

THE FAMILY AND THE DIARIES

İlyas Ragıp Nureddin was the second eldest of five children born to Dr. Abdurrahman and Saliha Nureddin. Dr. Abdurrahman Nureddin, one of four brothers, was born in 1857 in the khanate of Kazan, a Muslim enclave in the territories of the Russian Empire. His father Nureddin Efendi was the leader of the Muslim community and Abdurrahman was home schooled by his father before attending medrese, the local theological high school, which was basically the only type of high school at the time. In view of the growing threats to the Muslim communities the young man came to Istanbul, seeking refuge in the more secure Ottoman territories. He entered the University of Istanbul Faculty of Medicine, graduated in 1881 with Diploma Number 118, fluent in Russian, Arabic, Turkish and French. His younger brother Ali Nureddin followed in his footsteps and also became a physician. His next brother Emin Nureddin chose to remain in Kazan while the youngest Lemi Nureddin served in the Ottoman Palace as Russian - Turkish interpreter to the administration.

Şerife Saliha was born in 1863 in Bahçesaray in the Crimea, also a khanate. Her father Hacı Hüseyin Efendi was as well the leader of the local Muslim community and had been to the Hajj in Mecca as the title 'Hacı' signifies. She was the youngest of two boys and two girls and she and her sister, together with their father immigrated to Istanbul similarly to avoid persecution. Undoubtedly the members of these minority communities under Russian rule were in contact with each other but it appears that the young Abdurrahman and Saliha met in Istanbul and were married after Abdurrahman qualified as a physician. His first duties were in Trabzon, on the Black Sea Coast, where their first child and son Tevfik was born in 1884. A few years later Dr. Abdurrahman Nureddin returned to Istanbul and went into private practice; İlyas Ragıp was born there in 1888. Shortly afterwards Dr. Abdurrahman Bey was appointed Medical Officer of Health to the Province of Aydın, on the west coast of the Anatolia peninsula and the family moved between the cities of Manisa where their third son Mustafa Münir was born in 1891, then to Tire where their youngest son Hüseyin Enver was born in 1895, and finally settled in İzmir where their youngest child and only daughter Sacide Belkis was born in 1898. Dr. Abdurrahman's younger brother Dr. Ali Nureddin was also practicing medicine in İzmir which was the scene of a happy childhood for the two families and eight cousins.

Very early on Tevfik Nureddin expressed an interest in the nationalistic movements of the minority Muslim communities remaining in Imperial Russia. He travelled frequently to these communities, was fluent in Russian,

and eventually established a publishing house and bookstore - (Türk Yurdu Kütüphanesi) Turkish Homeland Library in Istanbul where he started publishing (Çocuk Dünyası Mecmuası) *The Childrens' World Magazine*, which became the most prominent publication for children during the period of the constitutional government of the Ottoman Empire and continued to be published for several decades.

Ragib, four years younger and while still in his teens, started writing articles for the local newspaper. He had an aptitude for music and played his mother's piano. He joined his elder brother in Istanbul where he completed his high school education, graduating from Vefa Secondary School, and aspiring to a medical career like his father, he entered the University of Istanbul Faculty of Medicine. Münir, three years younger was also a bright and studious lad. While still in grade school he brought home a citation and prize in mathematics, dated 31 August 320/1904, which might have been celebrated with a family photograph. (Fig. 2)

He then finished high school with distinction and went to Istanbul to attend law school.

Enver, the youngest son spent part of his childhood in the Crimea with his maternal uncle Halil Seyyid Efendi who remained behind when his father and two sisters left for Istanbul. He owned and operated an extensive orchard in the fertile lands and temperate climate of Bahçesaray, exporting fresh fruit to the aristocratic families in Europe. Little Enver seemed to thrive in the wide expanse of the gardens and orchards, under the doting of his childless uncle and aunt. Back in İzmir, Sacide, the youngest and only daughter of the family, was debilitated by tuberculous osteomyelitis in the face of which her physician father was quite helpless. Despite her chronic illness, little Sacide managed to maintain a lively presence within the family, amongst her devoted brothers and cousins.

