

Jakob Künzler

(1871 – 1949)

Witness of Love in Loveless Times

What hast thou done?
the voice of thy brother's blood
crieth unto me from the ground.
Genesis 4,10

More than 1'000 Christians were killed
between 303 - 305 AD under Emperor Diocletian.

In 390 AD over 1'000 inhabitants
of Thessaloniki were killed.

On December 30, 1066, more than 3'000 Jews
were killed in Granada.

Over 7'000 Albigenses
were killed in Béziers in 1209.

In 1349 more than 6'000 Jews were killed
in Basel, Zurich, Strasbourg and other European cities.

96 Delaware Indians were killed
on March 8th 1782 in Gnadenhütten.

Between 1888 and 1908,
more than 1 million people were killed in the Belgian Congo.

Over 60'000 Herero were killed in Namibia
between 1904-1906.

In the three years following April 24 1915,
more than 1 million Armenians were killed in Anatolia.

In 1922, Jakob Künzler led some 8'000 Armenian orphans through the Syrian desert into Lebanon. In Ghazir, Künzler and his wife Elisabeth founded an orphanage that was home to 1'064 children, to whom they became "Papa and Mama Künzler". The children were taught a trade and became skilled and assiduous workers. Jakob also took over the role of a father when the young girls became of marrying age. With the help of Swiss donors, he built residences for widows close to Ghazir. In Beirut he founded a home for the blind and the elderly (*CAHL, Centre Armenien des Handicapés au Liban*). In 1937 Künzler's drive, paired with the generosity of his Swiss friends, made possible the construction of a tuberculosis sanatorium in the fresh mountain air in Azounieh. His daughter Ida even pledged her life to Lebanon when she married Sheikh Alamuddin.

Jakob Künzler had spent the previous twenty years in Urfa (Şanlıurfa in present-day Turkey), where he worked as a male nurse. In 1915 he witnessed the terrible crime that later became known as the first genocide of the modern era. Men, women, children and elderly people were robbed of their possessions, deported, abused, raped and systematically killed. The vast majority of the victims were Armenian. But the land was also "cleansed" of Syrian and Aramaic Christians and of muslim Kurds. The number of victims is estimated to be well over one million.

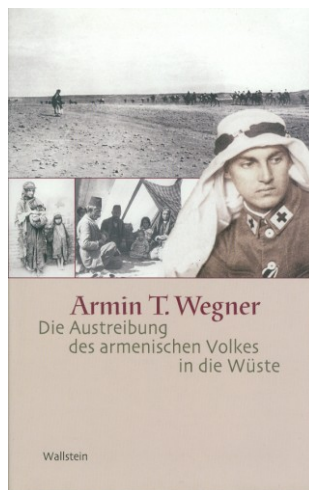
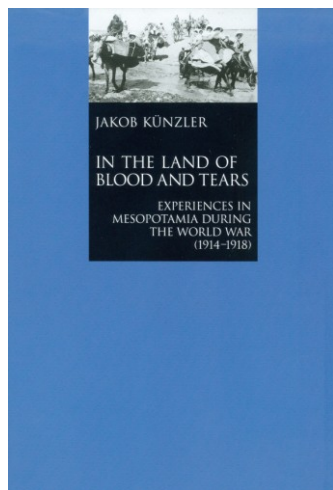
In Urfa, the Künzlers and their staff were able to provide help and comfort to a few of them. In the unceasing flow of unfathomable atrocities, a small number of victims found shelter and medical care in the hospital he headed. While others reacted by becoming numbed and detached, Jakob and Elisabeth Künzler seemed to find endless strength in the power of love. They stood fast in the face of horror and were there day after day for the suffering. Jakob Künzler recorded what he saw and heard, relating in astonishingly sober terms whatever happened in his immediate vicinity. He described the killing and looting in all their viciousness, cruelty and cowardliness, yet without subjecting the perpetrators to any harsh judgments. In 1921, Johannes Lepsius published these notes under the title "In the Land of Blood and Tears". The first English edition appeared in 2007.

To this day, Künzler's notes remain among the most important eye-witness reports of the events. World-renowned attorney Amal Alamuddin Clooney quoted excerpts during a groundbreaking trial at the European Court in Strasbourg.

The aim of this exhibition is to commemorate Jakob Künzler's great work of love, and to renew the ancient bond between Switzerland and Lebanon. We propose to counter oblivion and denial with the promise that love never fails, and that no labor of compassion is in vain (1 Corinthians 13:8 and 15:58).

The exhibition presents Künzler's work within a dual context. Red marks recall the blood that to this day stains our path as human beings. Five words from the Bible and the verse from a hymn evoke Jakob Künzler's own perspective on his work of love.

Short *excerpts* from Künzler's book are printed onto linen sheets laid out upon wooden cots.



The sheets are draped over *photographs* taken by German medical orderly *Armin T. Wegner*.

The exhibition tells the story of the Swiss orphan who came to be a great lifesaver dedicated to helping orphaned children. May his lifestory become a source of courage and new faith in God for many of us!

On August 19th, Turkish policemen conducted house searches in the Armenian quarter, looking for Armenian deserters. Suddenly they were caught in an ambush. One of the policemen was shot, while two others fled and alerted the police station. When the two Young Turk committee members from Constantinople heard of the incident, they ordered the crowd: “Down with the *Gjaur* (infidels)! Why do you hesitate?”

The crowd was only too willing to oblige. Those who weren't carrying weapons rushed home to get them, and those who did immediately set about exterminating the Christians, striking at anyone within arm's reach. From the hospital I could see the Kurds hurrying towards their neighborhood, which like our hospital lay beyond the city walls. In a matter of minutes they reappeared with their weapons, running towards the market. As many Christians as possible were to be sent to their deaths before sunset.

Fortunately, after the first shots rang out most of the Armenians had shuttered their market stalls. Others were urged by well-meaning Mohammedans to hurry home. But unfortunately not everyone was warned in time about the looming danger, and some were caught on their way before they could make it home. It was a gruesome manhunt, a horrendous massacre.

The tailor Kevork and his four apprentices were so taken in by their work in his shop at the market that they didn't notice the Kurds' and the Turks' sinister preparations. Kevork's workshop was situated on a side street leading from the market. The mob had to get there first. It didn't take long for the murderers to appear. Before Kevork was even aware of the danger, his throat was slit with a sharp knife. Not one of his apprentices was able to escape. None of them even thought of picking up a pair of scissors to defend themselves. Blood streamed over the threshold of the peaceful tailor shop. I could still see a pool of blood on the street there the next day. The five dead bodies lay on the floor of the shop that had been completely ransacked.

Near the mission hospital is a large, fortress-like house belonging to the butcher Shiko and his numerous family. Shiko had seven grown-up sons, two of whom were sent off in the direction of Diyarbakir to their deaths. This is the house that the Kurdish horde set out for that evening after finishing their bloody business at the market. But the building's heavy gates withstood their attempt to force their way in. They knew that there were

no men at home besides the elderly Shiko and his equally elderly brother. The Kurds were shouting so loud that to our horror we could hear them all the way to the hospital. They were demanding to be handed the two old men, threatening to abuse all of the women in the household that very night. They screamed a profusion of fanatical curses and swearwords into the four winds.

Just then, the two gendarmes I had requested from the governor for the protection of our hospital arrived. I assumed that they had come into the neighborhood along with other gendarmes. I enjoined them all to please see to it that order prevailed. Which they did, driving away the crowd that was thirsty for blood and craving the satisfaction of their raw lusts.

The next morning I found the old Shiko lying dead in front of his house. He had sacrificed himself for his family in the hope that the mob would leave the women and children in peace. His brother had managed to hide, and a day later I wrested him myself out of his narrow shelter.



The two Young Turks now ordered the massacre of a labor battalion. One of the soldiers, an Armenian, was able to escape. I will let him narrate it in his own words:

“I had been working for several weeks in the labor battalion on the road to Karaköprü with about 400 of my countrymen. On the evening of August 15th, 180 of us were summoned by roll call and ordered to get ready. We were to set out that same night in order to prepare a section of road for the transport of cannons a few hours away. After the evening meal, we were told to make music. This happened frequently, but it was also one of the pleasures of army life. At nine o’clock evening taps were sounded. Two hours later we set out. After a two-hour march we were told to halt and were allowed to smoke a cigarette. We still had no idea what was going to happen to us.

