

LETTER 1

ISABEL ALTHAUS DE WINTER

LAS PALMAS GRAN CANARIA

C/ Hermanos García de la Torre, 12

4th March 1983

MR

GRAD. ENGINEER SIMON WIESENTHAL

MESTROZIGASSE, 5

A - 1190 VIENNA, Republic of Austria

Dear Mr Wiesenthal,

Last week I asked for your address in person at the Austrian Embassy in Madrid.

May I take the liberty to address you directly. The reason for my writing is an article called "CANARY ISLANDS: Here is where HITLER wished to retire" published in the Spanish magazine "INTERVIÚ", issue 350, dated 26th January /1 issue of this year. The article was written by journalist JOSE LUIS MORALES. Please find enclosed a copy of the article translated into German by me. Anyone who is half educated in Spain knows who JOSE LUIS MORALES is, and what he is after with his libellous articles.

Your name is repeatedly mentioned in the article. In a nutshell, the article is brimming with horrendous lies and the most awful false accusations that seriously affect us, my deceased husband, who died in 1971 and me. The article also questions the authenticity of our property. We have proceeded with legal action against the writer of the article and the magazine itself. In the meantime, we have received anonymous phone calls claiming there are documents and evidence against us as stated in the article, intending to blackmail and extort us.

I'm strongly convinced of the fact that there is nothing negative in your archive about my deceased husband, graduated engineer GUSTAV WINTER, neither as a nazi, nor protector or concealer of nazi criminals, or as BARBIE's friend, etc. My husband was no nazi, he was never part of a nazi party, he wasn't even a soldier, and he didn't even take part in the 1st or 2nd World War, and he never wore a uniform. My husband didn't live in the Canary Islands between 1939 and 1947. The fact that there was a supply base in Jandía for nazi submarines is a total fabrication, there was never such a thing. Had this been true, this fact would have been inevitably known by the allies and secret services,

because Jandía was practically uninhabited back then, and everyone was aware of everything that went on.

The author of the article, in order to elude any responsibility, makes subtle statements in third person. For instance, claims supposedly made by historian BARRIOS URUMEA, who, according to our research to date, and to statements of historians we have consulted as well as a check of the list of authors, seems not to exist and is apparently not even a real character.

My husband came for the first time to Spain, from England, during the 1st World War, in 1915, where he spent his whole life working on industrial projects and later became naturalised. He ran a chemical product factory in FLIX, Tarragona, he lived in Valencia from 1919 to 1925 and later in Madrid, and from 1926 to 1931 in the Canary Islands, where he built the last of his electrical thermal plants in 1926/28, in Las Palmas. He provided electricity to the whole island of Gran Canaria followed by Tenerife. His connection with the Canary Islands does not date back to 1939 and has nothing to do with the 2nd World War, the nazis or Hitler, etc. During the 1930s, he worked on an important exploitation project of the vast fishing grounds in the Saharan coast, near the Canary Islands, and he chose Fuerteventura as location for the factories, sealing the corresponding deals in 1937 with the inheritors of the former owner of Jandía living in San Sebastián. The coasts of Jandía are well known for their abundant fish and there was a fishing village there too as well as the right type of soil (clay) for saltworks. The war and its aftermath, made the project fail. When we got to Jandía in 1947, we were able to make the most of the preliminary work done, such as roads, paths, digging wells (there was no water in Jandía, other than a natural stream), terracing and cultivated fields. My husband lived in Barcelona and Madrid in 1944, and I met him in 1945. When in Madrid, he worked on the design of the chalet mentioned in the article, whose construction started in 1946. Any link between the building of said house, in 1946, and Hitler or Eva Braun is pure madness and goes against all logic.

I came to Spain in 1941, and I studied at the University of Madrid since I couldn't finish my studies in Germany. My father, Friedrich Althaus, was a victim of nazism. He was a civil servant and he refused to become part of the nazi party -which he was obliged to do- and, as a consequence of this, he was made retire. My grandmother was called Ottilia Frankenstein.

In Madrid, in the 1940s, I befriended Ángel Wiesenthal and his wife (a childless couple). He had a dachshund that I often looked after. A brother or cousin of Mr Ángel Wiesenthal's, was back then the Spanish consul in Zürich (you may perhaps be related to them) and he was a great help to my husband.

