

FILE REFERENCE:
The Inspector's Dossier /
1861-1902.

Systemic Crisis and Institutional Reform in the Punjab Police

An evolutionary analysis of policing from the 1861 Constabulary Act to the 1902 Police Commission.

CRIMINOLOGICAL INSIGHTS
BY
DR. MRIDUL SRIVASTAVA

Evolution of Law: Reforming the Punjab Police (1861–1903)

THE BURDENED FORCE (1861–1901)

EXTRANEANOUS FUNCTIONS BEYOND CRIME

Police handled military communications, royal visits, famine relief, and even the destruction of wild animals.



THE “BOGIEMAN” PERCEPTION

Lack of public cooperation and “grave abuses” led the populace to view police as oppressors.

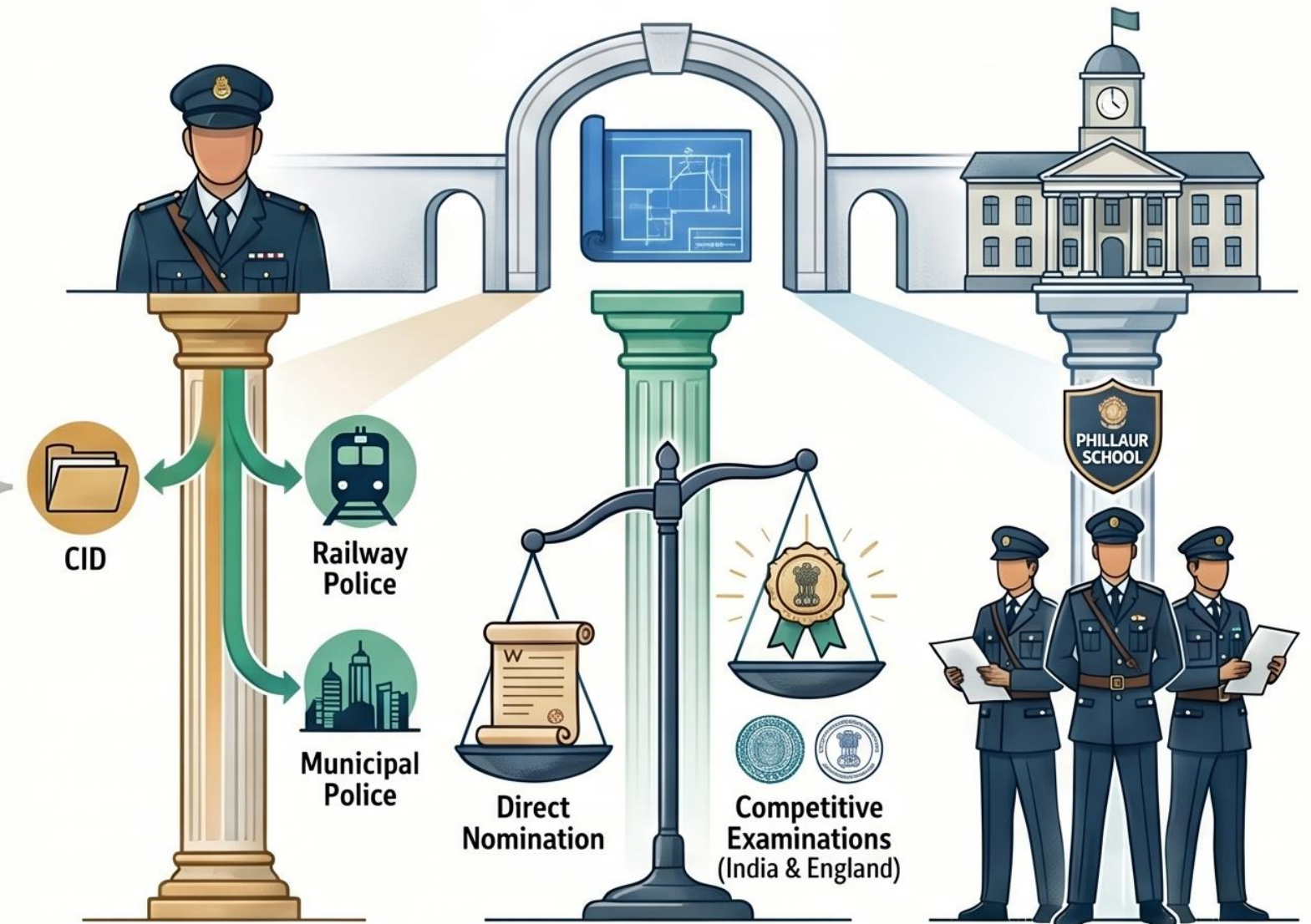


CRIME CATEGORIES

SURVEILLANCE OF “CRIMINAL TRIBES”

Vast energy was diverted to monitoring specific nomadic groups deemed hereditary criminals by the state.

THE REFORM BLUEPRINT (THE 1902 COMMISSION)



STRUCTURAL SPECIALISATION

Established CID and separated Railway and Municipal police forces.