“We had hardly rested for a quarter of an hour when some 40 mounted gendarmes from the city rode up to us. With them were 15 Armenians in chains. The gendarmes surrounded us. Then came the order to tie us up, too. Now we knew that our hour had come.

It was afternoon by the time we heard a call ring out: get moving!

“We were led to the outskirts of the village under a heavy guard. On the ground lay a pile of clothing among which we recognized our comrades’ belongings. They ordered us to get undressed. We were only permitted to keep our shirts on. Then they tied us together, two by two, with bloody ropes. No sooner was this accomplished than they ordered us to march. A few minutes later we passed a heap of our slain comrades, their bodies still writhing in their death throes. They led us to the edge of a cliff. There, the gendarmes and the Turks who had come from the city jeered and called us ‘traitors to our country’.

“Now they unshackled the first two. One after the other they were made to jump off the cliff. On the way they had to pass between two gendarmes armed with long knives who stabbed them as they went by. When my turn came, I was able to inconspicuously loosen the rope that bound me to my comrade, and when we were ordered to step up, I quickly grabbed a large rock and threw it at one of the gendarmes. It caught him in the chest, causing him to fall. I didn’t wait for the other gendarme to stab me but jumped off the cliff without hurting myself. A shot rang out behind me, but it missed. For the time being I found shelter under the overhanging rocks.

“After all 60 comrades were thrown off the cliff, the gendarmes and the Turks climbed down to see if anyone had survived the fall. I lay on my face and pretended to be dead. As they dragged me away, one of the gendarmes said: “This looks like the dog who defended himself.” As he said that, I was shot and could feel the warm blood trickling down my back.

“At last the murderers left. Shortly afterwards a Kurd appeared, calling out ‘Bedo, Bedo!’ Bedo was one of us. He was still alive, and shifted slightly in response to this call. The Kurd whispered to him to hide behind a large rock because he could not rescue him by daylight. Bedo was gravely injured, but the Kurd, who was a business friend, wanted to save him. I don’t know if he succeeded. After the Kurd left I tried to stand up. There were fifteen of us who, though severely wounded, were still able to move. We debated what to do. I suggested that we return to the city that night. But the majority of us weren’t strong enough for that, so only three of us set off that night. We were able to eat some melons in a nearby garden and regain some of our strength.

“After marching for a few hours in the dark, we heard a crowd of people coming toward us. We hid in a nearby vineyard. Who were they? Alas, we soon recognized them: 20 of our comrades from the battalion who had stayed behind yesterday in Karaköprü. They were now going the same way we had.

I could not walk any further that night, and my two companions were exhausted too. We decided to hide in the vineyard, under the vines. We were only able to reach Urfa the next night. That was on August 19th. We saw slain bodies lying in the streets. Thus a massacre had taken place here, too. I had to stand in front of my house for a long time, knocking and calling. At last my wife recognized my voice and let me in.”

Those were the words of the Armenian.



And the transport of those marked for death! Does such a pen exist as could describe the likes of it? The women refuse to go out into the street. Gendarmes drive them out with their whips. Outside a woman throws herself to the ground. She refuses to stand up. She tells the gendarme he should better kill her on the spot. He stabs her with his bayonet; still she refuses to get up, he stabs her again, though not so as to kill her, only enough to wound her. Blood flows from her wounds. Finally she changes her mind, stands up and walks.

That woman over there has gone mad. She walks along with them, her hair loose, singing and laughing.

Another woman over yonder tries to slip into a side street. But one of the gendarmes sees and goes after her. A single shot. She is released, she is more fortunate than her sisters.

Many Mohammedans have gathered on the city outskirts. An Armenian woman reveals her identity to some Mohammedans who make off with her.

There goes the fourteen-year-old daughter of an Armenian merchant. A Turk has been looking for her, now he grabs her. But she resists. She would rather perish in the steppe than end up in a Moslem house. A gendarme walks past, he doesn't intend to help the Turk, but lo, a gold coin is gleaming in the Turk's hand. The gendarme changes his mind. The struggling girl disappears with the Turk. Hers will be a sad fate in the harem.

I have already reported what happened to all those wretched souls along the way. It was beyond doubt that the people of Urfa were all meant to perish in the desert, and that this was a will and a design. That is why they were made to walk hither and thither so long, until there was no one left to transport.

Before the evacuation was over, all our charges were rounded up from every one of the buildings, on the same day, at the same hour. But still we hoped that they would be permitted to stay with us. The people were first made to stand before the buildings while our house was searched one more time. Believing all my wards to be outside, I unwittingly opened a closet in the presence of the policeman conducting the search, and lo and behold, a young Armenian woman jumped out. Even she had to laugh. Of course she had to follow them too.

My nine-year-old son, in tears, begged the policeman outside to take pity upon his 'grandmother'. She shouldn't have to go, he said, kissing the hand of the police chief, himself close to tears. But it was no use, the old woman had to go too. Who was this grandmother? She was a sixty-five-year-old woman, a widow, who had been in our service for sixteen years. But she was much more than a servant to us. My children considered her to be their grandmother, and she considered herself the same.

The next morning my wife once more approached the gendarme commander, imploring him to at least allow this old woman to stay behind. The commander, who had already picked the prettiest young girls out of the camps, presenting the other officers with those that he did not choose to keep for himself, told my wife: "Give me her daughter, and you can have her." But that was not for my wife to decide. Besides, the daughter was already held in the camp.

As the women were leaving I did my best to comfort them, telling them they were only being taken to headquarters for identification purposes, and that they would be allowed to return the next day. But old Mairam, the good 'grandmother', said: "*Oğlum, daha gelmem!*" "My son, I will never return!" She knew the Turks better than I did.

But old Mairam did indeed come back the night after the transport. She had been permitted to rent a carriage along with a few other women. The gold helped, and the bribed coachman let them out near the city. Mairam and her daughter reappeared at my house the next morning. But no sooner had they arrived than the police came after them again.

The women escaped through the back door and hid in a small shack in a nearby vineyard. Since the policeman had seen them entering our house, he searched that first, then the gardens nearby, and found them. They did not return a third time.



“During the massacres that took place in 1915, my parents were forced to emigrate from Divrik to Sivas. There we were fortunate to live under the protection of an American missionary, Miss Bewer. My mother placed great value on education, so all of her children, seven in all, were sent to the mission school. I was trained as a teacher by the Americans in Harput. My only brother became a pharmacist. We had many relatives, and together we were a very large family. All of us had to embark on the terrible deportation march along with thousands of fellow Armenians.

The first few days of the journey went well; we were escorted by American missionaries. But then the government sent them back. As soon as the Americans left us, our great suffering began. First of all, they took all of our men away. They brutally tortured them before our eyes and then killed them – often very slowly. Thousands of women and children were thrown into the Kirk Gjös river.

Then we were led over the mountains where it was hardly possible to tread. For days at a time we received neither bread nor water. We suffered the greatest loss of lives on the Euphrates near Samsat. More than 10’000 of us were thrown into the depths. We had to wait for one week on the opposite river bank. There they stole what money the survivors had left and robbed us girls of our honor. Darkness befell even the most pious of souls. As long as we still had some money we could preserve our honor, but when it was gone even that was no longer possible.

Because of the impossibility to change our clothes or to wash, the filth and the stench became unbearable. Many of us had knife or sword wounds that could not be treated. Some of these poor souls had worms crawling all over their bodies. One could hardly bear to look at them. But in the end we were so overcome by stupor that nothing made an impression on us anymore.

Further on we passed a well that was full of decaying human bodies. When we came to the next well they threw us in; but there were already many dead piled up in its depths, and very little water, so that not all who were thrown in died. They cast stones at us from above, and those who were struck were put out of their misery. Alas, no stone hit me. One of my sisters, too, remained alive in this hell. We spent the night at the bottom of the well in the terrible, fetid air. We wished for death a thousand times over. When the next day no one showed up to carry out that work of mercy – to throw stones into the depth of the shaft – we debated what to do. We found some money for an eventual escape and for the next chapter of our

ordeal on the bodies of the dead. We knew that it was most often hidden in the hair. Thus we managed to collect a few Turkish pounds, which we jingled the next time a Kurdish head looked down over the edge of the well. The Kurd got the message. He pulled us both out, took the money as payment, and we escaped hell for the time being. How eagerly we sucked in the fresh air!

