

Otto Frank
Buchenstrasse 12
4127 Birsfelden

June 10, 1971.

2215

Yad Vashem
Jerusalem

Department: The Righteous among the Nations.

Dear Sirs,

Herewith I propose the following persons to be awarded the distinction " The Righteous among the Nations":

Mr. & Mrs. Jan and Miep Gies, Amsterdam-W. 86 Woestduinstraat
Mrs. Elisabeth van Wijk-Voskuyl, Amsterdam -O. Galilleiplantsoen 119
Mr. Victor Kugler, 626 Weston, Ontario, 22 Braeburn Ave. Canada
Mr. Jo Kleiman, Amsterdam-Z. Biesboschstraat 37

In the following I am giving you a detailed account of the help given by these people to my family and my friends.

After Hitler came to power I left Germany with my family and emigrated to Amsterdam, Holland where I became managing director of the Nederlandse Opekta Mij. Amsterdam. In 1939 I established another company trading in spices and employed as a specialist Mr. H. van Pels, a Jewish refugee. After the occupation of the Netherlands by the nazis the situation for the Jews worsened quickly and in autumn 1941 I was not allowed to continue business, nor was Mr. van Pels. I managed to have my employees Mr. Kleiman to become managing director of Opekta and Mr. Kugler of the spice business, so that these firms could go on trading.

I soon realized that the time would come when we would have to go in hiding to escape the danger of deportation. After having discussed the matter thoroughly with Mr. van Pels we came to the conclusion that the best solution would be to hide in the annexe of our office-building Prinsengracht 263. This would only be possible if Mr. Kleiman and Mr. Kugler would be willing to take full responsibility for everything connected with our hiding and if the two secretaries of the firms would cooperate. These were Mrs. Miep Gies and Miss Elisabeth Voskuyl. All four immediately agreed though they were fully aware of the dangerous task they would take upon them in doing so. By nazi-law everyone helping Jews was severely punished and risked to be put into prison, to be deported or even shot.

During the following months we prepared the hiding-place by sending furniture, all sorts of household-stuff, clothes, tins etc. to the house after office-hours where always one of the above named four persons attended to the matter. This had to be done very cautiously, so that nobody would get suspicious.

When my daughter Margot received a call-up to be sent to Germany on July 5th 1942, we decided to leave our home and the following morning my wife, my two daughters and I went to the hiding-place. Mr. and Mrs. van Pels and their son followed a few days later and in November another person joined us, a dentist whom Mrs. Gies asked us to take in, as he was in danger.

So we were 8 persons in hiding and the foresaid helpers had to take care of all these people. Miep and Elly had the extremely difficult task to provide food. To nourish 8 people while most of the food-stuff was rationed, was a hard job. They had to buy in different shops, so that it would not raise suspicion if they bought big quantities in one. Mr. Gies and Mr. Kleiman bought ration-cards on the black market for us and when after some time we became short of money, they sold parts of our jewellery. Besides Mr. Kugler sold spices without booking the sales to help to finance our needs. All these activities were risky and they always had to be careful not to be trapped by collaborators of the Germans or by agents provocateurs.

Apart from food there were lots of other items which we needed in the course of the 25 months of our hiding, such as toilet-articles, medicines, clothes for the growing children etc. as well as books and other material to keep us busy.

Every day our helpers came to see us, sometimes early in the morning before office-hours or at lunch-time when the other employees had left the house. Their moral support was very important for us. They gave us an optimistic view on the situation if possible and tried to conceal bad news. There was much tension in their lives during these two years and Mr. Kleiman who had a very delicate health had several attacks from ulcer due to all the excitements.

In spite of all precautions and the devotion of our friends we were betrayed and the Gestapo raided our hiding-place on August 4th 1944. Mr. Kleiman and Mr. Kugler managed to convince the Germans that the two girls had not known that Jews were hidden in the building and so only the two men were arrested and sent to prison. The Germans seem not to have known that Mr. Gies was also one of our helpers.

After my return from Auschwitz I heard that Mr. Kleiman and Mr. Kugler had been sent to the concentration-camp Amersfoort. Mr. Kleiman was in a very bad state of health and after some time the Red Cross managed to get him free. Mr. Kugler had to do forced labour for the Germans in different places and twice he was in danger to be shot. In March 1945 he took advantage of a turmoil caused by a bombardement by English planes during a transport and escaped. He then hid until the end of the war.

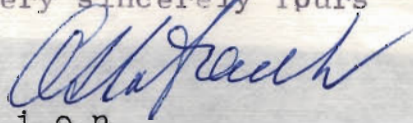
From my report you will realize that the 5 aforementioned persons risked their lives during two years in helping us.

I am the only survivor of the eight people in hiding and I would appreciate it very much if our helpers would receive an acknowledgement for their courage by your institution.

Mr. Kleiman died 12 years ago, but his widow would surely be glad to accept the honorary acclamation posthumous for her husband if granted.

For further details I am pointing to the well-known "Diary" of my daughter Anne.

Very sincerely Ypurs



Legalization

We hereby certify that the signature of Mr. Otto Frank, married, Dutch subject, and resident at Birsfelden (BL), identified by passeport No T 170 609, is genuine.

Basle, 24th June 1971

No 7018

Staatskanzlei
Basel-Stadt



Alfred Voet