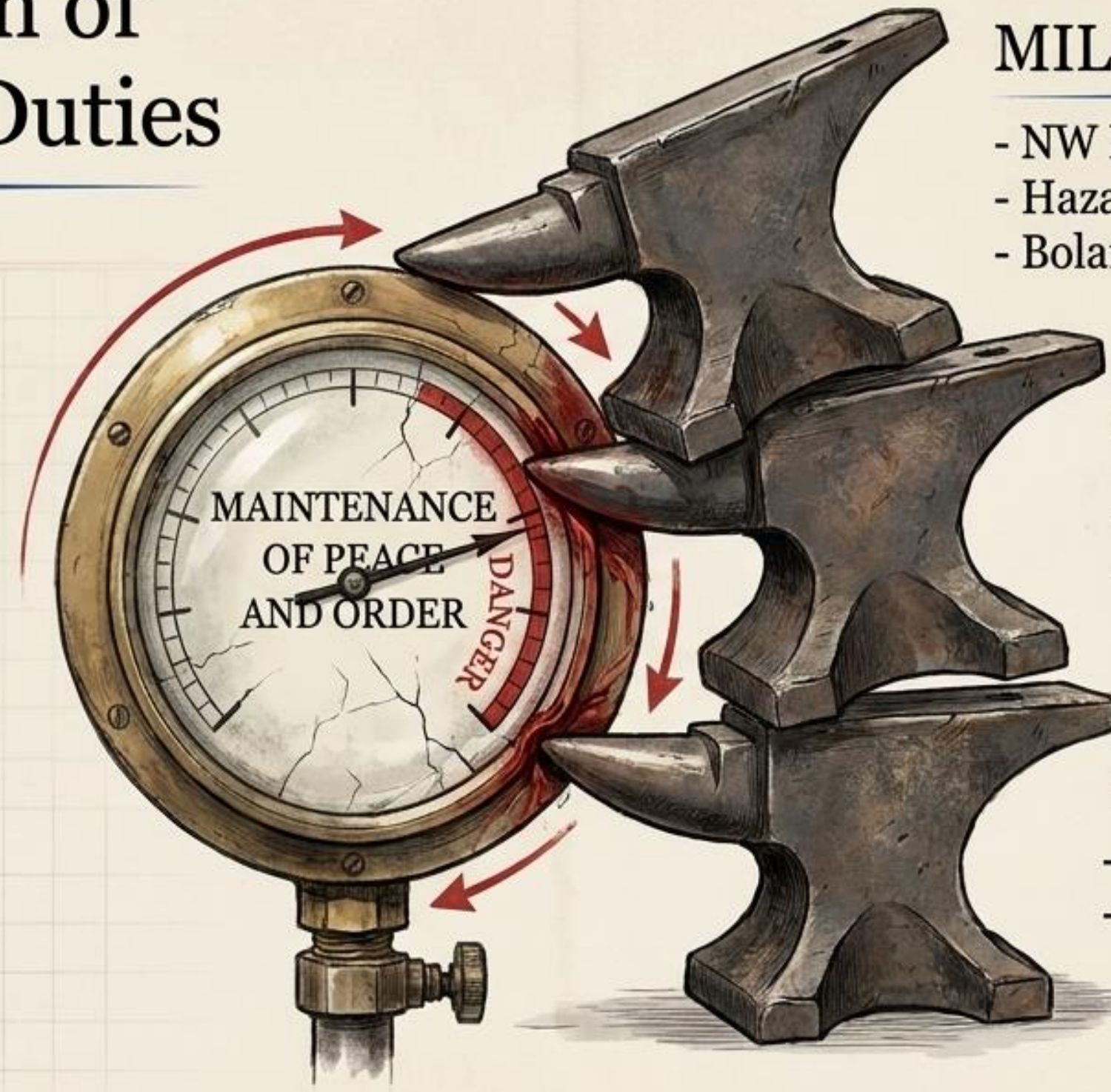
MERIT-BASED RECRUITMENT

Introduced competitive examinations in India and England to replace direct nomination.

TRAINING AT PHILLAUR SCHOOL

Mandatory professional training for all ranks was established at the provincial school in Phillaur.

The Suffocation of Core Policing Duties



MILITARY DIVERSIONS

- NW Frontier (1863)
- Hazara (1868)
- Bolan Pass (1886)

CEREMONIAL ESCORTS

- Viceroy's durbar (1863)
- Prince of Wales (1876)

PESTILENCE & PESTS

- Cholera camps in Lahore Jail (1881)
- Destruction of wild animals

INSIGHT: Because the activities of the police could not exceed powers expressly conferred by Legislative Acts, they became an ad-hoc governmental utility, leaving local villages vulnerable to nomadic thieves.