During Ragib's third year in medical school, the Ottoman Ministry of Education established a bursary for students to study in Switzerland. Ragib was aware of the financial constraints faced by his father, who had received honors and decorations from the Ottoman Sultan for services rendered during an outbreak of hemorrhagic diarrhea and a major earthquake in the Province of Aydın in 1901, but had limited resources for educating his five children. Furthermore tempted by the opportunity to study abroad, Ragib took and passed the scholarship exam, withdrew from medical school and in September 1909, together with a group of seven other students embarked on an arduous journey, arriving in Lausanne where he settled into a pension and registered at the University of Lausanne to commence his studies in the natural sciences.



Fig. 2. Thirteen year old Münir with his parents Saliha Hanım and Dr. Abdurrahman Bey. On the piano behind them is a photograph of Ragıp taken in 1903 while in high school.

Ragıp's time in Lausanne was not just spent with academic studies. He was very active in establishing a hostel and center for Ottoman Students, which still stands today. He carried on an extensive post-card correspondence with his beloved little sister Sacide back in İzmir, travelled through Switzerland and parts of France, and translated appropriate stories and items for children from the French literature for his brother Tevfik's magazine. While in Lausanne, Ragıp was inspired to write the text of a march set to the music of a Swiss folk tune, (Osmancık Yurdu) 'Homeland of Little Osman', which subsequently served as a rallying cry for Ottoman troops. As we shall see, his nationalistic inclinations would be manifest throughout a great part of his life. While Ragıp was still in Lausanne, Enver, with the support of their uncle in the Crimea, joined him to pursue his studies of French and then German, subsequently using his linguistic skills in his career in communications and intelligence.

In 1912 Ragıp Nureddin completed his studies and returned to İzmir with his University of Lausanne Diploma. Then he voluntarily participated in the conflict in the Balkans. He was wounded in his foot and returned home on medical leave. He was initially assigned to teach biology in Kastamonu in central Anatolia, where he ran afoul with local authorities for teaching the theory of evolution. He was then transferred to Bursa and shortly thereafter in October 1913 he was appointed Inspector of Ottoman Students in Paris. During this period his postcard correspondence continued with his beloved Sacide whose health was failing. By this time Saliha Hanım and Sacide had moved to Istanbul, hoping to find more effective treatments for Sacide, while Dr. Abdurrahman Nureddin was anticipating his retirement from his position of Medical Officer of Health in İzmir and would serve briefly in the same capacity in Bursa.

1914 was a sad year; Sacide succumbed in April (**Fig. 3**), not very long after her cousin also died of tuberculosis. War was declared and Ragıp was recalled from Paris in August and dispatched to military school for training and preparation for his assignment as a reserve officer in the Ottoman Army. His brothers Tevfik and Münir were also enlisted. (**Fig. 4**). This is the point at which the diaries begin and carry us forward to August 1916.

A word about the Diaries. As we shall see, throughout the different phases of his military service, through thick and thin, amongst his many peers, his Diary served as Ragıp's closest companion and confidante. Youthful exuberances, indiscretions, tragedies, the unexpected and the mundane,

anxieties and responsibilities were shared with these ever present little date-books. And these records reveal for us a first hand account of some realities which do not always find their way into official records.



Fig. 3. Sacide Nureddin, fall of 1913. On the back of the photograph is written in İlyas Ragıb's handwriting: My beloved little Sacide who from her youngest years carried the burden of a devastating disease flew away to eternity Friday evening April 10, 1914, leaving a deep wound in our hearts. May she receive Allah's gracious mercy.



Fig. 4. Dr. Abdurrahman Nureddin with his sons in 1914. In front, seated on his father's right is Tevfik, Ragıp stands behind Tevfik, Mûnir stands behind his father and Enver in civilian clothes stands between his brothers. The military headgear they wear, called 'enveriye' was specifically designed by Enver Paşa so the troops could prostrate themselves in prayer and touch their foreheads to the prayer rug which would not have been possible with a military cap with a brim.