For three days we wandered about aimlessly in the mountains. Then one night I lost my sister. I do not know what happened to her. Now I was completely alone. Where should I turn to? Finally I saw a shepherd and asked him to show me the way that led to the next city. He replied that there were no cities anywhere here, but that the deportee route was not far. He pointed it out to me. Soon I was back among the deportees. They were groups of my fellow countrymen who had flocked together here, at a place called Mohammed Khan.

A distinguished Mohammedan took me with to Urfa. His name was Mohammed Khalil, and he was among the richest men in the city. But I was seriously ill by the time we arrived.

As I was not getting better, he sent me to the mission hospital. There was no room there, so I ended up in the courtyard of the Syrian Church, along with other wretched souls who like me longed for death. Finally a woman told me that I should go to the Künzlers, who helped all Armenians. I set off for Mr. Künzler's house, which was only a quarter of an hour away; but because of my extreme weakness it took me three full hours to get there. I was feverish when I arrived at the house, where I received clothing, shelter, help, and medicine. That brought an end to my greatest suffering. Slowly I began to recover. And when Mr. Künzler opened an orphanage after the armistice, I became a teacher there for what little remained of my people."

Almost Tamassian



"It was the 10th of July 1915 when along with some 2,000 men, women, and children I had to leave my native town of Harput. My husband lived in America. I was able to take along some money and clothes, as well as a bed that I loaded onto a donkey. My two daughters, who were ten and twelve years old, had to walk alongside.

We stopped near Malatya. Some convoys of deportees from Erzurum and Sivas joined us, and we went on, southwards over the steep Taurus mountains. We often had to crawl over the rocks on all fours. Many children and elderly people succumbed to these excessive ordeals. They remained lying where they had fallen, an welcome prey for wild animals. We had long since gotten rid of our belongings, having been forced to send back the donkeys we had taken with us upon leaving. In the mountain valley that lies between Malatya and Adiyaman we were plundered by the surrounding Kurdish tribes. Our men were taken from us. They were taken off to the side and killed. We were so far gone that we would have gladly gone to our death too, if we had only known what would happen to our children. Further on the way to Samsat, we lost most of the young women and girls. The nearby Kurds took from the women and girls whatever they pleased.

"On the other side of the river, on the territory of Urfa, our suffering reached its peak. We were never given water unless we paid for it in gold. They drove us from the wells with the butts of their rifles. On the banks of a large spring where we rested for a few days, they completely robbed us of whatever money and jewelry we had left. When there was nothing left to be taken from us we were driven into a stone desert. A large number of Kurds surrounded us. They undressed us and from the discarded clothes they took anything that still was of any value. When they stripped us naked, it appeared that there were a few adolescent boys among us that had been disguised as girls. They were hacked to pieces on the spot. Now the Kurds drove us – a large naked crowd of about 2,000 girls and women – into a narrow clearing, and the nightmare began. We were shot at from all sides. This caused a terrible stampede. Those standing near the edge were shot, and those in the middle suffocated.

I myself only escaped death because I came to stand on top of a pile of dead bodies. With excruciating effort, I managed to pull up both of my daughters onto this elevated spot. Their bodies were completely blue. There were only a few hundred of us left alive when the Kurds left us. The

next day we had to move on because the smell of decaying flesh was unbearable. Day and night, my two children cried in their small voices: '*Mayrik hats, mayrik hats!*' – 'Mother, bread! Mother, bread!' When some Kurdish horsemen came our way, I begged them to take my daughters with them. To them should they now be committed, after God! They took them along. I do not know what became of them; I never saw them again. I was no longer able to cry when they left, my stream of tears had run dry. I only wished for one thing, an early death.

Every now and then, I and a few other women who, like me, were searching for death, would rise and go a few steps further.

The Mesopotamian August sun scorched our naked bodies. We dug holes with our bare hands in the plowed soil and covered ourselves with dirt to shield ourselves from the midday sun. At night we crawled into these holes too, because it would get very cold, and the dirt would protect us from the cold. Our bodies covered in burns, we finally reached a Christian village near Urfa. There we were given bread, water, and some pieces of clothing. I was allocated a short child sized shirt that allowed me to cover myself, if only very barely, after sixteen days of nudity.

Our stay in the village was to be a short one. The gendarmes came and herded us together again. That same day we arrived in a deportee camp in Urfa. I was advised to flee; but that was only possible with a bribe. I borrowed a gold pound from a woman, and I gave it to the guard that night and was free. But where was I to go? I would have gladly gone to the German hospital, but was unable to find it. A Turk seized me and carried me into his house. I soon became very ill. It is this Turk himself who took me to the mission hospital. There I was able to recover.

I only escaped evacuation with the population of Urfa because on the day the police rounded up all the Armenians from the hospital, I lay with a high fever. I later became the cook in Mr. Künzler's house.

I still have the child's shirt with which I covered my naked body and will keep it as a relic to show my husband when I'm allowed to see him again."

Vekhsa Bedrossian

In August 1919 the woman wrote to me from Aleppo, telling me that her husband had died in America. We have continued searching for her two daughters until now, but in vain.



Many of the city's Armenians had friends among the Mohammedans. The latter were not all so ruthless as to take part in the eradication of the Armenians with the same astounding cynicism as the government.

Every day Armenian women and children disappeared from the deportee camps without getting killed. They found shelter with these compassionate Muslim friends. It had also become commonplace for every Mohammedan to help himself to any of the unfortunate women and girls in the camps that suited them. Although these Armenian women had to assume a Mohammedan name upon becoming part of a Mohammedan household, this didn't mean that they had to become Mohammedans themselves.

The government was aware of these practices, and apparently deemed excessive the number of Armenians thus surviving and soon issued a warning that anyone taking in Armenians ran the risk of deportation.

Even the city judge was summoned by the military court to give up the Armenian Christians staying with him. This man had been transferred from Erzincan to Urfa for disciplinary reasons in July 1915 for protesting against the expulsion of the Armenians. In Urfa he presided over a meeting that took place during those troubled days, opposing the atrocities being committed against the Armenians. He had provided shelter to a number of Armenian women in his house. The general summoned him after the meeting and said to him: "Who are you, that you dare act against the central government and publicly call for a milder treatment of the Armenians, and how dare you harbor Armenian women in your house directly against my orders? If this does not stop, you will see that we have the power to bring you to reason."

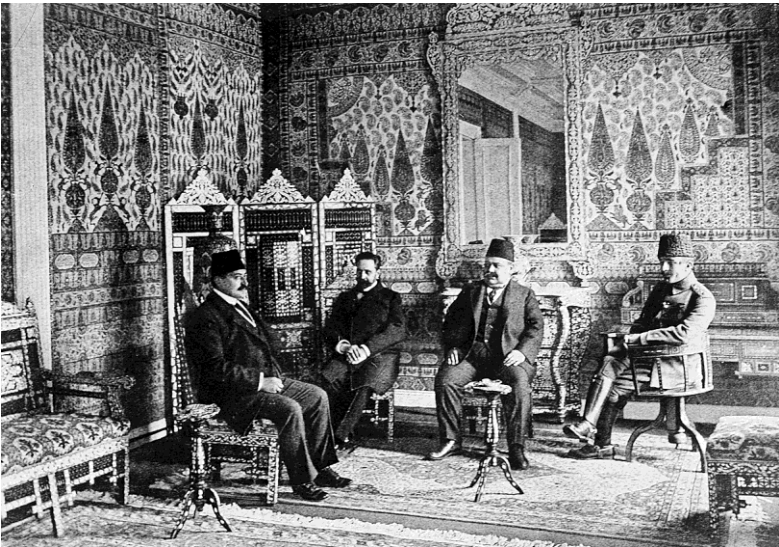
Without even waiting for a reply, the general ordered the judge to leave. It should be added that as *kadi*, the judge was the second highest official in the city.