As a reference I will mention Mrs Dely Solaro, Adele Katz before she married, from Vienna. She was a Jewish woman who had fled to Italy, and whom I met and supported in Madrid in the 1940s. She lived in our house in Jandía for many years. She's now 87, and lives in Las Palmas, C/ Real del Castillo, 157.

I would also like to mention Mrs Lilly Köhler, Schretzmeyer before she married. She married Mr Alexander Köhler (of Rumanian background), living in Lanzarote, Tías, Puerto del Carmen, C/ General Prim nº 26. Mrs Lilly's parents fled Vienna (they were Jews) and they went to Lausanne, in

Switzerland. Mrs Lilly Schretzmeyer's father was captured by the nazis and executed in a gas chamber in one of their infamous concentration camps. Her current husband, Mr Alexander Köhler, fled to Switzerland with his mother, Mrs Estella Köhler. My husband financially supported the family Köhler in Switzerland until Mrs Estella Köhler was able to emigrate to the United States. Her son, Alexander Köhler has known my husband since age 7, and used to always call him "uncle Gustav". The young couple, Alexander and Lily Köhler, lived with us in Jandía for a few years.

The people aforementioned, are disgusted by the content of the article published, since they know well that none of that is true, and it is merely based on false accusations.

Dear Mr Wiesenthal, I do not wish to tire you out with any further details. I shall be pleased to provide you with any other information you may require. How could the writer of the article state that my husband recently died, when he died nearly 12 years ago, is beyond me. How can he say that nazi parties were held in Jandía, when I have permanently lived in Las Palmas since 1965? After the sudden death of my husband, I had to raise 5 children, the youngest was 9 and the eldest 18. Two of my children are now lawyers, another one is a doctor, one is an engineer and a professor at the university, and the other one is a 5th year medicine student in Las Palmas. We shall not allow this bucket of lies to be spread on us by a simple and infamous writer.

I beg you to please let me know if there could be anything in your files that verifies what the writer is saying in his article.

I owe this much to my husband, he did nothing but good and helped everyone. The current success of Jandía is thanks to my husband's promotion of tourism after some agricultural projects failed. I also do it for the reputation of my husband, my children and 9 grandchildren. I will not allow, after having lived a reputable life, to be now called NAZIS.

I look forward to your kind understanding and reply.

YOURS SINCERELY: Isabel Althaus de Winter

Mrs Isabel de Winter  
Hermanos García de la Torre, 12  
Las Palmas de Gran Canaria 5  
SPAIN

VIENNA, 11th March 1983 SW/A  
Grad. Engineer Gustav Winter

Dearest Mrs Winter,

I have received your letter dated 4th March and the documents enclosed which I have thoroughly read.

Overall, I would like to inform you that the article mentioned is a lot of nonsense and no journalist has ever contacted us to talk about Jandía or has ever been given information by us, as claimed.

Here are some examples that show the lack of reliability of the article: Karl Silberbauer, who arrested Anne Frank and her family, is in the article named as the “renowned Gilberbaner, Gestapo agent”, but he was actually a Vienna Police Department agent, who was totally insignificant, and who, when working in Holland was told to go to a particular house and arrest a Jewish family, and then take them to the Police Station. That was the extent of his work in Anne Frank’s case. He died around 6 years ago.

Roschmann collapsed 3 years ago in a street in Paraguay, and died 10 days later at hospital.

Major Treblinke, Franz Stangl, died in 1971 in Düsseldorf, in jail, after being arrested in 1967 in Sao Paulo.

Please, do send me the details of your husband’s birth, Gustav Winter. I shall gladly help you and provide you with information relevant to your case and the necessary documents regarding the past of your husband.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Wiesenthal

Isabel de Winter  
Hermanos García de la Torre, 12  
Las Palmas de Gran Canaria - 5  
(Canary Islands)

LAS PALMAS GRAN CANARIA  
30th April 1983

MR DOCTOR ENGINEER SIMON WIESENTHAL  
MESTROZIGASSE, 5  
A - 1190 VIENNA Republic of Austria

Dear Mr Wiesenthal,

I have received your priceless letter dated 11th March this year, in which you kindly answer my letter dated 4th March.