The 1915 Diary is a small, pocket sized, leather-bound date-book. On the cover, embossed in gold are the inscriptions both in Ottoman Turkish "Muhtıra Defteri" and in French "Agenda International 1915". From the first page we gather that these date-books were printed in Istanbul by Hagop Matteosian, and the headings are in Turkish, French, Greek and Armenian, indicating that they served the many minorities who lived within the borders of the Empire. 1915 being the seventeenth anniversary of the printing, it is apparent that these small items were popular and one cannot help but wonder how many more of them might be tucked away somewhere, to shed further light on a period of history the echoes of which reverberate today. The information provided in French in the first seventeen pages are of a very practical nature such as postal rates, postal insurance rates, postal money order and telegraph rates, currency exchange rates, interest rates, conversions of weights and measures, distances, phases of the moon, eclipses, latitudes and longitudes. A more condensed version of this information is provided in Turkish at the back of the diary. The dating recorded in the diaries reflects the several calendars which were in use at the time. At the top of each entry page the only constant is the day of the week. Otherwise the dates are recorded in old Ottoman Turkish, according to the Hicrî Muslim calendar month based on the lunar cycle and the year of the Hegira of the Prophet Muhammed from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD, hence the dates indicated in 1300s, referred to as Rumî do not correspond to the Gregorian calendar and conversion of dates are only approximate. The dates of the Gregorian, or western calendar are recorded in French, usually 13 days ahead of the local calendar which is noted as the Rumî calendar. The Greek and Armenian notations follow the Rumî calendar, with indications of Holy Days and other notable events. Similar notable events of the Ottoman Calendar are indicated in bold letters. The 1916 Diary is much more simple and does not contain any information other than the headings for each day and Muslim Holy Days.

İlyas Ragıb's entries are according to the Gregorian dates, but from time to time he will refer to the Rumî New Year. This was a time when western influence was bringing about changes and allowances must be made for disparities in dates arising from the simultaneous operation of two calendar systems. The reader will recognize these junctures throughout the diaries. Starting in March 1840, the calendar used within the Ottoman Empire which took March 1 as the first day of the year, gradually adjusted so that by January 1, 1918 it was synchronized with the western calendar.

The Diaries and other documents reflect not only day to day events of historic interest but also the culture of the time. An attempt has been made to retain these nuances to give the reader a flavor of the culture unique to the

place and time. The use of florid language is part of polite discourse, even amongst the unsophisticated, and although the meaning conveyed might not have been altered by eliminating these touches and resorting to a more straightforward translation, the cultural authenticity would have been lost. Rather than being an awkward translation, such expressions reflect a deliberate intent to convey the practices of the place and time. I hope the reader will come away with more than some historic facts and a sense of having genuinely been transported to a different land and era.

In the course of this record, İlyas Ragıp Nureddin will gradually be transformed into Ragıp Nurettin Ege. This is because the early use of the letters 'b' and 'dd' were based on usage in the Ottoman alphabet and script. With the adoption of the Latin alphabet in 1928 the consonants 'p' and 'tt' were substituted. Up until the new 'Surname Law' was passed by the new Government of the Turkish Republic in 1935, families used their father's generic name, hence the patronymic 'Nureddin' which was the family surname. At this point Ragıp Nurettin looked back to his paternal ancestors the 'Agayeff's from the Kazan region of Russia and chose as the surname of the family the Turkish equivalent of 'Ege', which means 'master, owner or big brother'. And finally, while anticipating the birth of a child, family members usually chose a boy or girls name with which the newborn infant would be christened as the umbilical cord was being cut. Eventually another name would be chosen but the 'umbilical name' is always recorded as part of the identity of the child. These initial names are usually associated with the Prophets. 'İlyas' was Ragıp's very first name.

Terms frequently encountered such as Bey, Beyefendi, Efendi, denote 'Sir' or 'Mister'; Beyefendi may be used in lieu of a gentleman's name. Ağa denotes a 'lord' or 'master' or 'local landowner'. It may also be used to address an illiterate person. Hanım is the female equivalent of Bey. Annotations at the beginning of some entries as well as a brief Glossary and Appendix provide the reader with further context and insight into events, conditions and personalities, cultural practices, as well as other matters of interest and some Turkish words without a precise equivalent in English.

