

THE TALE OF COFETE

Sunday 13th January: there is barely any wind and the sky is clear, almost blue: a wonderful Sunday morning after eight days with dust in the air. I'm looking forward to the afternoon with a higher and unexpected satisfaction: reading the central pages of this newspaper about the work of Mr Diego Talavera, an article called Nazi Submarines in Puerto de La Luz. I'm about to transcribe the first five lines: "*Fuerteventura was no supply base for German submarines during the Second World War, and the Winter house in Cofete, in the West coast of the island, was not used as accommodation for German officials. All of it has been a fabricated tale and a popular fantasy.*"

I had been waiting a long time for something like this to come along. And I have never expressed myself through the public media about this topic before. No matter how well documented as I might have been, what credibility would it have for a son to try to defend his father's honour publically when it comes to activities carried out by him before his son was even born? The outcome of the movie *Music Box* has had dissuasive powers over me. And, above all, when he didn't do it whilst in life –although it is true that back then, the tale didn't have the impact it has gained in time, in the following three decades-. On the other hand, being deferred and resigned and feeling too powerless to deny such a wide-spread tale. Finally, and although it would hurt deeply to know that your father might have been or might have been believed to have been, this or the other, I have also done my best to own my actions and not feel responsible for things I have taken no part in, even if this is directly related to one's parents.

I thought that this tale was like a virus I was protected against, and that it didn't affect me after so many doses of memory (based on the repetition of this tale). Nevertheless, I ought to admit, that I must be affected by all of it, since today, after reading those five lines, I have felt huge satisfaction, without a doubt connected to something very deep down. I am not as naive as to think that this article shall make the tale fade away: it will go on, it's a very appealing tale. But it has made me feel good, and I haven't managed to help myself from writing these lines in turn.

It is true that the landscape of Cofete, with that house on the skirt of the mountains, generally covered by haze in the evenings, the fact that it belonged to a German person... all of it may seem mysterious, enigmatic, and may be a source leading to questions and fantasies. But, is that enough? Throughout the years, I have always wondered how many of those who have spread those stories actually did any research at all? It's very simple, it's basic: all you have to do is go around and ask the locals, those who lived in Cofete in the 40s. Unfortunately, there are currently very few of them still alive, but in the past thirty years, when the stories were being spread, it would have been easy to find them in Morro Jable. Has anyone bothered to figure out the construction date of the house of Cofete? (the house could be accessed by anyone by just giving the people "keeping it" a mere tip). Have any pictures been submitted or has anyone given any documents confirming any of it? It is probably more interesting to publish stories based on legends, repeated and enhanced by those writing them, and then used as reference by someone else, always with "new additions" to the story, often very hurtfully so, and, it goes on... Then, all this is taken as basis for a novel that adds even more weight to what people were already believing about the reality of such fiction. How many things are published and said and we all take them to be true and take part in making them more believable?

I must mention two things now, taking a step back of the seriousness of my words above. The house in Cofete has had other owners for years, and somehow before now, there had been no infamous "tunnels" found for those submarines. In addition, Cofete is an impressive place, extraordinarily stunning. However, has any of those who have been there truly believed that it would be a good supply base? What for? For something else other that gorses, cactus sap, donkey's meat and mussels? Also, how would supplies and fuel be taken there in those days? Which infrastructures were there in place for that, and how would the submarines be supplied? (the research carried out of naval letters of the area, reveals that the shallow the water reaches even areas far away from the coast, which would deter any submarine from being able to manoeuvre anywhere near it, which is what explains the formation of large waves so characteristic of that coastal area and that have taken so many lives).

The article by Mr Diego Talavera, concludes with something that seems blatant (but that however, is no use to back up a story): Were was the fuel and infrastructures for all this? In Gran Canaria, in Puerto de La Luz. As Whitehead said, “you need an outstanding mind to see what is obvious.”

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