



Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies

Vol. 14, n°2 | 2010
Varia

Jäger (Jens), *Verfolgung durch Verwaltung: Internationales Verbrechen und internationale Polizeikooperation 1880-1933*

Konstanz, UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2006, 424 pp., ISBN 3-89669-568-1

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Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/chs/1199>
ISSN: 1663-4837

Publisher

Librairie Droz

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 December 2010
Number of pages: 131-133
ISBN: 978-2-600-01470-0
ISSN: 1422-0857

Electronic reference

Anja Johansen, « Jäger (Jens), *Verfolgung durch Verwaltung: Internationales Verbrechen und internationale Polizeikooperation 1880-1933* », *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies* [Online], Vol. 14, n°2 | 2010, Online since , connection on 30 April 2019. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/chs/1199>

Comptes rendus Reviews

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Jens Jäger's book derives from his *Habilitationsschrift* on the origins and development of international police co-operation on criminal investigation. It is an extremely erudite study on a fascinating topic with an abundance of details. Following Mathieu Deflem's research on 19th and 20th century international police co-operation with focus on the US and Germany, Jäger provides a study which is firmly focused on Europe and which is historical rather than sociological in its approach. In these respects Jäger's study is in direct line with Liang's 1992 study on the Rise of European Police in the context of international relations.

The breadth and a wealth of details are impressive. Jäger casts his net wide, involving the main capitals of Europe, Berlin, Vienna, Paris, London, St. Petersburg, and makes excursions to the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark. This leads to many important insights about the dynamics driving police forces from around Europe towards ever greater integration and co-operation on international crime.

While Jäger is not specific about the main focus of his argument(s), five main themes emerge. The overall argument seems to be that the development of the International Criminal Police Commission (later known as Interpol) was no linear process or the result of a preconceived plan (p. 13). This seems a very plausible development and perfectly in line with the processes described by Historical Institutionalists. Jäger traces the origins of international police co-operation back to the 1860s-1870s with public concerns over white slavery, obscene publications and later trafficking of illegal drugs. He shows how the concept of the 'international criminal' emerged in criminological debates of the mid-19th century as a consequence of concerns over the ease with which people could move across the European continent and operate anonymously within the great cities. However, he then demonstrates how international crime was in fact very marginal to crime statistics, and that much more was made of the perceived threat from international professional criminals than the problem deserved. It was therefore not the magnitude of the problem that caught the attention of senior and middle ranking officials in the criminal investigation departments around Europe, but a perceived need for co-ordinating information. As Jäger aptly puts it, the bureaucratisation of the problem, the collection of a wealth of data that could be quantified and shared, gave the sense of controlling it. Jäger then links this phenomenon to wider processes of centralisation,

standardisation, professionalisation and specialisation within police forces around Europe as well as the scientification of criminal investigation. At the same time, Jäger sees little evidence that the increased specialisation and scientification of detection methods had any significant impact on the detection rate for the crimes associated with 'international' criminals (p. 381).

Some of Jäger's most interesting findings are his observations on the processes of exchange and integration. He argues that the international police co-operation originated from the personal connections of individual criminal investigators in Berlin, Vienna, Paris and London, who began to exchange information about international criminal activity outside the sanction and largely without the knowledge of the foreign ministries or justice ministries of the countries concerned. These informal connections were institutionalised through international police conferences starting in the 1880s which after the turn of the 20th century developed into a set of concrete policies and practices for police surveillance, identity checks and exchange of information. The establishment of the ICPC in 1923 was just the completion of a long process of integration and standardisation between police forces across borders which had been ongoing for the previous fifty years. In the final part Jäger shows how the First World War only constituted a temporary hold on the co-operation and that connections from before the War were quickly re-established after the end of hostilities. Thus Jäger emphasises the continuity from 1880 right through to 1933 with slow but continuous integration of shared police knowledge. However the question arises why Jäger ends his main research in 1933, as he subsequently shows that the police co-operation continued, albeit with altered agendas, throughout the 1930s. The cut-off point with the rise of the Nazi regime in Germany seems a bit arbitrary, and if it is explained somewhere, this reader lost that point among the wealth of information.

This leads me to the main problem with the book: it does not lie in the material or the arguments, but in the presentation. In the introduction some rather vague general questions are formulated (p. 14), but I am not convinced that any of these questions do justice to the impressive amount of detailed research that follows. Similarly, the final chapter, rather than drawing the threads together, continues to throw new information at the reader. Throughout the almost 400 pages, the reader is led through a wilderness of details and arguments without any prior clarification of where the argument is going and why. All too often it is only after many pages of endless amounts of details that the relevance of the previous forty or fifty pages becomes clear. This makes a very tough read. The reader has to pay careful attention to every little detail because any point may turn out to be crucial, but this will only be clear fifty pages further on. To make matters worse, there is no index to help the reader going back and catching up on details that escaped her attention the first time around. This is a great pity for any researcher who might need Jäger's findings for further investigations as specific pieces of information are very difficult to locate in the book. Moreover, the numeration of headings and subheadings is extremely unhelpful and confusing. It reaches a subdivision of up to five digits (e.g. 2.2.2.2.3. Austria – Vienna), but these five digits are again a subdivision within each chapter, and to make the confusion complete, the parts I, II and III each starts with a new Chapter 1. As a result there are no less than five headings with the number 3.1. (pp. 27, 82, 227, 277 & 342). Finally, the section on documentation only provides a minimum of information on unpublished material. A list of archives does not help the interested researcher in any way, as it only states that Jäger has consulted the

Public Record Office, the Foreign Office, the Home Office and the Metropolitan Police, but does not provide details of which documents he was using. For any detail of the actual records, the interested researcher will need to trawl through all 1,055 footnotes.

It is a great pity that Jäger's excellent research does not appear as clearly and forcefully as it rightly deserves because of the unhelpful presentation of the book. The book is certainly worthwhile the effort, but I would recommend the reader to arm herself with a block of 'post-it' to keep track of data and key arguments.

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