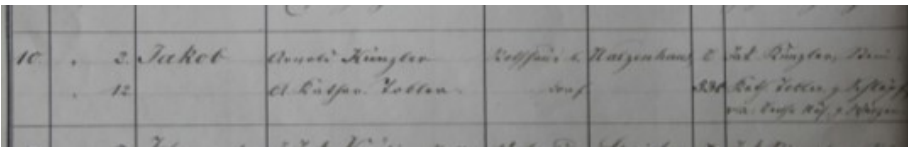
No sooner had he reached home than the police appeared with orders from the general to seize the Armenian women. Within just a few days notwithstanding, the judge had again taken in more refugees. I have never met a nobler soul among the Mohammedans than this *kadi*. I was never as close to any other of Mohammed's followers as I was to him. When we later parted, it was as the best of friends, indeed as brothers.

Because he was constantly working to relieve the suffering of the Armenians, the *kadi* of Urfa had to put up with a nickname, "Ermini Papasi", the Armenian Priest.

The missionary woman too, Fräulein Jeppe, a Danish member of the German Orient Mission, managed to hide seven men. Although the police searched her house thoroughly three times, they remained unable to find the seven men. Naturally it turned out that the savior had taken too much upon herself with the constant turmoil; she lay close to six months recovering from a nervous condition, a consequence of those harrowing days.

The last time they searched our house in the summer of 1916, the police arrested our Arab servant in order to force him to testify. They gave him a terrible beating, but the brave fellow, who was fully informed of everything that went on in our house, did not betray anything. He too was a Mohammedan. Such steadfastness deserves great respect!





Entry in the Hundwil baptism register

Jakob Künzler was born at the Rothus in Hundwil into an old family originally from Walzenhausen. He was deprived of his father at an early age and spent his childhood in Teufen and Stein. Jakob sang in the boy's choir, played the zither and the mouth organ. When he was eleven years old his mother became seriously ill, and after a brief remission, she too passed away. Jakob trained as a carpenter in Stein and was confirmed by pastor J. J. Meier, who had recently returned from missionary service abroad.



Birthplace



From the family archive: „Grandfather“ Jakob Künzler as a child in the classroom in Stein

In Stein auf Okeren 1888 Confirmierte

<i>Nr.</i>	<i>Confirmirte</i>	<i>Eltern</i>	<i>Heurath</i>	<i>Wohnort</i>	<i>Geb. Tauf.</i>
1.	<i>Jacob Künzler</i>	<i>Andr. & Johanna</i>	<i>Andr. & Johanna</i>	<i>Stein</i>	<i>1851. März 21/81</i>

Entry in the Stein confirmation register



Young Jakob (© Family archive)

His years as a journeyman brought him to Basel. In need of an operation, he ended up in the hospital there, where he was cared for by young men who had acquired basic nursing skills and chosen to care for the sick in the spirit of Christian love, and referred to themselves as « Brothers » or « Deacons ». Jakob too wanted to become such a deacon. His vigorous, friendly manner, his quick grasp of things, his broad interests, exceptional memory and skillful hands predisposed him to such an occupation. But he was nevertheless plagued by doubts. Was he truly humble enough for this service ?



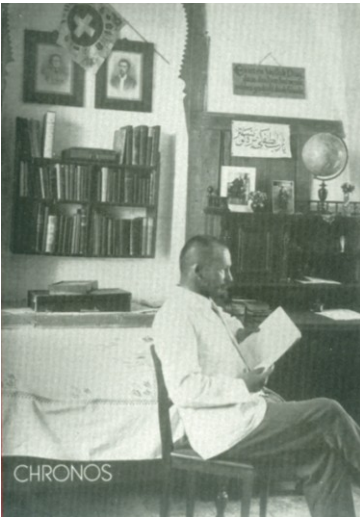
Photograph of Jakob Künzler by Dr. H. Christ (© LaRoche family archive)

It was during the summer of 1899 that his call came. Dr. Johannes Lepsius, world-renowned friend of the Armenians, asked him whether he would be willing to serve as a male nurse in Urfa, in eastern Anatolia. Surely he had heard of the terrible massacres being carried out against Armenians. A newly built clinic was to bring them some relief. Lepsius told Künzler that the clinic director, Dr. Hermann Christ, whom he had met in the Bürger hospital in Basel, wished to ask him for his cooperation.



„I once more visited my mother’s grave in Teufen. I needed to commune with the being who during my childhood had been closest to me on Earth. At her grave I said : « Mother, many lands and oceans will now separate me from you, but our hearts will remain close to one another. As your son, I wish to show myself worthy, that you should not be ashamed of me in your eternal home. God shall help me. »

In the fall of 1899 Jakob Künzler bade his homeland farewell at his mother’s grave.



Jakob Künzler preparing his presentation (front page of the book Die Schweiz und Armenien (Switzerland and Armenia))

On day during a horse ride in Aleppo, a young woman took pity on the inexperienced horseman, letting herself fall back in stride with him. The two openheartedly told each other their life stories. Elisabeth Bender was the daughter of a missionary and an Abyssinian princess. She too had lost both of her parents at an early age. The two young people fell in love. But neither spoke of it. Six years later Jakob sought the young woman out. She was in Scotland and wanted to become a nurse. When she finally consented to marrying him, she became the woman at his side that made his lifework possible.



Elisabeth Bender as a young nurse



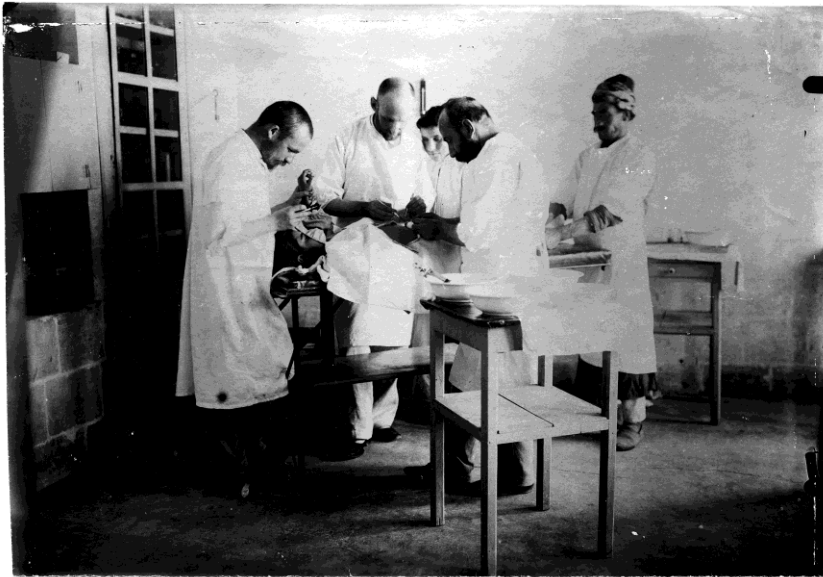
Family archive: Jakob ...



and Elisabeth Künzler in early years

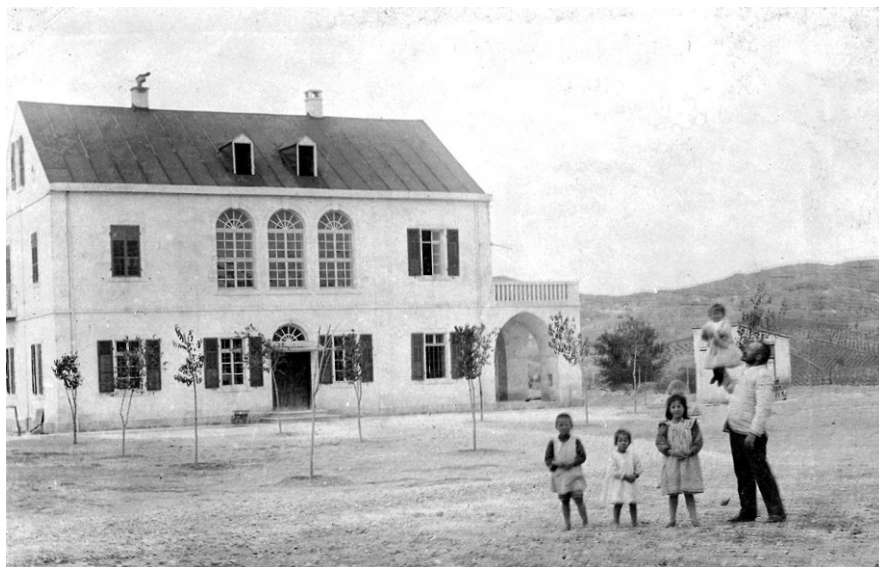
They were to have five children. The family started every day out with an excerpt from the Bible, a song and a prayer. They generally attended the Sunday service at the Syrian Christians' Protestant church.