Let us now turn over the cover of the *1915 Agenda International* and start the journey.

Güneş N. Ege-Akter

II. CALLED TO DUTY

1915 DIARY

My Autobiography

The Battle of Yenice (or Yanitsa) was fought in what is now northern Greece on 2 November 1912 between the Greek Army of Thessaly and the Ottoman VIII Provisional Corps. The Greeks conducted a brilliant flanking attack that broke the Ottoman position. The loss of the Yenice position opened the way to Salonika, which itself fell six days later.

My father, Abdurrahman Nureddin Bey, is Medical Officer of Health for İzmir. I was born in 1304/1888 in Istanbul and spent my childhood years in Nazilli, Tire, Manisa and İzmir in the province of Aydın. I attended the İzmir Senior High School for seven years and received my diploma from Vefa Senior High School in Istanbul. Having passed the entrance examinations, I entered medical school. Following the Declaration of the Constitutional Government, I was amongst a group of students who qualified for scholarship support for higher education in Europe. In September 1325/1909 I started my studies in natural sciences at the University of Lausanne. Upon the start of war in the Balkans, I returned home and voluntarily participated in the conflict in Yenice Vardar where I was wounded in my foot and returned home to İzmir. Following my medical discharge, I was assigned to teach biology at the Kastamonu High School, where I remained for three months and was subsequently to be transferred to the Harput Senior High School, which I declined. I returned to Istanbul and after teaching at the Bursa High School, I was appointed by the Ministry of Education. Inspector General of Students in Paris. I assumed my duties there in October 1329/1913. I served in that capacity until mobilization. In accordance with the new conscription law, I have been inducted into the army as a Reserve Officer candidate and am assigned to go to Erzurum. That's where I'm heading.

January 22, 1331/1915, Thursday

Sivas

İyas Ragib

Sâliha Hanım, wife of Dr. Abdurrahman Bey, İzmir Medical Officer of Health Bursa, at dwelling No 5 across from (Acem Fırını) The Persian Bakery on (Cafer Ağa Hanı Sokağı) Cafer Ağa Inn Street in the district of Daye Hatun in Mahmud Paşa, Istanbul

