

The Golden Age of:

TAHER PASHA

Taher Pasha is a figure I will always remember. This man's love and devotion for the sport pushed us forward; he employed all his power, knowledge and contacts to lead the show jumping sport to its golden age,

GENERAL MOHAMED SELIM ZAKI.



When walking through life's path, everyone has two choices. You can just walk through hoping for the best to come out of it, living a so-called "normal or peaceful" life, feeling happy, content, or even unhappy. Or you can walk through it deciding that you WILL get the best of it; enjoy every bit of it, and even make other people's paths easier and happier. The latter path was the choice of Prince Mohamed Taher Pasha, which led him further to be written in history not only through faith as a prince, but also through choices he made in his life and contributions in other people's as well. Prince Mohamed Taher Pasha was the founder of the Egyptian Equestrian Federation (EEF) in 1942, the first president of the Egyptian Olympic Committee, the first Egyptian representative in the International Olympic Committee in which he was given a life time honor membership and the initiator of the Mediterranean games first held in Alexandria 1951.

In 1948, one year after the enlistment of the EEF in the Federation Equestre International (FEI), Taher Pasha's most important and significant contribution was to bring a foreign French trainer 'Colonel Le Farg' to train the Egyptian team. 'La Farg had the most impact on me personally, he used to give us dressage sessions and he insisted that we have to have a minimum score in dressage before we could compete in jumping', said Gen. M. Selim Zaki.

1949

Taher Pasha hosted an international show jumping event in 1949 inviting the European riders with their top horses over to Cairo. This show hosted the French and Italian teams competing in full power against the Egyptian team at the Mena House Hotel.

Later at the same year Taher Pasha sent the team to Europe so as to compete in France (new Monti Li Mar, Nimes, and Vichy), then Italy (Forte De Marmi, and Monte Catini) during a period of 4 month. He ordered us to go and see how the European riders work and deal with their horses, in training and at shows", Gen. M. Selim Zaki Stated.

1950 & 1951

Taher Pasha invited teams from France and Italy again to Cairo in 1950. In 1951 he held another International Egyptian event including the Italian, French, Belgium and Turkish teams in Cairo and Alexandria. After that the Egyptian team traveled to Italy (Rome) to compete in Piazza de Siena, which is a very difficult show. "I remember I did well in Rome, so Taher Pasha gave me his golden money clipper with his initials on it" said Gen. M. Selim Zaki.



Right to left: Omar Mansour, Ahmed Mazhar, Mohamed Selim Zaki, Mohamed Taher Pasha, Mohamed Khairy, Colonel Le Farg, and Farouk Al-Heiny.



The wide water jump -- 5 meters



The water jump in the triple combination.

1952 Olympic Games

Taher Pasha sent the team to Switzerland (Lucerne), then to France (Vichy & Paris), to prepare for the Olympic Games later that year. "In Lucerne, it was raining heavily and upon our arrival we found Taher Pasha waiting for us with rain coats; he was always concerned, always keen to motivate us", said Gen. M. Selim Zaki. At the Olympic Games, Mohamed Khairy had eight faults in the first round and eight faults in the second finishing 12th over the world's ranking. Gen Gamal Hares believes that "Mohamed and his horse jumped brilliantly; if it weren't for the water jumps, I know he would have won a medal because his horse was the only one in the games that didn't knock any poles down". Even after the 1952 revolution, Taher Pasha still attended all the Egyptian Equestrian Team's games abroad.

Plane to Helsinki 1952,

General M. Selim Zaki told HORSE Times a very interesting story that he recalls from that time:

"Ahmed Mazhar who was a very good friend of mine, insisted that our horses travel by plane due to the shortage in time. Mazhar knew I had a passion for flying, I knew the flight he reserved was a plane that was written off by the British Army in Egypt after having been used for transporting casualties for several years. We were reluctant to use this plane yet, there was no other option, and anyway we loaded the horses at the front area and sat behind them. They brought two huge lunch boxes full of sandwiches and drinks. The pilot started the propellers and after 20 minutes he came back and informed us that there is an oil leakage in one of the propeller motors that will have to be fixed in Hamburg. I sat next to the window and I saw the oil leaking in fine streams over the outside of my window. We panicked to an extent that we ate all the sandwiches that were meant for the whole crew. The pilot was not very happy about it, but anyway we arrived safely.



Gamal Hares in the plane used for the trip to Helsinki, 1952



Left to right: A. Mazhar, M. Khairy, O. Mansour, M. Selim Zaki, and G. Hares, in Vichy.



Left to Right: Mohamed Selim Zaki, Gamal Hares, and Mohamed Khairy. Team of the Olympics 1952

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