

The Egyptian Red Crescent Society's Aid to the Ottoman State During the Balkan War in 1912

Zuhal ÖZAYDIN*

* İstanbul University, Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Medicine, Department of Medical History and Ethics, İstanbul

e-mail:ozaydinn@superonline.com

Summary

The Ottoman State was in need of aid in 1913 during the Balkan War, as a result of the cholera epidemic and thousands of Turkish immigrants. The Red Crosses and the Red Crescents helped the Ottoman State during this disastrous year. The Red Crescent Society of Egypt was one of the societies that greatly helped the Ottoman people in need.

Key words: Egypt, the Egyptian Red Crescent, Balkan War (1912), Cholera, Balkan immigrants, War Medicine

Introduction

In consequence of the meetings of the European powers, the Ottoman Empire was declared war by Montenegro on 8 October 1912, by Bulgaria on 17 October 1912, and by Greece on 19 October 1912. Balkan War therefore started at the beginning of the following winter.

This war caused a lot of disasters for the Ottoman State. When the Ottoman East Army was defeated by Bulgarians and retreated back to Çatalca, cholera epidemic broke out and spread very rapidly (1). Turkey was defeated to cholera during this war (2).

Thousands of people emigrated to Istanbul and Anatolia due to war. Turkey faced grave troubles because of on one hand war casualties and on the other hand cholera epidemic, as well as many homeless people and orphans. Many official buildings including the barracks and police stations were turned into hospitals and mosques and masjids were assigned to immigrants to cover the needs of the sick and the homeless (3) (4) (5).

The Ottoman Red Crescent Society welcomed the foreign Red Cross units, which came to Turkey to lend a hand to the needy people. All these foreign aid units of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent were settled on the spots they were needed by the Ottoman Army and the Ottoman Red Crescent.

The health units having tents and other required equipments set up field hospitals nearby the battlefield. Most of health teams not having tents and equipments rendered medical service at the hospitals in Istanbul. The health teams serving to wounded and crippled soldiers in the Istanbul hospitals were managed by the Ottoman Army Sanitary Service; and the Ottoman Red Crescent Society covered their needs (6).

The Egyptian Red Crescent Society

The Egyptian Red Crescent Society was one of the important aid units among them .

Under the auspices of his excellency, the Khidiv of Egypt, the medical mission led by Khidiv's brother Mehmed Ali Pasha, arrived in Turkey and contributed a great deal for the treatment of the wounded Ottoman soldiers and for the rehabilitation of the Muslim immigrants. Egyptian Red Crescent brought a lot of fine medical equipments and health staff. The medical staff established hospitals at various parts of Istanbul and treated lots of patients who had been wounded and fallen sick at war.

They also started a maritime line so as to transfer our immigrants to Smyrna by a boat called Red Sea (6).

First Medical Team, Hadımköy Hospital

Egyptian team led by colonel Dr. Selim Musli Bey was welcomed by a special committee of the Ottoman

Red Crescent at Galata Port in November 1912. The hospital was first set up at Sazlıbosna and then in Hadımköy in large and proper barracks at the expense of 1700 Ottoman Liras. From November 30th 1912 to March 2nd 1913, 194 out of 294 patients were cured, nine of them remained invalid, 20 people died. 21 of them were transferred to other hospitals while 15 patients were sent outdoor.

Hospital Medical Team

Surgeon Dr. Colonel *Selim Musli* (president)
Surgeon Dr. Captain *Emin Maluf*
Surgeon Dr. *Mehmed Sıtkı*
Surgeon Dr. *Mehmed Fazlı*
Dr. *Burhaneddin*
Administrative officer: *Ahmed*
Writer: *Ahmed Rasim*

The impressions of some of the visitors of that hospital are as follows:

“The works of the Egyptian Red Crescent Society, the regularity of the hospital which supply for every kind of medical equipment is worth of all sorts of appreciation and thanks. February 10th, 1913. Surgical Councillor of the Ottoman Army Dr. Kerim Sebati”

“Besides the perfection of the equipment at the Egyptian Red Crescent Hospital I observed that medical staff have been doing their best to treat patients. Appreciation is my duty. February 21st 1913 General Abdüsselam”

“We visited the Egyptian Red Crescent Society in Hadımköy. We found the present situation of the patients very well. The cleanliness of the wards is especially appreciated. March 1st, 1913 Talat (The prior Internal Affairs Ministry), Halil (The prior Parliament president), Abdullah (The prior Smyrna parliamentary)” (6).

Second Medical Team, Beylerbeyi Hospital

The second health team from Egyptian Red Crescent Society established a hospital of 14 wards and 200 beds on December 16th, 1912. 338 patients and wounded were admitted to the hospital from its inauguration until March 8th, 1913. 135 operations were carried out. Only six of the operated patients died.

Hospital Medical Team

Prof. Dr. *Ranah* (chief of physicians)
Surgeon Dr. *Ali İbrahim*
Surgeon Dr. *Selim Zevgad*
Dr. *İsmail Dibani*
Dr. *Hüseyin İbrahim Mesud*
Surgeon Dr. *Aseiton*
Surgeon Dr. *Derair*
Surgeon Dr. *Gabasler*
Surgeon Dr. *Tevfik Ömer*
Pharmacist: *Willy Gaylish*
Writer: *Tevfik Bey*

Ten German Nurses and 21 Egyptian attendants (6).

