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*Problems and Misuse of Yugoslav Diplomatic Courier Service 1918-1941*

*Summary*

Although Diplomatic Courier Service was established by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to protect confidential information, there were many problems that hindered its normal functioning. Irresponsibility of diplomatic consular civil servants jeopardized security code and documents that had been dispatched this way. Although Ministry of Foreign Affairs had realized the problem the choice of the couriers was made according to social status of the employees and their financial support. Security of the documents and code books was jeopardized by the intention of the Chiefs of Diplomatic and Consular Mission to employ unfit staff. Deficiency in the organization of service and mutual communication between state organizations and timely information of Missions in the foreign countries caused the delay in dispatch and reception of information that sometimes led to pointlessness of the instructions and reports.

Special problem was overburdened of the couriers. The causes were various and consequences multiple. Frequently the courier service was used to dispatch private messages and letters that didn't have anything to do with official matters. Overloaded couriers hadn't always been able to respond to the planned route and to reach destination on time. By its appearance they caused suspicion of customs officers, conductors and fellow-travelers. Their appearance harmed reputation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and in order to fulfil all their assignments they caused incidents that just made the general matters even worse.

Imperfections in organization of the courier service and certain understanding prevailing in the administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs enabled various misuses. Although it is not possible to form general opinion regarding this matter, it is obvious that civil servants wanted to save their own money that they had received for travel expenses but also participated in criminal deeds. The most serious problems were missing of money orders and attempts of smuggling various objects within diplomatic items of mail.