Regarding my letter from 4th March, may I inform you that the Court has accepted my claim for defamation and slander against journalist José Luis Morales and that legal procedures shall now follow their course.

I am very much looking forward to seeing the publication in German magazine 1 STERN concerning the incredible discovery of Hitler's diaries, since they should show whether Hitler ever had anything to do with the construction of a "castle" on the island of Fuerteventura, in Jandía, to retire with Eva Braun, as the Spanish journalist made us believe in his article for INTERVIÚ magazine.

You did ask about my deceased husband's details. Here they are: GUSTAV WINTER, graduated engineer, son of Adolf Winter and Anna, Klingele before she married. He was born on 10th May 1893 in ZASTLER (near Freiburg/Breisgau). Please find enclosed a copy of his birth certificate, as well as a copy of his first civil marriage in Argentina in 1914 to Johanna Adelsberger. I was his second wife.

May I ask you to please do check your archive regarding the past of my deceased husband in order to provide me with any corresponding information.

I am strongly convinced of the fact that either his name is not in your register, or if it is, there will be no negative information concerning him.

Please be so kind as to confirm this for me.

I look forward to your kind reply.

YOURS SINCERELY: Isabel Althaus de Winter

Isabel de Winter

Hermanos García de la Torre, 12

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria - 5

(Canary Islands)

Las Palmas Gran Canaria

30th April 1986

MR GRAD. ENGINEER SIMON WIESENTHAL

MESTROZIGASSE, 5

A - 1190 VIENNA, Republic of Austria

Dear Mr Wiesenthal,

Today, may I take the liberty to address you once more. I would like to enclose copies of the last two letters (ANNEX I. and II.)

During this time, the legal proceedings haven gone through the corresponding sections of the court of Barcelona, and although the journalist who wrote the article has been convicted, he is out on bail. He has not been able to submit one single piece of evidence throughout the whole process, but has however appealed the verdict. The case shall now end up at the Spanish Supreme Court.

Our lawyer, Mr Piqué Vidal, a renowned criminal lawyer from Barcelona (who, among other things, defends the President of the Generalitat of Cataluña, JORDI PUJOL, in the litigious case of BANCA CATALANA) has just written to one of my sons. Two of my sons are lawyers here. Please find enclosed a copy and translation into German of the letter from lawyer Mr Piqué Vidal.

As you can see, the lawyer is requesting a valid and legally certified copy of the information you provided here by a sworn translator, the original copy and the translation were included in the criminal files as exhibits.

In order to avoid said exhibit from being eventually refuted on behalf of the other party, our lawyer requests a legitimate and authentic copy of the details. Basically, a new original and translated copy, certified by the corresponding Spanish consulate, as well as certified legal competence and activity of the ARCHIVE CENTRE, although it is a globally renowned centre, its legal scope (record entry, etc.) must be duly documented.

I shall be extremely grateful should you send me the requested documents at your earliest convenience. Although the Spanish judicial system is well known for taking its time, and they have been working with this case for 3 years, the final verdict is already imminent.

# DOKUMENTANTIONSZENTRUM

DES BUNDES JÜDISCHER VERFOLGTER DES NAZIREGIMES

A -1010 VIENNA, SALZTORGASSE 6/IV/5 — TELÉFONO 6391 31,6398 05

BANK DETAILS

CREDITANSTALT BANKVEREIN WIEN

NÚM. DE CUENTA 47-32608

Mrs Isabel de Winter

Hermanos García de la Torre, 12

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria 5

SPAIN

VIENNA, 14th May 1986 SW/A

Grad. Engineer Gustav Winter

Dear Mrs de Winter,

We have received your letter dated 30th April 1986. As requested, we shall send you a second "original copy" of our first letter. Unfortunately, we have no way of translating it into Spanish, but you shall surely be able to manage to do this over there more easily.

If you send us the original copy and the corresponding translation, I will make sure that the documents are then certified by the Spanish Embassy.

The association "Bund Jüdischer Verfolgter des Naziregimes" (Association for Jewish Victims of the Nazi Regime), run by the Archive Centre, of which I am the president, is an officially authorised association, duly inscribed and with statutes registered by the Vienna Police of Associations under number I-SD/1012 VB/75.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Wiesenthal

Annex