

Mining, memory and war events in Europe in the 20th century



Proposal for transnational cooperation "Europa con los ciudadanos"



Justification

The CEDER "La Serena" has been working for 25 years, among other areas, in the study and dissemination of the cultural resources of our heritage with the aim of contributing to a better knowledge of our history, to the reinforcement of the territorial identity and to the search for new opportunities for rural development.

This work has been carried out with a bottom-up approach and in a participatory manner, trying to give the weight of the actions to civil society through the direct participation of Associations and various collectives.

In this line of actions, the intangible heritage and oral memory have played a very important role and from the Regional Documentation Center launched a cultural dissemination initiative and a "testimonial bank" linked to memory with the aim of learn more about our recent history and value our local resources..

Background

The region of La Serena has many resources related to mining, from prehistoric times, during the romanization, in the middle ages and mainly during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Castuera had a prominent place in the extraction of lead in the nineteenth century, not forgetting the resources linked to the archeology of lead and flat in Roman times, but without doubt one of the most unique and important exploitations of those developed during the twentieth century, Except for the extraction of granite that continues to be the main industrial activity of the region, it was the exploitation of the Wolfram mines. This mineral became strategic during the great wars of the twentieth century and especially during World War II.

There are several deposits of this mineral in La Serena, such as the La Rosita mine in Campanario and Pico Lirio in Castuera, but among all the places the San Nicolás Mining Complex stands out, in Valle de La Serena, although there are other contemporary exploitations in other municipalities of the comarcana.

The contemporary history of San Nicolás is a succession of ups and downs, of ridges and valleys, alternating in time, expansive moments with international prominence, linked to the warlike conflicts that marked the tragic 20th century, followed by paralyzes of all activity. Now it is sunk in a chasm, it will soon come out of it to emerge vigorously.

The Sociedad Minera Tres Amigos began operations in 1914. The production of tungsten was exported to Europe, where it began to be demanded due to the Great War, the First World War. Later, during the Spanish Civil War, the Republic absorbed the production of the mine until the summer of 1938, at which time the Francoist troops took control of the area.

Concluded the Hispanic conflict, the concession was retired to the group Tres Amigos adducing the expiration of the same. In spite of the appeals filed, in 1941 Román García de Blanes was made, who changed the name and formed the San Nicolás Mining Group. From then on, the German company Sociedad Montes de Galicia takes the reins of the space under the lease formula.

During the years of the Second World War, wolfram became a strategic mineral of the international war industry. This metal, thanks to its qualities, was incorporated into the alloys with which the armor was manufactured. While the Allies had mines available in America and Asia, Germany, lacking them, required production from Extremadura. It is

surprising to think that, for example, the Panzerdivision of the German Wehrmacht that fought on the Soviet front were made with material from Valle de La Serena.

Project proposal

We propose a project proposal that we consider can be framed within the scope of the "Europe with citizens" Program with the following theme:

- Identification of territories of the European Union with tungsten mining exploited during the wars of the 20th century.

- Exchange of experiences, documentation and oral testimonies between these territories and citizens with the aim of documenting a common European history linked to this historical process.

- Analysis of the socio-economic situation of rural territories that lived a period of splendor around mining and its current situation, looking for new options for the future.

- Preparation of a European map through the study of the territories where the tungsten passed after its extraction until reaching the factories: route, transport, foundries, etc.

- Reflection on the limitation of natural resources such as lead, tungsten, lithium and the importance of generating new models of green and circular economy.

Keywords.

Historical memory, wolfram, oral memory, intangible heritage, mining, rural development, circular economy.

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