

**On 13 February 1934 the hotelier Hanns Kilian complains to the municipality of Garmisch about the denunciation of an Austrian performer as a Jew<sup>1</sup>**

Letter from Hanns Kilian<sup>2</sup> to the municipality of Garmisch, dated 13 February 1934 (copy)

Subject: letter from Dr Max Vollkommer,<sup>3</sup> Munich, dated 14 January.

I refer to the discussion with your magistrate Mr Holzschuh and comment, as requested, on the letter that Dr Vollkommer addressed to Minister Esser on 14 January about the incident that took place on 30 December in the Alpenhof Park Casino.

I would like to state that it does not correspond to the facts that the performer engaged at the time, Ridi Grün, behaved – as alleged by the writer of the letter – in any way that was offensive or brash. Ridi Grün only performed Viennese folk and operetta songs whose quality and propriety have found favour all over the world through the style and simplicity of their delivery, and this also enabled her to secure the utmost success with large audiences in attendance.

When I engage performers through the agency and the booking department of the Munich office, it is unfortunately not possible for me to ascertain if these performers are of Jewish descent or not, and it would be to the credit of Dr Vollkommer if he saw to it that the booking office did not give any assignments to Jewish personnel.

In any event, if Ridi Grün is in fact a Jewess (I do not know and am unfortunately unable to verify this), then I must emphatically reject the allegation that she had the audacity to disparage the German people in my hotel through her performance. At any rate, I do not know anything about such a thing.

In my opinion, it would have been more useful, and better all round, if Dr Vollkommer – since he, after all, knew who I was – had told me that night what he thought, instead of bringing this matter to the attention of Minister Esser. I imagine that the minister is inundated with quite different and more important tasks, and it is thus inappropriate to bother him with such matters.

I would be very grateful to Dr Vollkommer if he could advise me on where to find good and genuine German performers for my weekly events, for at the ball hosted by the German Stage on 7 February, I unfortunately observed that the performers were poorly received, and that the master of ceremonies engaged for the evening, Carl Maria Braun, delivered such unbelievable remarks (dirty jokes and wisecracks of the worst kind) that my guests were outraged.

1 BArch, NS 23/158. This document has been translated from German.

2 Hanns Kilian (1905–1981), sportsman and businessman; successful bobsledder; took part in the Beer Hall Putsch, 1923; owner and manager of the Alpenhof; SA-Sturmabführer and leader of the Garmisch branch of the National Socialist Motor Corps, 1934; president of the German Bobsleigh and Luge Federation from 1952.

3 Probably Dr Max Vollkommer (1894–1985), physician; resident of Munich; joined the NSDAP in 1931. Acting 'in advocacy of the aims of our Movement', Dr Max Vollkommer, an SA-Obersturmführer and Party member, had informed the Bavarian state minister without portfolio, Hermann Esser, that on 30 Dec. 1933, at a dance event at the Alpenhof hotel, an 'offensive, brash Jew' had sung the 'Lied vom Hünen' ('Song of the Giant') in a way that could be interpreted as a 'disparagement of Germany': *ibid.*

I think that if such a mistake is made by the head of the Combat League for German Culture, Dr Heinz, by way of the section head for theatre in the Propaganda Department, Mr Schneider Franke<sup>4</sup> from Munich, who books the performers through the Society for Literature and the Performing Arts, then Dr Vollkommer's accusation must be unreasonable.

It is easy for guests from Garmisch-Partenkirchen to hurl criticism and insults, as these people understand neither the business nor how difficult it is to satisfy all tastes, which, as is well known, vary widely. However, when something inappropriate actually does happen, it is unfortunately not possible to legislate for this beforehand.

In any event, I can assure the municipality of Garmisch that I have endeavoured, and will continue to endeavour, to run my hotel according to the principles of the 'New Germany', and ask you to give credence to my assurance.

Heil Hitler

signed Hanns Kilian

NB. As I learned from Mr R. Kunig,<sup>5</sup> the long-standing operetta tenor for Munich's Gärtnerplatz Theatre, which performed in our hotel yesterday, Ms Ridi Grün is not a Jewess, according to a statement he made. This was also confirmed by my establishment's master of ceremonies, Otto Clemente, who asked Ms Ridi Grün last summer if she was a Jewess, to which she replied in the negative. This therefore excuses me from Dr Vollkommer's accusation, and I would like to leave to him the task of establishing whether the said performer is a Jewess or not.<sup>6</sup> Dr Vollkommer probably mistook her Viennese accent for Jewish jargon.

4 Probably Josef Rudolf Schneider Franke, writer; author of works including *Der Goldene Käfig* (1937).

5 Rudolf Bonifaz Kunig (1894–1951), actor in Munich.

6 Though the Austrian Ridi Maria Grün, a resident of Vienna, only learned of the denunciation later, she lodged a complaint on 25 April 1934 with the Supreme SA Command in Munich. She rejected the accusation that she was a Jew. Because she felt she had suffered 'considerable damage', she demanded that Vollkommer be brought to account, and threatened to bring the matter to Hitler's attention: BArch, NS 23/158.