Third Medical Team, Yeşilköy Hospital

A medical team constituted by 14 physicians, one pharmacist, 12 men, two women nurses and 3 attendants set up a hospital of 270 beds at the houses rented in Yeşilköy on December 21st, 1912. 370 patients were admitted to that hospital from its **inauguration** until March 8th, 1913. Only 52 of them were lost, while the rest were cured. (6)

Fourth Medical Team, Maltepe Hospital

This team, composed of 13 doctors, one pharmacist, 26 nurses and attendants established a hospital of 360 beds at the buildings rented in Maltepe on December 28th, 1912. 589 patients were admitted to that hospital until March 8th, 1913. 63 of them died, rest of the patients were cured.

Besides all these missions, the Egyptian Red Crescent took part in the treatment of the wounded soldiers in Edirne at a building assigned to the field martial.

Hospital Medical Team

President *Kemal Bey*
Representative *Naci Bey*
Dr. *Mahmud*
Dr. *Mehmed Kâmil Bey*
Dr. *Mehmed Arusi Bey*
Dr. *Mehmed Abdülselam Bey*
Dr. *Enis Ünsi Bey*
Dr. *Abdülneceb Reşidi Bey*
Dr. *Osman Rıdvan Bey*

Dr. *Mehmed Abid Bey*
Dr. *Ali Sami Bey*
Dr. *Tevfik Şehlavi Bey*
Dr. *Mehmed Fazlı Bey*
Dr. *Abdülhalim Mahfuz Bey*
Pharmacist: *Mehmed Salim Bey* (6).

Hospital for Immigrants

A hospital of 52 beds in Yedikule was set up by the Egyptian Red Crescent for rendering medical service to the immigrants, on February 21st, 1913. This unit, constituted of two doctors, two pharmacist, two men and one female nurses and two attendants fulfilled its function perfectly (6).

Ship Called “Red Sea” for Patients Transfer

The ship, Red Sea, was reorganized for the transfer of patients and immigrants from the Rumeli (Thrace) to Anatolia as a hospital for 100 beds. Five doctors, one pharmacist, 24 nurses and two attendants were charged in that hospital ship. This boat worked on the line between Thessalonica and Smyrna and, carried 1000 wounded and approximately 10000 immigrants until March 8th, 1913 (6).

Additionally, a medical unit connected to the Egyptian Red Crescent in Prevesa arrived in Janina in order to help that patient transfer (7).

We will deal with the medical aid by Indian Red Crescent to the Ottoman Empire during the Balkan War (1912) at the next issue:

Writer note: While surfing the Internet I learned that Egypt helped Turkey during the earthquake disaster in 1999. This reminded me of the Egyptian Red Crescent's aid during the Balkan War. We must not forget the aids of people during the days of disaster.

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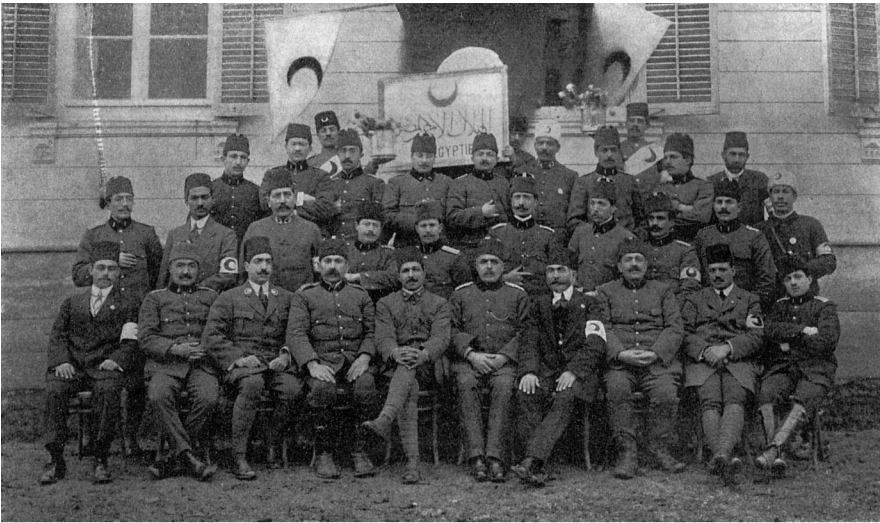


Figure 1- Egyptian Red Crescent Medical Team; in the middle Dr. Mahmud Mahir Bey, on the left: Rıza Pasha, Kemal Bey, on Right: Dr. Refii and Dr. Abdüsselam

مصر هلال احمر ارکانی و بعض اطباءى عسكريه
اورتده دوقتور محمود ماهى بك ، صولنده صره ايله رضا پاشا ، كمال بك صاغ طرفنده دوقتور رفیى و عبدالسلام بكر

Figure 2- The Hospital of Khidiv's
Mother: Hospital Medical Team and
wounded soldiers



والده خدیوی خسته خانه سی هیئت صحیه سی و خستگان عسکریه



مصر هلال احمر بکار یکی خسته خانه سی هیئت صحیه سی

Figure 3- Beylerbeyi Hospital; Hospital Medical Team