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*Rudolf Schmidt and the Robbery of the Archival Material. The Robbery and Devastation of the State Archives in Novi Sad in the Second World War*

*Summary*

Rudolf Schmidt was war criminal being at the position of the Commissar of the State Archives appointed by the occupying forces worked on devastation and robbery of the Archives. Being former employee of the Archives and afterwards the member of the Spanish German Cultural Association (Kulturbund), the Germans realized that Schmidt was the most suitable person to prepare archival material for the robbery and later on to work on its processing. Rudolf Schmidt cooperated with the Ustaše and handed over to them part of the archival material from the Archives of Novi Sad. At the same time he robbed the archives from his personal interest and chose the most valuable archival material that previous robbers hadn't taken from the Archives and took the archival material with him to Osijek and at the end of the war when running away took it to Czechoslovakia. He was arrested there and deported to the camp. Schmidt's crime over cultural and historical monuments was proved after the war by the work of Provincial Commission and the State Commission.

In the course of the Second World War the State Archives of Novi Sad was robbed several times but the creators of the archival material and their owners were robbed as well. The robberies were planned and performed systematically having widely spread network from the top of the governing authorities through the state organizations and institutions, Nazi and military organizations to the individuals as was Rudolf Schmidt and other direct executors. The Germans were the most rigorous but during the robbery of the archival material they cooperated with their allies and split the war trophy with them. The robberies were directed from Berlin, Vienna, Zagreb and Budapest. However, Vienna played the central role. It was believed that that the Yugoslav Archives were of the interest of Austria and that Vienna more than Berlin was able to use that substantial and important prey. Archival material from Vojvodina was of special importance for the Germans.

In the years and decades after the Second World War, the restitution of the archival material from Austria, Hungary Croatia and Czechoslovakia was performed. Restitution never compensated the loss that the State Archives of Novi Sad suffered during the War. Moreover, the smaller part of the archival material was returned. Among archival material that Rudolf Schmidt robbed from personal reasons and that had been restituted from Czechoslovakia were the documents belonging to the oldest and the most important archival material from the Archives of Vojvodina. Those documents included unique and rare documents of the complete manuscript heritage in the institutions of protection of cultural holdings of the Republic of Serbia.