« In our marriage, we have a proven method that eases our reconciliations. We never retire for the night without saying our evening prayers together, and since one cannot pray with a grudge, we must clear the air first. *Probatum est!* »



In the clinic's « operating room » : Jakob Künzler (left) sedating a patient while household servant Muchz Abraham holds his feet and Dr. Christ performs surgery on him, assisted by Armenian physician Abraham Attarian and Sister Camin. (© LaRoche family archive)

Dr. Christ's wife came down with tuberculosis and he had to leave. Dr. Andreas Vischer replaced him in Urfa. He too was from Basel. For ten years Jakob Künzler and Dr. Vischer worked side by side in great mutual respect. The new houses built for the physician and the deacon's family show the importance of their presence for the city.



Jakob Künzler with his children in front of Dr. Vischer's house

Jakob Künzler quickly became fluent in Armenian, Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish and English, and was able to communicate with people from all social backgrounds without the help of an interpreter. He regularly contributed to the magazine « Der christliche Orient » (The Christian Orient). He had a remarkable ability to express his thoughts with just a few words in a lively and captivating manner. This came from his desire to consider people from all different walks of life fairly and without prejudice. Künzler chronicled the weather every day for many years. He described different illnesses with scientific precision. Underlying his down-to-earth, meticulous observations is his unshakeable faith in the Word of God.



Card drawn by Andres Giger, Hundwil

The fall of the Sultan in 1908 brought hope for renewed political order. All ethnic groups were to have the same rights and obligations. Yet Künzler was skeptical. Was it possible for centuries-old patterns of behavior to change so quickly?



In 1913 the first stone was laid for the foundation of the new hospital, in the presence of all of the city dignitaries. Jakob Künzler is under the tree towards the left in a white hat. (Der Christliche Orient)

The work in Urfa nevertheless pursued its course. In 1912 more funds were collected, and the foundation stone for a new hospital was laid the following year. World War I broke out, preventing Dr. Vischer's return from his home leave. As a result, Künzler de facto became the sole head of the hospital for the four next years.

The Ottoman Empire entered the war alongside Germany. The campaign against Russia ended in a devastating defeat. Who was to blame? The Armenians were accused of deserting and suspected of collaborating with the enemy behind the front.

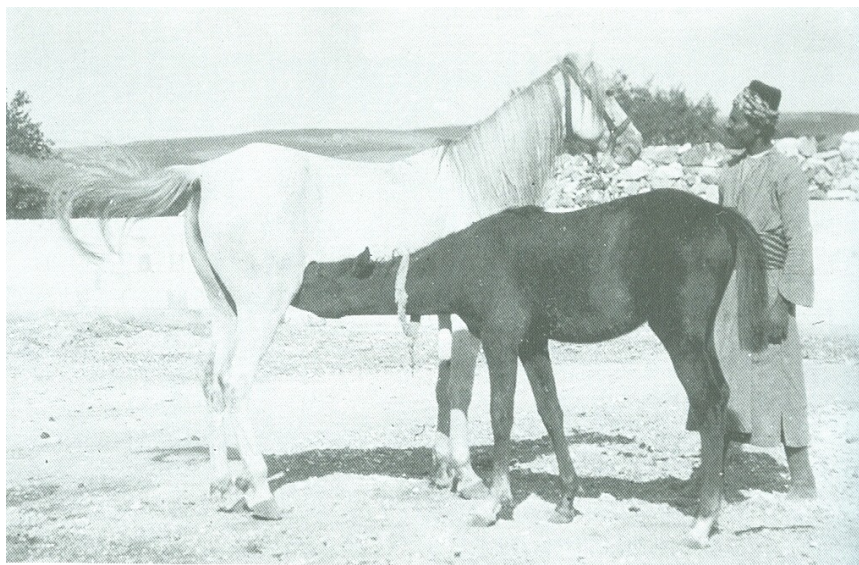
JAKOB CRITICALLY ILL, TYPHUS. MAY 1.

KÜNZLER DOWN WITH SPOTTED FEVER, RECOVERING,
CASH EMERGENCY, JAKOB. MAY 27 1915

Two telegrams to Dr. Andreas Vischer

Jakob Künzler had barely recovered from a serious case of typhus when the looming disaster could no longer be ignored. Long processions of deportees were arriving into Urfa from the North. Only women and children. The men had already been killed. Soon it became undeniable: these were not spontaneous massacres. Modern technology made it possible for the systematization of murder. Thanks to the telegraph network, a mass extermination was being carried out through central command. The old Ottoman Empire was to be transformed into a modern nation-state. All non Turkish ethnic groups were to be « removed »: first the Armenians, then the Syrian and Greek Christians, and finally even the Kurds.

Künzler collected reports, alerted the German consulate in Aleppo, took notes of his own observations and soon realized that he was powerless to do anything against the gruesome injustice. On October 19th, the Armenian resistance in Urfa was broken. Künzler's friend Leslie took his own life out of despair. Displaying both calm and courage, the Künzlers managed to keep the clinic open and save a few lives. Thanks to her many contacts among Urfa's women, Elisabeth Künzler was able to smuggle some women and children into Aleppo. Fellow missionary Karin Jeppe concealed seven Armenian men. Amazingly, the Künzlers survived those grueling years without any scars to their mental health.



Servant Ali helped to look after those in hiding and smuggled those whose lives were in danger across the border. Even under torture he never betrayed anyone. (© Legacy Dr. A. Vischer)

The Künzlers spent one year on home leave in Basel. After their return, it soon became clear that there was no perspective to their work in Urfa. Almost all the Christians were dead. The state authorities wished for no outside help for the Muslim Turks. On October 1st, 1922, Jakob Künzler closed the clinic down.

„With a heavy heart, I finally made the decision to give up our work in Urfa and move to Syria, trusting that I would find God’s guidance there too.

I crossed the Euphrates at the very same place as when had I first entered the country, 23 years earlier to the day. Thus a long period of work sustained by much love, prayer and sweat was brought to a close.

Had it all been in vain? Faith answers: No! »

The Christians that had remained in the country feared new massacres. The American charity Near East Relief decided to bring the Christian orphans into a safe neighboring country. The difficulty was to gather the children together from various places, collect their documents from the local authorities and organize the expedition. It was necessary to pass through areas controlled by tribes known for robbing travellers. Who was to safely lead the children if not Jakob Künzler, who was familiar with the local customs and had friends among all of the different peoples? After a dramatic journey, Künzler crossed the Euphrates with some 8’000 orphans, leading them into Syria and Lebanon into safety.



Armenian orphans on the way to Syria and Lebanon

The Künzlers took over the management of an orphanage able to take in some 1'400 children. Then Jakob Künzler got blood poisoning and had to have his right arm amputated. From then on it was a one-armed « Papa » that took care of « his » children.

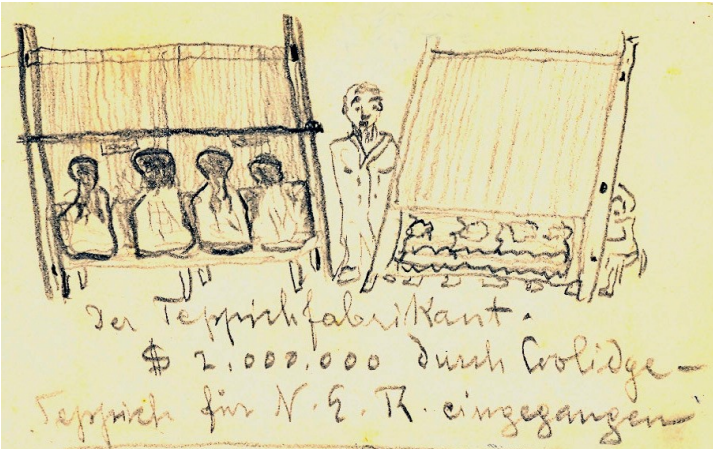


One-armed Papa Künzler (© Family archive)

When the children became of age, he found a spouse for them. A carpet factory gave the young people work. One of the rugs even made it all the way to the White House in Washington.



