



# The Wasif Jawharieh Photographic Collection

by Issam Nassar

The Institute of Jerusalem Studies recently published volume one of the memoirs of the Jerusalemite musician Wasif Jawharieh.<sup>1</sup> Entitled *Ottoman Jerusalem in the Jawharieh Memoirs, 1904-1917* and edited by Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar, this volume, in Arabic, dealt exclusively with the last decade of Ottoman rule in Palestine, focusing particularly on the two or three years before the first great war and ending with the surrender of Jerusalem to the British forces and the entry of General Allenby to the city on 9 December, 1917.

Wasif Jawharieh, a musician and 'oud [Oriental lute] player, kept a diary of his life in Jerusalem spanning the period from 1904 until 1950. He donated the manuscript of his memoir to the Institute for Palestine Studies (IPS) archives in Beirut in the early seventies shortly before his death. Along with the



memoir's three handwritten volumes, Wasif Jawharieh also gave IPS seven albums of photographs and seven corresponding notebooks about the photos. Carefully arranged, the albums and the notebooks constitute what Jawharieh described as the photographic history of Palestine during the late Ottoman and subsequent British Mandate period. The albums are chronologically organized, encompassing a total of 890 photographs taken by various early Palestinian, European and even Jewish photographers of Palestine collected one by one by Wasif Jawharieh over a period spanning several decades

The seven albums correspond with the memoirs in themes, people, places and events. In fact, every now and then, Jawharieh refers the memoir reader to a specific picture in his albums, mentioning carefully its location and corresponding number. Although the collection is often missing vital information, such as the name of the photographer or the exact date that each picture was taken, Jawharieh was rather meticulous in carefully documenting the names of the people and places that *appear* in the photographs (sometime even including anecdotes about individuals in the pictures). Such careful documentation, coupled with the chronological and thematic order of the photographs, makes his collection a valuable and vivid visual, social and political history of a crucial period of modern Palestine.

The act of collecting pictures, particularly non-personal photographs, and organizing them within albums was a popular way of employing the medium in the nineteenth century. It is thought that this rather new "tradition" was "spurred on by the example of Queen Victoria" and quickly became a craze, first in Britain and then in North America, from the 1860s on.<sup>2</sup> That tradition was not so popular in Palestine, particularly among the indigenous population, as it was in Europe at

the time, but many European visitors and residents of the country (such as the wife of Jerusalem's British consul in the 1850s) did collect photographs in albums. Similarly, the Ottoman Sultan, the sovereign ruler of Palestine at the time, was known for his grand scheme of photographing the empire, a project that led him to dispatch photographers to various parts of the massive Ottoman lands. By the early twentieth century, a number of photographers and establishments in Jerusalem, such as the Franciscan Press, were selling albums with olivewood covers filled with photographs of the Holy Land, sometimes with dried flower pasted inside the covers. The gradual entry of the album into Palestinian life mirrors the gradual entry of photography into the region at large. By the thirties, official visitors were often presented with photography albums of various sites in the country. The Mufti of Jerusalem presented one such album to the Archbishop of Canterbury when the latter visited Palestine during the British Mandate.

The recently-published Arabic memoirs of Wasif Jawharieh include a small portion of the photographic collection that he carefully maintained over the years. In this issue of the *Jerusalem Quarterly File*, we include some of those pictures to highlight the contributions made by Jawharieh by way of preserving and documenting Palestine's modern history.

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*Issam Nassar is Associate Editor of JQF.*

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<sup>1</sup> For further information on Jawharieh see Salim Tamari, "Jerusalem's Ottoman Modernity: The Times and Lives of Wasif Jawharieh" in *Jerusalem Quarterly File* no. 9 (Summer 2000), 5-34.

<sup>2</sup> See Nancy C. Micklewright, "Personal, Public, and Political (Re)Constructions: Photographs and Consumption" in Donald Quataert, *Consumption Studies in The History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1922, An Introduction* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), 271.



