

Trepca's Mine in the Region of Stan-Terg during WWII

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Abstract

In this study I have explained the economical importance of Trepca Mine in the region of Stan-Terg which is considered as one of the most important mines in Europe and which today is the biggest economical source of Kosovo.

Based on some historical and economical developments it is noticed that this mine was so attractive for the weapon industries, and about 40 % of all products were sent by Trepca to the German factories. In general Trepca was an important factor of international, economical and political relationship, as an important strategic source.

Keywords: Kosovo, Trepça's mine, history- politics, economy, Balkan.

Introduction

Between the two World Wars, Germany was interested about the Mines of Kosovo, specially for "Trepca" in Stan Terg. It is important to mention that the leadership of Trepca was ready to close the Mine in order to save the status of the employees. Germany was informed about this and immediately wanted to put its authority in these Mine in order to serve the German Military Industries.

While Germany was making plans for the Balkan occupation, it was also planning to use Trepca for its military needs (Denic, 1972, 2086).

The failures of Italy in Africa in Albania, made it not a valid partner for Germany, so the big interest of Germans was shown to Trepca (Avdyli, 1978, 53). The correspondence between the Britain office in Belgrade and the Foreign Office in London documented that there was an earlier deal between Trepca and the National Bank of Yugoslavia which was made on the 13th of July 1938, and the agreement which was reached in 1940 was not different from it.

By the company memorandum which was set by the British team after the end of War, we can clearly see the history and the conditions of Trepca from 1927 until 1948.

The exploitation of Trepça during the German invasion 1941-1944

As we mentioned above, Germany was interested to use Trepca Mines between the two World Wars. The chance for Germany to realize this aim came during the Miners strike which was organized by miners with the aim of raising the salaries and getting better working conditions.

In this case Germany started the action to take the Mine under its control, but this plan failed even though it was strategic. This was not a lost chance for Germany because they succeeded to get the biggest part of Leadon by Yugoslavia, based on the illegal protocol which was signed on the 5-th of October 1939 (Dukic, 1954, 50). According to this protocol, Germany was obliged to send military airplanes and artillery weapons

to Yugoslavia, while Yugoslavia had to send to Germany a big amount of strategic components, especially painted metallurgy.

This lasted until the 18th of April 1941 and all that time was supervised by the German guards (Amramorsi, 1973, 83). Because of the low number of employees, during the German invasion, the production was lower in comparison to the evidences of the 1941, time in which the mine was under the British administration.

Since 20th of April to 30th of September 1941-----194.403 t

1st October – 31st December 1941 -----90.101t

1st January -c30th September 1942 -----248.500t (Djordjevic, 1974, 303).

After WWII, the Yugoslavian leaders started to ignore the British goods, and decided to call off the agreements with them. The 20th of April of 1941 was the date when the “Trepca” company was in control of the German authorities which became also part of German company “LUFRAWAFFA”. This company was in private property of the Marshal Hermann Goering. The usage of Trepca Mine by the Germans was a good opportunity for them cause more than 40 % of Leaden was always sent to the German military factories to produce all the weapons needed for War (Dauti, 2002, 45). This situation caused political and diplomatic issues which were very important for British. They were interested to take Trepca Mine back and have it under their administration (Haziri, 2011, 21).

It was really strange when the Public Record Office which was active in the Ministry of Social issues has brought some reports where it described that Trepca was not only an important source for Britain but also for international economics (Tahiri, 1978, 60). Before the War, Yugoslavia earned 750.000 pounds per year, and the profit from the export was about 1.250.000 pounds. Around 7500 co-operators were working and this was the reason why Britain insisted to be settled in Mitrovica when the Germans moved away.

In August 1944 the conditions to produce in Trepca were more difficult, because of the bomb attacks, which destroyed a big part of it and the railway of Mitrovica was damaged, so it was impossible to transport the products, and that is why it stopped producing (Tahiri, 1978, 61).

In November 22 1944, Mitrovica survived the occupation of Germany, but this also was trouble for its citizens cause they were still treated as 2nd class people eventhough they were hosts not settlers there. A very difficult period for the Albanians was the period between 1945 until 1966, when Alexaner Rankovic was the leader of the government (Abrashi, 1996, 7).

Conclusions

In the end we can mention that Trepca’s Mine in Stan Terg was in the centre of international states attention and the 20th century was the beginning of the modern establishment of Trepca. This paper analyzed and showed that the importance of the Trepca’s mine in Stan-Terg was great in economic, politic, historical and social sense. Its importance is laid out since the earlier periods of history until now, especially since the 20th century. The usage of this Mine by Germans proved that it was used for its military aims during WWII. After WWII, Britain wanted to have it in its

administration. During the communist regime in Yugoslavia, Trepça became a state property. Based on the documents of the state agency in Kosovo, Yugoslavia did not have any development strategy, however during 1979-80, Trepça enterprise completed its own financial needs and loans. Finally with the independence of Kosovo Trepça has reacquired its economic and social importance.

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