Jakob Künzler and an Armenian orphan girl weaving a carpet for the White House in Washington



Family archive: a drawing by Jakob Künzler of his work among the weaving orphans

Once the children reached independence, one last thing remained to be done. A hospice for widows was built in Ghazir with the support of the Swiss friends of Armenia. Künzler introduced gambezi fish into the surrounding ponds to fight the malaria mosquitoes there. His crowning achievement was the construction of an Armenian Sanatorium on the heights of Mount Lebanon. Although a fund-raising trip to the USA was not particularly successful, he was able to once more count on his faithful friends in Switzerland. Künzler's achievements were officially honored in 1947, when the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Basel awarded him with an honorary doctorate.



Family archive: Jakob Künzler reviews his life in this drawing: the small sand vendor, spinner and embroiderer of his early years becomes a carpenter, then a deacon, later a physician and father of orphans. In the end Künzler is a one-handed writer giving a slide lecture on sexual hygiene.

Jakob Künzler passed away in Ghazir on

January 15, 1949, surrounded by his family. Two days later a large crowd of mourners bade him a last farewell in Beirut. On February 22, 1959, a commemorative plaque was unveiled in the presence of his wife Elisabeth in his native village, Hundwil. Elisabeth Künzler-Bender passed away nine years later at the age of 92.



Elisabeth Künzler-Bender on her 90th birthday

Truly, I tell you,
Whatever you did
for one of the least
of these brothers and sisters of
mine,
you did for me.

Mathew 25:40

Funds were raised in 1912 for the construction of the clinic in Urfa. To this effect, the monthly magazine „Der Christliche Orient“ published a series of photographs commented by Jakob Künzler. Concise yet brimming with life, these descriptions convey the deacon’s sense of observation and unconditional love while affording a glimpse of daily life in the hospital.



Our Sisters

The number of our Armenian nursing sisters has long reached five. Head Sister is the reliable Anna, a calm, industrious and very sensible Christian. She is the furthest to the right on the photograph. She already has 11 years of hospital experience.

Standing next to her is Sister Osanna, the daughter of a Protestant deacon who died of blood poisoning in our hospital. She has been working with us for 5 years, is very competent and shows much love for the ailing.

The small figure in the center of the photograph is Sister Kutsi, who has been in service since 1909. Her personality is much appreciated by the patients as she is constantly cheerful and gay. When she first started with us it seemed that she would not amount to much, she was somewhat clumsy and made a rather odd face when told the many new names that she would have to learn. Now she is quite different, she has become deft, alert and thoughtful. She is a bit too reckless. For the

last year her health has been far from perfect, and she ought to spare herself, which only happens when I rein her in, so to speak.

Rpsome, or Horom, as we call her for short, is our fourth Sister. She is the youngest, barely 20 years old, and has been with us for almost two years. Her character is much appreciated by the sick, though of course she is still somewhat behind in knowledge and experience. Most Turks cannot see an unveiled woman without casting her coveting glances, and because Sister Horom is a beauty by Oriental standards, it has happened several times that Turkish patients have behaved inappropriately towards her, and I then had to take a firm stand against such patients.

The last to have joined us, just a few months ago, is Sister Khatun. She started out as our ear patient. It is during her illness that she decided to become a nurse. She enrolled with us, and we hired her as soon as we were in need of help. She too is promising. As soon as summer vacation begins, she will be in need of an operation herself because of trachoma.

Of our five Sisters, only Khatun is Armenian-Gregorian, all the others have had a Protestant education. May God bless the service rendered by these Sisters upon the inhabitants of our country.



Inside a hospital room

Even the most willing viewer will see precious little in this picture. If one look closely, it is possible with great difficulty to make out the heads of three patients. Our rooms are too small and too narrow to be respectably captured on camera. When it was photographed, the room held 9 patients.

We had to install the patient at the center of the picture on a trestle bed, because the room only has 8 cots. When we have a shortage of space, we make room for such a trestle on which to lay the 9th patient. We can see a weight hanging from a rope tied to one of the beds. It weighs close to 20 pounds. The other end of the rope is attached to an Arab whose leg was shattered by a bullet during a raid.

The observer shouldn't conclude from the box of Havana cigars that we smoke Havana cigars here – no, the box only serves to hold the thermometers.

The handsome pitcher on the table is rather elegant. Its porous structure helps to keep the drinking water cool.

The kidney dish next to it lets one rightly guess that the patient lying in the bed by the table must be newly operated, and that his mind is still clouded from the chloroform.



Hospital patients

It is a rare occasion to be able to photograph so many patients up and about at the same time in our hospital. As soon as a patient is able to hobble about, he is generally bade to leave the hospital in order to free his cot for the next patient. Thus, we rarely have as many patients that are able to walk around as are shown in this picture. The four day-nurses wanted to be in the photograph too, and their presence further increases the group.

Surely the mission friend will bear with me introducing the patients one by one.



On the far right, with a bandage over one eye, is Ramadan the Kurd. He came here from the northern town of Severek, two days' travel from here. When he came he was blind in both eyes. We first operated the right eye, but alas, the operation failed. With much care and prayer, we took on the operation of his other eye. Thank God, it was a success and the poor fellow regained his sight at least in one eye.



Next to him is a Christian woman. She too has a bandaged eye. The only one she had left had developed a malignant growth and there was a risk of her going blind. In this case too, thank God, through long and costly care we were able to save the precious eye of this poor woman, who is mother to three underage children.

Sitting next to this woman is a Christian girl from Adiaman, two days' journey away. She first had to have her eyelids operated, then because of unrelenting pain we had to remove her severely swollen spleen. As I write, she is considered recovered.



Behind the young girl is one of our old servants from the ward in Diarbekr. She was in need of surgery for a cancerous growth. Note her long braid of hair, to which we may add an amusing detail. Here, too, the female city dwellers enjoy showing off their long tresses. When they do not have their own, as is the case here, someone else's hair is used.

Sitting serenely next to the girl from Adiaman is a patient wearing dark glasses. She is an elderly Turkish woman from Severek. The cause of her joy are her own two eyes, which had gone blind from glaucoma, but could be made to see again thanks to a series of operations.



The woman next to her is from Mardin, four days' journey from Urfa. Her child is sitting on her lap. It is not the woman who is the patient, but her child, who had to have a stone removed from its bladder. The child was so anemic and bloated that we worried that it might not survive the operation. But it withstood it very well, unlike a small boy whom we operated on the same day, also because of a bladder stone, and of whom we said: surely he will bear it well, yet he died two days after the operation. So it goes sometimes – what appears to be weak is strong, and what seems strong turns out to be weak.



Crouching before the child's bed, pensive, anxious, he too with a bandaged eye, is a bearded man. Isn't he the spitting image of Ramadan, whom we just described? It is his brother Ali, who also received eye surgery. He is currently still suffering from a eye ulcer that developed after the operation. Standing behind him and the child from

Mardin is the private patient Mustapha-Manèr.

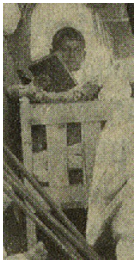


Whoever is familiar with the names in these parts will immediately notice that this is a man with both a Mohammedan and a Christian name. This is highly unusual. Of course he is only called thus among the Christian population. His name at baptism was actually Manugg, Manèr for short. When the terrible massacres happened in 1895, Manèr was the only Christian in a Mohammedan village. He was put before the choice of either dying, or becoming Moslem. If it had been only for him, he told us, he would have had the courage to die, like so many other Christians. But his young wife and their small children begged him through their tears not to choose to die. Thus he became Moslem and chose for himself the name Mustapha. Dark hour of my existence! says Mustapha of that time when he became a Moslem.

Soon after the massacres, the Turkish government had to give in to pressures by foreign powers and amnestied all Christians that had been forced to convert. They were thus able to once more become Christian. Manèr immediately returned to his old faith, which he had never renounced in his heart. But the name Mustapha stayed with him as a distinctive mark assigned to him by the Christians.

To the credit of most of the local Christians, it must be said that they didn't condone Manèr's deed. Thousands of them were put before the same choice, they too with wife and children, yet they had the courage to choose death rather than renounce their Christian faith.