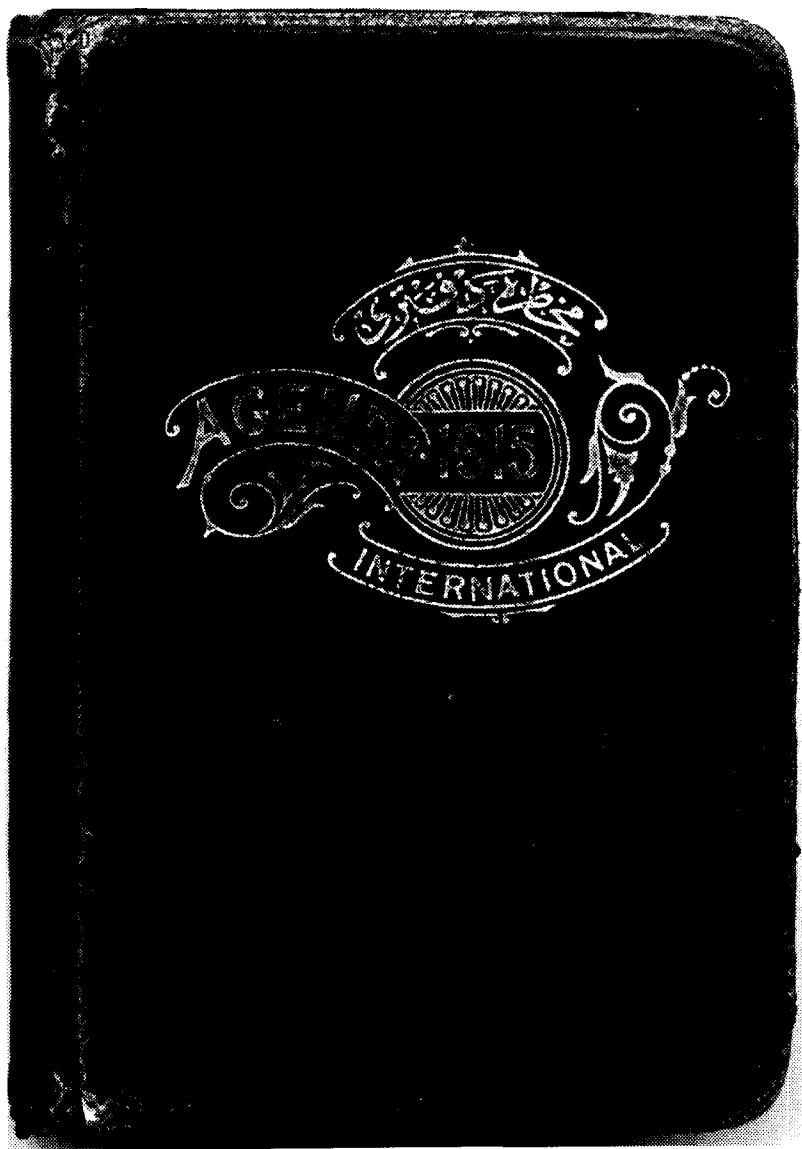
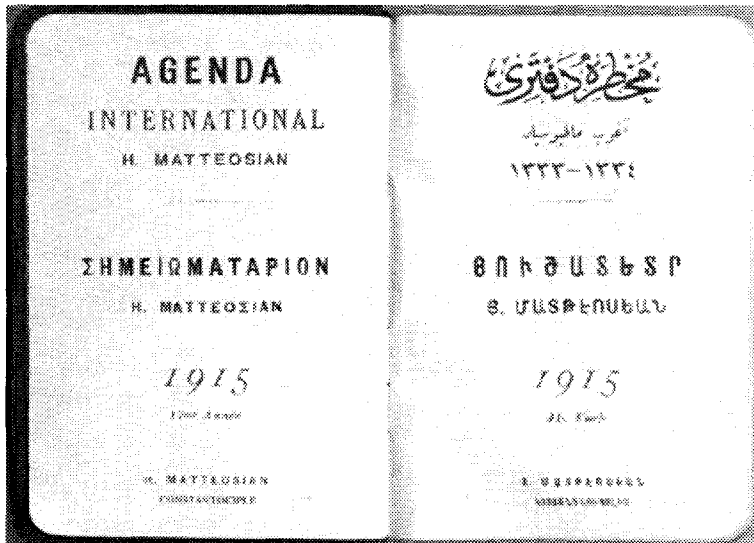


