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## The Attempt to Burn Down the LEV Printing House in Ružomberok

One of the earliest affairs in the First Czechoslovak Republic was the attempt to burn down the Lev printing house in Ružomberok in 1920. Our primary objective is to bring new insight into this affair. The core of our work involves analyzing two contemporary archival documents: a report from the gendarmerie headquarters and an encrypted telegram with orders for sabotage. The reconstruction of the broader intelligence and political background of the case is essential for understanding the affair. The authors draw on sources stored in the Slovak National Archives in Bratislava, the National Archives in Prague, and the State Archives in Bytča, as well as other state archives in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, supplemented by contemporary press reports and correspondence between the main actors.

In this study, we examine the historical background of the events surrounding the attempt to burn Leva. The order to sabotage (burn down) the Lev printing house in Ružomberok was allegedly sent by kpt. Ján Kyjovský in an encrypted message to mjr. Ludvík Palounek in March 1920. In the aforementioned encrypted message, Kyjovský ordered mjr. Ludvík Palounek to destroy the LEV printing house in Ružomberok in order to hinder the election campaign of the ŠLS party and its leader A. Hlinka.

The action itself was allegedly initiated at the behest of the then Minister of Defence Václav Klofáč. Ludvík Palounek, one of the most controversial secret agents of the VO intelligence organization is one of the main protagonists of

the affair. Another important protagonist was Andrej Hlinka, a Slovak politician, and a priest who brought it to the attention of the Czechoslovak press and political circles.

In the second half, we present a description, analysis, and evaluation of the preserved encrypted telegram from the perspective of cryptanalysis. The results of our analysis show that the message was encrypted using the Polybius cipher. This encryption system belongs to the category of simple (monoalphabetic) substitution, which is also an expansion cipher. The author of this system is the well-known Greek historian and writer Polybius (c. 200–118 BC). This system was also adapted in cryptography, where it became a very popular method of encryption. We were also able to successfully reconstruct the used cipher key (table and coordinates) of the Polybius cipher.

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