

THE ALLEGED SUPPLY OF SUBMARINES IN FUERTEVENTURA DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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CONCLUSIONS

Gustavo Winter took no part in the clandestine service supply of the *Kriegsmarine* in the Canary Islands during the 2nd World War, or in the supply of German submarines in Jandía. Both claims are based on four main arguments. First of all, the industrialisation project of Jandía as proposed by Winter had mainly financial purposes. There is no evidence to support that it was a cover, as claimed by the British consul in Las Palmas, and the German Army was not that interested in it despite being given information from the eastern island provided by *Richard Ohlrogge*. However, the scepticism this project brought about in Jandía, such a poor place that lacked all sort of infrastructures, led to the spread of rumours about the alleged strategic use of the eastern islands by the *III Reich* or the existence of a submarine base somewhere on the islands, which was never confirmed and has currently been refuted by German archive sources. It's even possible that those rumours were not only due to the aforementioned scepticism, but rather to the situation of British interests in the Canary Islands during the Civil War, or even due to mistrust and envy at a local level.

In addition, the documents about the clandestine supply service of the German Army did not mention Winter's part-taking in supplying German submarines. On the other hand, it does include the detailed activities carried out in Puerto de la Luz and Puerto de Santa Cruz de Tenerife and the names of the men who were close to him and who took part in it. In fact, the action of the *Etappendienst* in the Canary Islands was getting started when Winter tried to get funding for his industrialisation project, but the aim was to guarantee the availability of fuel for German submarines at the Cepsa refinery in Tenerife. During the first years of the war, the activities of this clandestine service were focused on the two mentioned ports, making the most of the German vessels sheltered there, as well as the services of house *Woermann*, as opposed to acting in places that were slightly remote such as Jandía, lacking the necessary infrastructures to do so, which would make it much more difficult to keep it low key. The only registered refuelling of German submarines in the Canary Islands took place between March and July 1941 in La Luz; Jandía wasn't even among the alternative options suggested in 1939 by the *Etappenorganisation*, and it wasn't even backed up by the Spanish military forces deployed in Fuerteventura during the conflict.

Thirdly, the German naval documents not only never mention Winter as part of the activities of the *Etappendienst*, it also includes two documents about the rumours being spread already back then. In fact, the OKW, who gave instructions to the German naval attaché in Madrid to coordinate the activities of the *Etappenorganisation* in Spain, had to gather information about Winter's actions through the intelligence services, the *Abwehr*. Subsequently, he ended up addressing marshal Göring at the beginning of July 1941, whom Winter had requested funding from, as person in charge of the material, in order to ask him to make the latter leave the activities he was carrying out, since his worth for Germany during the war was doubtful and this could lead to an increase in vigilance of Allies of the islands, damaging the clandestine activities that were indeed being carried out by this service. Overall, the lack of knowledge regarding the activities carried out by Winter on behalf of the OKW, inferred in both documents, plus the need to address Göring in order to manage to get activities to cease in Jandía, are evidence enough of the fact that Winter took no part in the clandestine supply services of the German Army in the Canary Islands.

Lastly, Winter could not have supplied those German submarines in Fuerteventura, since he was away from the Canary Islands for most part of the 2nd World War, except for a trip he could have gone on, on 10th September to Gran Canaria. In this regard, rumours about him kept on being spread during the war and the aftermath of the war, although he was no longer on the islands and despite German sources having refuted that information. (...) There are also documents to confirm that Winter returned to Spain in 1944, and that the following year he was living in Madrid. Therefore, had there been any sort of supply of submarines in Fuerteventura during those last years, he wouldn't have been able to have taken part in it. Evidently so, no side of any story is the definite one, and this one is no exception, since there are some issues that remain open and must be investigated in the future. For instance, *Richard Ohlrogge's* trip, or Winter's carryons in France during the 2nd World War. Nevertheless, the documents of the *Etappendienst* consulted show that he did not take part in that service and that the alleged supply of German submarines in Fuerteventura is nothing but a tale, despite this, it shall remain in people's minds.