What brought him to our hospital? He came down with rose disease, as a result of which a large part of his body died off completely. He very narrowly escaped dying from the disease. But he was granted a respite. Covering the large open wound with healthy skin necessitated a miracle of medical and technical skill. And it was a success. Hence Mustapha-Manèr's rather satisfied expression in the picture.



The little boy lying in the cot is the Armenian Ohannes. He has been our patient for over three months now, free of charge. His entire shinbone had died off. A long time must pass before a new one has grown in. He is in all probability a late descendant of a German crusader, for he has blue eyes and reddish-blond hair. He is holding a picture book in his hand. And here I would like to make an appeal. We are short of picture books in our hospital. Everyone, young and old, looks at picture books with joy and pleasure. Few are those able to read, and the illustrated books are a most welcome pastime. Who will present our patients with a picture book?

The man with the crutches is the Kurd Ibrahim from Severek. He is a patient who asked me for a picture book every time he caught a glimpse of me. He had a dropped foot resulting from a gun shot injury, which the doctor put back into place.



The old man behind him is a Christian from Urfa. He had already recovered from an operation undergone here, but his pallor reveals some other hidden ailment.



Standing next to him, slightly askew, is Elias, the goldsmith from Chungush, 5 days' journey away. For several years he had been unable to work because of neuralgia. Here he could be cured. Back in his homeland, he sang the praises of the doctor's skill. The result of this was the arrival in Urfa of a whole caravan of patients from that area.



Seated on a stepladder is a Protestant youth from Severek. He has just been admitted to the hospital because of a tuberculous foot condition. Will he be blessed with recovery? This is very doubtful, because generally tuberculous conditions never let go of their victims. He can read, and so spends most of this period of suffering reading, especially the Bible.



Who does not thank the Lord that he is not among the ailing, when he contemplates the picture of our hospital patients while himself in good health? Who will remember the suffering and help us to take in the poor, who have nothing?

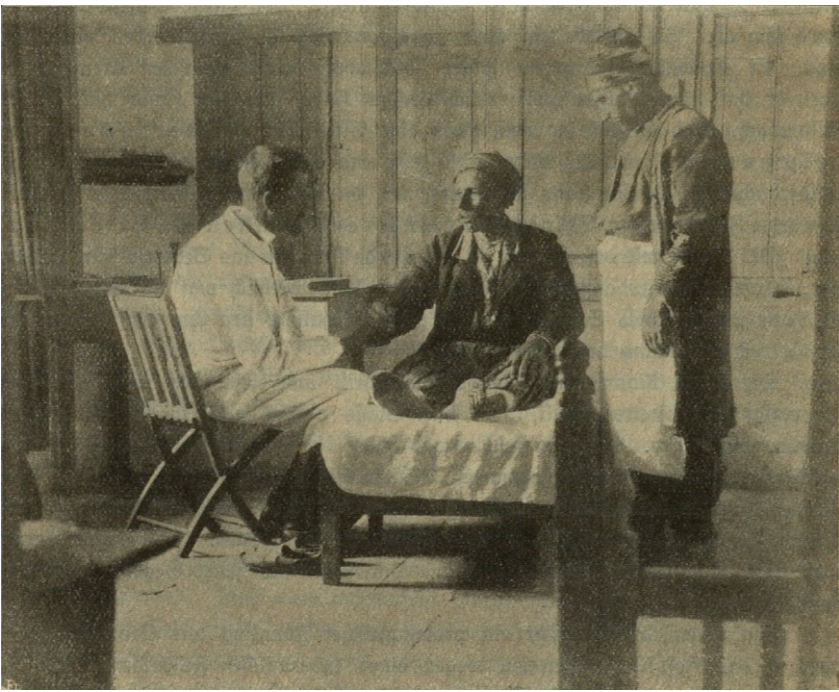


Morning in the clinic

Here is a colorful picture. Big and small, young and old, rich and poor, Christians and Mohammedans, everything that can be found on a given morning in the clinic.

There are around one hundred people in the picture. Normally they are divided into two courtyards and two waiting rooms. Patients that come to have their bandages changed or to have their eyes treated, and those who are new and come to be examined, are in different rooms. Every year, the months of April, May and June flood us with patients so that we are barely able to cope with the amount of work.

In the new hospital that is to be built we must have a waiting room large enough to fit all of the patients so that we may reach them all when we read the word of God to them before we begin the medical work. Our current rooms are too small, too open and they are not decorated in any way that would make them agreeable to those waiting. All of this should be improved in the new hospital, so we hope.



A patient is examined

Our examination room is small. Because it also serves as a laboratory, it is very cramped. This should be better in the new hospital.

Sitting on the bed is a sick Turk from Severek. He has removed his shoes so as not to soil the white bed linen. Dr. Vischer is feeling the patient's pulse while the man tells him his case history. The man standing is our old servant Mirchz Abraham. On outpatient days he serves as a translator when this is necessary, and assists the patients in dressing and undressing. Mirchz Abraham is soon to retire. He can no longer be required to work too much. His other main work is bandaging. It is he who makes our bandages.

We boast no handsome examination room, yet we examine around 5'000 patients every year. In the new hospital we wish to decorate the room with some nice pictures.



A group of Kurdish patients

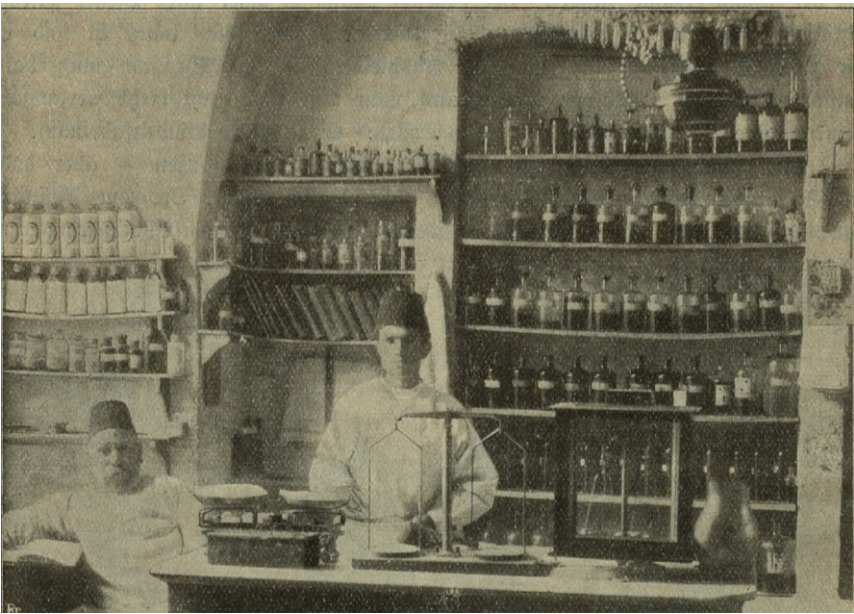
Quite an amusing picture! Country Kurds and city Kurds. They are to be distinguished from one another by their clothing.

The two men standing to the right and the man sitting to the left are city Kurds, the one standing to the left and the man with the grey beard are country Kurds. Likewise, the women with a light-colored scarf, that only lets a small part of the face appear, are city dwellers (“*basheri*” in Kurdish) and the two women dressed in dark are “*gundi*”, villagers.

In the case of children, it is not as easy to see which of them are *basheri* or *gundi*, unless maybe that the *basheri* are dirty and the *gundi* dirtier still. In the photograph, only the second child from the left is from a village, all the others are from the city.

Doesn't the elderly Kurd cut a dignified appearance? Were we to put him in European clothes, and cover his head with a top hat instead of his thick turban, we would have before us a professor with a striking facial expression, or a venerable pastor.

The Kurds are without a doubt a people that can still amount to something, if they are given good schools and their hearts are educated through a better religion than the Mohammedan one is.



At the dispensary

Our dispensary too, is a room that doesn't easily fit into a single picture. It is a vaulted structure that is rather damp in the winter, causing certain medicines to deteriorate. So our dispensary too cries out for relief, for a better place – hence the building of a new hospital! Our pharmacist Abraham, who has worked hard with us since the very foundation of our medical mission, is slowly beginning to grow old, as can be noted by his greying hair.