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*British non-commissioned officers accepting the surrender of Jerusalem from Hussein Salim al-Husseini, mayor of Jerusalem. Source: Ottoman Jerusalem in the Jawharieh Memoirs.*





*Famed photographer Khalil Raad posing in his Ottoman uniform during World War I.  
Source: Ottoman Jerusalem in the Jawharieh Memoirs.*

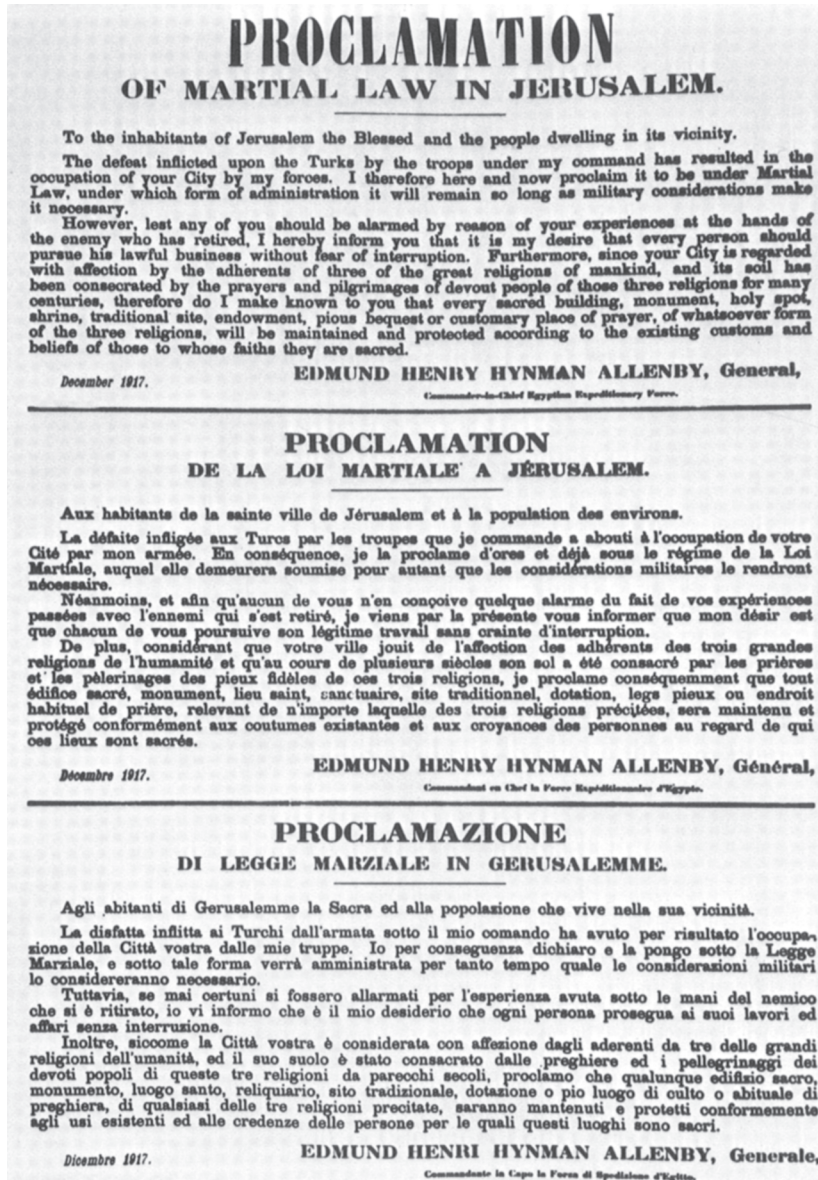




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*Aref Pasha Dajani was mayor of Jerusalem during WWI and president of the First Palestinian National Congress in 1919. Source: Ottoman Jerusalem in the Jawharieh Memoirs.*



Allenby's December 1917 proclamation declaring martial law in Jerusalem after the Allied commander entered the city. Source: Ottoman Jerusalem in the Jawharieh Memoirs.





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*Nuri, the first pilot to fly a plane in Palestine in 1914.*

*Source: Ottoman Jerusalem in the Jawharieh Memoirs.*



*The first boat headed to the Dead Sea touring Jerusalem in 1915 as part of military campaign. On the boat are Ali Roshen Bek and Nihad Bek, leaders of the Ottoman forces in Jerusalem at the time. Source: Ottoman Jerusalem in the Jawharieh Memoirs.*





*General Allenby at Jerusalem's Qalaa inside Jaffa Gate after the surrender of the city to the British Forces. Source: Ottoman Jerusalem in the Jawharieh Memoirs.*