Fig. 5. Cover of *Agenda International* 1915



DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE DES POSTES TÉLÉGRAPHES ET TÉLÉPHONES			
Rue Meydanlık (Eski-Zapché), Stamboul.			
Bureau central des Postes de Stamboul. Rue Meydanlık.			
Bureau central des Postes de Galata. Rue Médjéssé.			
Bureau central des Télégraphes de Stamboul. Rue Meydanlık.			
Bureau central des Télégraphes de Pera. Grande Rue (Galata Serai).			
Bureau spécial pour les Boîtes Postales, Place Yeni-Djani, Stamboul.			
TARIF POSTAL OTTOMAN			
Service interne			
Lettres affranchies, pour chaque 15 grammes	1	—	—
» non affranchies »	15	2	—
Cartes postales simples	—	—	20
» avec réponse payée	—	—	1
» locales pour Constantinople et ses environs	—	—	10
Journaux, pour chaque 50 grammes (poids max. 4000 gr.)	—	—	2
Imprimés	—	—	—
(Poids max. 2000 gr.)	—	—	10 (a)
» par mer, pour chaque 15 gr.	—	—	10 (a)
» pour d'autres cas, » 50 »	—	—	10 (a)
Papiers d'affaires	—	—	10 (a)
(Poids max. 2000 gr.)	—	—	10 (a)
» par mer, pour chaque 15 gr.	—	—	10 (a)
» pour d'autres cas, » 50 »	—	—	10 (a)
Échantillons de marchandises	—	—	10 (a)
(Entre deux bureaux du littoral, chaudières jusqu'à 75 gr.)	—	—	10 (a)
(Poids de 50 gr. (b) » pour d'autres cas, » 50 »	—	—	10 (a)
Droit fixe de recommandation	—	—	1
Droit fixe d'avis de réception	—	—	1
(*) Ces taxes sont réduites à 20 paras et 1 piastre pour les lettres échangées par terre ou par mer, entre deux bureaux du littoral qui disposent des moyens de communication, soit par terre, soit par mer.			
(a) Les envois ne dépassant pas 30 grammes, sont soumis à une taxe réduite de 5 paras.			
(b) Les envois dépassant le poids de 250 gr., sont soumis à une taxe de 20 paras par 50 gr. jusqu'au poids maximum de 2000 gr.			
Service international.			
	Pays de l'Union	Pays hors l'Union	Pst. Par. Pst. Par.
Lettres affranchies, pour chaque première unité de 20 grammes	1	—	2
Pour chaque unité suivante de 10 grammes	0 50	1 20	—
Cartes postales simples	0 20	1	—
» avec réponse payée	1	2	—
Journaux et imprimés, chaque 50 gr. (Max. 2000 gr.)	0 10	0 20	—
Papiers d'affaires, pour chaque 50 gr. (» 2000 »)	0 10 (a)	0 20 (b)	—
Échantillons de marchandises, chaque 50 gr. (» 250 »)	0 10 (c)	0 20 (d)	—
Droit fixe de recommandation	1	—	—
» d'avis de réception	1	—	—
(a) Minimum de perception 1 piastre. (c) Minimum de perception 20 paras	—	—	—
(b) » » » 2 » (d) » » » 1 piastre.	—	—	—

Fig. 6. Front pages of 1915 Diary

— زحمت عالم —
 پرورم از یس بذر به سرطوبی عیال و صبه نورالدین
 فکدر - تولدم استانبول تاریخ توأم ۹۰۰
 زمان صبا و می آید بهم دلا تله نازلی، برده
 همیشه از موره بگردم -
 از میرلعدا بسده بدی سه بودم،
 وفا اعدا بدین شهادت نام می آله رفه
 با ساقه طبعه مکتبه کردم اعلان
 نشره طبعی و شفاقت آوردن به اعزام
 اولونان طله آراسته سابقه اشتراک
 (۹۰۵) سنه اولنده بسو بمرده ده
 لوزان دارالفنون علوم طبیه شفاقت
 دوام با شلدم، (۹۰۸) سنه سی
 بالغان محاربه شفاقت اعلانی آورده برده
 حمله کله راک سدر نیکه مرتبه شوش
 طبیبه سیکم وار دار محاربه کونطلی بود
 اشتراک و ایا محمدن یا آله رفه از موره
 دهندهم، بعد التاوی استانبول

کلام و قلمونی سلطانیه علوم طبیه
 تعلیمه نعیمه اید بیدم - اداره ادب
 آی تدبیرین صوگرا ضرر یوت اعدا بدین
 نقی اولوندم ضبط قبول ایدم
 استانبول عودت به مدرس سلطانیه
 طبیبان تعلیمه نعیمه اید بیدم - اداره
 بولونند و قدر ضرر یوت (۹۰۹) سنه سی
 نشریه اولنده صراف نظارتک یا آله رفه
 طله سنه فتنه نعیمه اید بیدم
 سدر کله قدر او آله رفه قائم بکلیض
 صوگرا قونی موجب احتیاطی عیال
 نامزدی اول رفه آوردن آله رفه
 شهادت ارفه در مرتبه اوام
 کید بیوردم -
 ۹۰۰ لوزان تاریخ
 سیواس
 بیخنده
 ایسی رفه

Fig. 7a. İlyas Ragıb's brief biographical sketch. (See page.31)

In the event that I am killed in action, I kindly request from our battalion commander that this be returned to my family at:

(Türk Yurdu Kütüphanesi) Turkish Homeland Bookstore at No 77 Bâb-ı âlî Avenue

The monetary units were the lira made up of 100 kuruş and the kuruş made up of 100 para. Not surprisingly there has been significant devaluation of the kuruş and the lira since WWI and the para has disappeared altogether.