But he does not only keep busy in the dispensary, where he has the help of an able assistant by the name of Hosep, he is also quite an acceptable surgical assistant on operating days. He already has three grown children. Three are younger in age. May God spare him, for our good and that of his family, for many years to come!

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3,26

And ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. *Genesis 3,5*

Biographical data

Historical events

March 8, 1871: Jakob Künzler is born in the Rothus in Hundwil

1872: the Künzler family moves to Teufen

November 3, 1877: death of Jakob's father

Primary school and work as a spinner

1878-79: Jakob lives with relatives in Stein and Wolfhalden

1880: Jakob's mother returns to Teufen

1882: mother's illness and death (October 11)

Easter 1888: Jakob celebrates his confirmation in Stein

Apprenticeship as a carpenter

Summer, 1891: begins working as a carpenter in Basel

1893-94: trains as a Deacon (male nurse)

1895: Armenian massacre

Works in the Basel Bürger hospital

1899: appointed to the clinic in Urfa (now Şanlıurfa in modern Turkey)

1903: founds the Syrian-Protestant school

1903 and 1909: vacation leave in Stein AR

November 7, 1905: marries Elisabeth Bender

*1908: declaration of the Turkish national state,
universal citizenship rights, compulsory military service*

1909: Adana massacre

1913: representative houses are erected in Urfa for the both Doctor and the Deacon

*August 1914: the major European powers declare war
Turkey enters the war alongside Germany*

Autumn 1914: commissioned as medical assistant to two Persian princes

April 1915: Künzler suffers a serious case of typhus

*1915-16: mass deportations and killings
Armenian uprising in Urfa and subsequent defeat*

October 30, 1915: Künzler's friend F. H. Leslie kills himself out of despair
1915-1918: intensive health care independently provided to civilians and soldiers

October 30, 1918: armistice

1919-20: on leave in Basel

1920: return to Urfa

1921-23: victory of Kemal Atatürk

Massacres of Greeks, Syrians and Kurds

1921-22: the Künzlers bring 8'000 orphans to safety in Syria

October 1st, 1922: the clinic in Urfa is closed

1923: Künzler directs the orphanage in Ghazir, Lebanon (Near East Relief)

April 1923: Künzler has to have his right arm amputated following blood poisoning

Sets up a carpet factory

1925: a carpet is sent to the White House in Washington

The Lebanese President awards Künzler with the *Ordre pour le mérit*

1931: the orphanage is shut down; vacation leave in Switzerland; lectures

1932: service in Beirut on behalf of the Swiss Friends of Armenians

nursery, soup kitchen, information center, housing for Armenian widows in Beirut

Fight against malaria with Gambezi fish

1935-36: „professional beggar“: lectures in the USA

1938: opening of the Armenian Sanatorium in Beirut

1938: vacation leave in Switzerland

1939-1945: World War II

November 22, 1947:

The University of Basel awards Künzler an honorary doctorate in medicine

Januar 15, 1949: Künzler dies in Ghazir

Januar 17, 1949: burial in Beirut

Januar 17, 1968: death of Künzler's wife Elisabeth

I can already feel Künzler's orderly touch in the clinic; the man himself is very jolly and well disposed, now and then he lets a yodel from his Appenzell homeland ring out, which does one much good in this barren, silent land.

Dr. Hermann Christ, 23.12.1899

The fact that Mr. Künzler held out the whole time is very, very remarkable. He is blessed with indestructible nerves and a cheerful disposition, yet in the end it appears that it will be too much even for him. The number of epidemics that have come over our city following the deportations has increased immeasurably. We must do everything in our power to support him in every possible way.

Karen Jeppe, Der Christliche Orient, 1919

You should see Künzler at work in his roles as orphan-father and factory director, one would tend to think that he has four arms rather than only one. If I had my way, I would gladly spend a few weeks at the Künzlers', for to be with such people is more beautiful than the most beautiful of landscapes.

Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Vischer, 1924

Where did you find such inexhaustible love for the unfortunate, for the orphans and the beggars? How could you keep on smiling in front of such physical and moral ugliness? What sustained you? The roots of your unshakeable faith, seated deep in your heart, just like the foundations of the Swiss mountains in the heart of Europe. Beneath all this misery your eyes saw our Savior, who said: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Pater Boghos Aris at Künzler's funeral, January 17, 1947

If Albert Schweitzer was the man of learning, it is the gift of action that places Jakob Künzler, the Deacon in the white smock, among the most compassionate men of our times. Where else does one find such exultation of caretaking, lived out during an entire lifetime, such praise of the hardship that all the filth, pus, blood, stench, feces, sweat, tears, impatience, ungratefulness, clamor and despair bring upon him who tends to the ailing?

Paul Schütz, 1967

Papa's deep, unquestioning faith was the source of the joy that radiated out from him, warming and gladdening all who came into contact with him. It gave him strength in the face of danger and tragedy, which he accepted with the confidence that such was God's will.

Ida Alamuddin, 1970

With his pragmatism and dependability, Künzler was the counterpart of the restless and idealistic publicist Lepsius. Künzler too was a gifted writer. His strength lay in his direct portrayal of first-hand experiences whose significance went far beyond the private realm. He was a communicative person and came into contact with people from the most diverse backgrounds. Among his friends were Kurds, Turks, Arabs, Syrian Christians and of course Armenians.

Hans-Lukas Kieser, 1999

Künzler and his wife pursued their work in Urfa, in South-Eastern Anatolia, in the midst of the Armenian genocide and had to look on with astounding sobriety as all the ideals they practiced were trampled over by a gruesome history of facts.

Dr. phil. Manfred Züfle, 1999

Künzler's writing is measured, his prose spare, and the resulting litany of horror and tragedy is the more disturbing for it. The author's selfsacrifice in the cause of saving lives in the most onerous of circumstances, to his endeavors to help rebuild the shattered remnant of the Armenian community in the aftermath of genocide, his book, too, is ample testament.

Donald Bloxhalm, 2007

University of Basel, Medical Faculty
Office of the Dean

We hereby bestow the title of Doctor in Medicine,
Honoris Causa, upon:

Mr. Jakob Künzler

from Walzenhausen, Appenzell, Deacon;

who spent over 25 years in Armenia caring for
countless ailing and wretched in Christian love, and
who valiantly braved the bloody scourge visited upon
the Armenian people ;

who after this great misfortune led thousands of
children into safety in Lebanon, where he guided the
healthy among them towards professional
independence, and founded a permanent home for the
blind and the weak ;

and who transformed the immense, squalid refugee
camp on the shores of Beirut into a comfortable
settlement, and through wise counseling managed to
successfully combat and curtail the dangerous
epidemics of tuberculosis and malaria threatening its
inhabitants ;

who thus, along with his faithful wife, saved thousands
of people from terrible suffering and a certain death
with unflinching dedication, achieving an example of
pure humanity that deserves to be placed on a par
with the greatest medical accomplishments.

Basel, November 22nd, 1947

The blood and righteousness of Christ
Those are my garment, my sole ornament
In them shall I stand before God
When I enter the kingdom of Heaven.

Stanza from the song played at Künzler's deathbed

On September 8, 1922, more than 100'000 Assyrians, Armenians and Greeks were killed in Smyrna.

In the years between 1932-1953, over 4'500'000 "kulaks" were killed in the Soviet Union.

Between 1933-1945 over 5'000'000 Jews were killed throughout Europe.

In 1937 more than 200'000 Chinese were killed in Nanjing.

Over 1 million people were killed in North Korea between 1953 - 1998.

In 1965, over 100'000 "communists" were killed in Indonesia.

From 1966 to 1976 over 500'000 "counterrevolutionaries" were killed in China.

In 1972 over 100'000 Hutus were killed in Burundi.

More than 1'400'000 people were killed in Cambodia between 1975 - 1978.

On September 17, 1982, over 500 Palestinians were killed in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila.

In the months following April 6th, 1994, over 800'000 Tutsi were killed in Rwanda.

In July 1995 more than 7'000 Bosnians were killed in Srebrenica.

Over 50'000 people were killed in Darfur in 2004.

On January 7th, 2015, over 150 people were killed in Baga, Nigeria.

These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Revelation 7,14



An exhibition in honor of Jakob Künzler,
born and baptized in Hundwil
Concept and text: Pastor Bernhard Rothen, Hundwil
Translation: Kari Sulc