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Curt Weiss

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A WORLD BUREAU OF PROSECUTION—NEW METHODS OF IDENTIFICATION¹

CURT WEISS²

The conception of the word "prosecution" includes all measures directed against either the perpetrator or participator in a crime, either by police or judge, and that, from the time the crime is committed up to the time the captured criminal is turned over to the authorities qualified to try and sentence him.

The different methods of prosecution are of extraordinary diversity, but for our inquiry only those require consideration which concern the intercourse with other authorities.

The greatest obstacles when prosecuting a criminal are the boundary lines between countries. It is an easy matter for a criminal to cross them in a train or automobile. But the pursuer, as soon as he reaches the boundary line, must halt or at least so slacken his pace that he can hardly hope to catch the fugitive.

For some time the international criminalistic alliance has directed its efforts toward the organization of an international alliance, which would give the leading police authorities the right, when prosecuting dangerous criminals, or in other important matters relating to their office, to communicate directly with each other, and so reduce the ceremonious diplomatic intercourse, which takes up so much time, to that which is absolutely necessary. Even though we admit that every civilized country will, in its own interest, apprehend the criminal who has sought a refuge within its boundaries, because that international criminal in all likelihood will not try to make a living by honest toil, but in all probability will find his livelihood again in criminal undertakings; still, there are immense difficulties which the countries interested in rendering such criminals harmless have to deal with—difficulties in ascertaining whether the criminal they have apprehended is identical with the one whose description has been given them by some foreign government. Dr. jur. Hakom Jørgensen, Police Inspector of Copenhagen, has now succeeded in entirely removing this difficulty.

Jørgensen has invented a *Fernidentifizierungs verfahren* by means of which the finger prints of international criminals are described in a

¹Translated from the German by Mrs. Bertha R. Wolf.

²Director of the State School for Police at Kiel.

manner independent of language. A compilation of material for identification into a record, which makes the means of identification employed up to this time much more complete, will in the future enable those countries which decide to introduce Jørgensen's record, to *immediately* identify an international criminal when he is captured.

The principle of the Jørgensen method consists in listing both the ten fingers of a person and the individual marks on certain fingers on the finger print sheets by numbers. These number formulas of the finger prints are further completed by an extract of the description of the criminal according to Bertillon's System, also carried out in numbers, and by the name, date and place of birth of the person concerned. As a basis for the elaborations of the *Fernidentifizierungs* registers the finger print sheets of those people classed as international criminals will be taken. To this end one duplicate of the international criminals would have to be sent by the police authorities or departments of the different countries to a central department. As international criminals in this sense, we would class all persons who demean themselves according to the manner of criminals, either by occupation or habit, and who are either citizens of a foreign country or classed as without citizenship in any country, or of whom we may presume that they are engaged in criminal activities, whether individually or in connivance with others.

In particular we should class as international criminals:

Confidence men, hotel and jewelry thieves, railway and steamship thieves (ocean liners), card sharpers, counterfeiterers, bank robbers and safe breakers, white slavers, etc.

The international central office will compile the material for identification in the manner heretofore described, in a book which should, if possible, be published annually and in three parts:

- (a) On the basis of a systematic arrangement of the number formula which facilitates the looking up of persons.
- (b) In a list of names arranged alphabetically.
- (c) Using the categories of criminals as a basis.

According to necessity quarterly supplements could be compiled and distributed. It would be necessary to take care that a police department which arrests an international criminal shall immediately turn in a finger print sheet to the main office of its country, to be forwarded to the central office. The monthly publication of the records of criminals who, after committing a crime, escape to a foreign country, is also contemplated.

The use of the *Fernidentifizierungs* register will require special training of officials, which training would have to be undertaken by the different countries, after one official from each country has been trained at a special course of instruction.

The bureau for identification of international criminals at Copenhagen, which is subsidized by Denmark and conducted by Police Inspector Dr. Hakom Jørgensen, is ready to undertake the further preparations for the elaboration of the plans as heretofore described.

Until the countries which intend to join have recognized and accepted the international office as an institution to be jointly supported, this office will, until further arrangements are made, defray the expense of the record and charge a certain amount which is yet to be fixed, for the record which is now being delivered. The office pledges itself to carry on the business, act as bureau of information and to undertake the education of those officials of the different countries who have been selected to become teachers.

I was granted the privilege a short time ago, in company with the manager of the Central Dactyloscopic office of the Police Presidency in Berlin, Dr. jur. Schneickert, of subjecting the method of identifying international criminals to a thorough test.

We were convinced by this test that, if the plan as described heretofore is actually carried out, not only will the international criminal be energetically fought and restricted according to the principles and endeavors of all criminalists of the present time, but also, as a result of the direct self-help of the separate police departments, there will be a very decided saving of time and expense. The office as planned will, of course, take account of further requirements in the province of the international organization for prosecution of criminals, as for instance, publication of an illustrated paper for prosecution published in three languages, exchange of pictures of international criminals for special occasions such as world's fairs, etc.

It would be desirable to immediately call an international police congress for the purpose of organizing an international official police bureau to serve all civilized countries, at which congress Prof. Jørgensen would be given an opportunity to demonstrate his method to all practical police officers who are there convened. It is desirable also that the United States of America take the lead in all departments of political economy and of intellectual endeavor; they may well be expected to take the initiative in this matter.