Künye, for which there does not seem to be an exact English equivalent, is the personal registry entry of a soldier. This constitutes a brief description of the soldier including rank and branch, name or nick-name, father's name, place of origin which is not always place of birth, brief physical description, year of birth, date of joining the unit, important events during his stay in the unit such as awards, punishments, serious illness and when the person is assigned to another unit or dies, at which time the künye is closed with the date of departure and reason. Künye Defteri is the log book, containing this information for all the troops.

İlyas Ragıp Efendi, son of Abdurrahman, date of birth 1304/1888 registered with the Sultan Ahmed Recruiting Office, date of entry into the Academy, August 3, 1330/1914. Registration No 662

Director General of Military Academic Training, 396

In his possession: 1 greatcoat, 1 jacket and pants, 1 pair of shoes, 1 headgear, 1 pair of wool socks, 1 pair of gloves, 1 huntsman's vest, 1 water canteen, 1 bread bag, 1 small blanket. Only ten items. Company Commander

Expenses from Ulukışla to Erzurum of four-hundred-nine kuruş and thirty para have been paid. İlyas Ragıp Efendi, Reserve Officer candidate whose künye is noted above, has been paid his salary up till the end of the thirty-first day of the the present month and his daily wages for the thirty-three days starting immediately thereafter. Consequently this document will certify that, from the cessation of his daily wages till his appointment and commencing with his joining his detachment, he is entitled to a corporal's monthly salary of twenty-eight-and-a-half kuruş.

31 December 1330/1914 Accountant; Signed on behalf of the Regimental Commander

January 12, 1915 Tuesday

The city of Erzurum was the headquarters of the Ottoman Third Army. It was also a very modern fortress and the lynchpin of the Ottoman defenses of the Caucasus. It was extremely well equipped with 235 artillery pieces emplaced in twenty concrete and earth forts that protected the city from Russian attacks from the northeast. In addition to the defenses, the fortress contained hospitals, magazines, and communications centers.

Place of [domicile] is given with names of some officers. Last names were not in use at the time so this was one way of identifying soldiers

We're getting ready and have received our marching orders. Örfi and the rest have made a list and on it are me, Hikmet, İsmet, İzzeddin, İbrahim [Gerede], Kemal [Dersaadet], Ahmed Ziya [Trabzon], Hasan Tahsin [Muğla] and Memduh [Van]. I'm fed up with these chaotic days and want to leave as soon as possible. After shopping for some odds and ends I came home in the evening; Münir was on leave as well and we all spent a pleasant evening together. It is almost certain that I'll be heading to Erzurum... But I only talk about the Ulukışla Depot Battalion with mother. In this regard, I can only focus on two points: (1) our very brief training might likely prevent us from taking part in combat; (2) belonging to the educated classes in a nation overwhelmed with ignorance. I wonder? And the answers will likely emerge in the near future. We're trying to get in touch with friends whose names are on the list but who have not yet been notified. We have to be at the military academy at seven tomorrow morning. I go to bed and amongst visions of lines of skirmishers, firings, attacks and victories, I fall asleep.

January 13 Wednesday

Ağabey is the term used specifically to denote an older brother.

Mother woke me up at five o'clock. My ağabey and Münir were also up. Enver, as usual, was fast asleep. We had breakfast amidst the usual small talk. I left after bidding farewell once more to mother and Münir, and at the bridge met up with Sabit, Ahmet and the others who will make up the first contingent. I was at the academy at exactly seven o'clock and pretty soon the rest came along. Apparently two deserters from two of the battalions will join us. So we had to remove two from the list-Tahsin and İsmet. Then Memduh stayed behind and İsmet was included in his place. İhsan and I walked to Maçka and from there to Sirkeci. After a good meal at the Ali Efendi