The 1867 Surveillance Blunder and the Rise of Professional Crime

1861 1862 1863 1864 1865 1866 1867 1868 1869 1870 1871 1872

The 1861 Reformatory Strategy

- Homeless nomads monopolising theft forced into reformatory villages (Sialkot).
- Adults worked the land; children attended school.
- Strict police surveillance required permission to leave.

1867: The Chief Court of the Punjab removes police surveillance over criminal tribes, declaring it illegal.

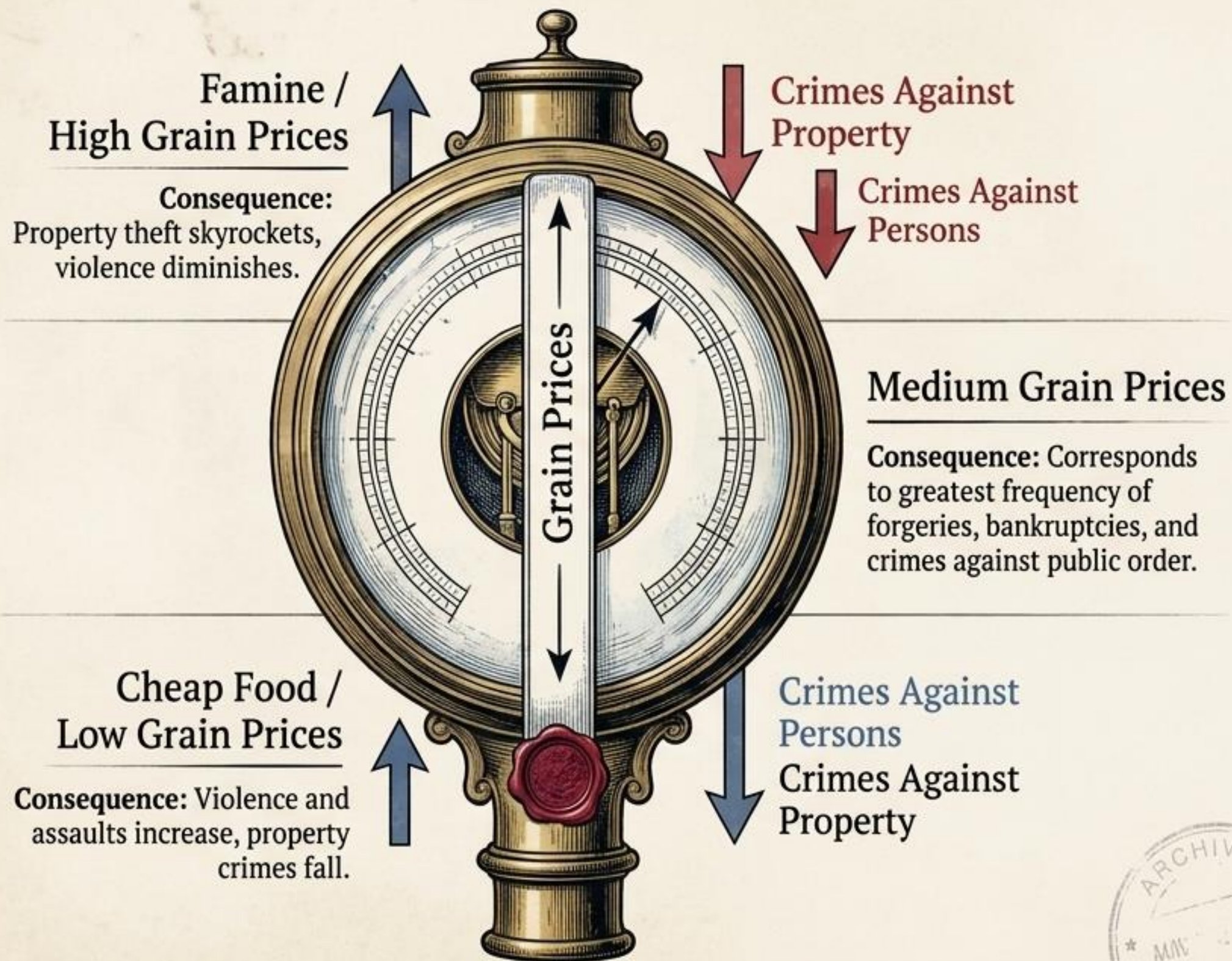
Consequences

- The released tribes become a scourge against law-abiding citizens.
- Because families were maintained by criminal associates when imprisoned, ordinary penal procedures failed.

“Their immunity from legal conviction left them as a body permanently efficient for crime.”

The Economic Barometer of Crime

Sidebar Notes



The Paradox of Education

"Knowledge is power, not virtue."
Education makes criminals cleverer, not less prevalent.

The Prison Incubator

Prisons functioned as schools for exploits. Inmates viewed prison as a place to "secure suitable confederates for stealings."

The Taxonomy of Punjabi Crime

	1. Casual Crime	2. Normal Crime	3. Professional Crime
Premeditation Level	None (Impulse or sudden provocation).	Moderate.	High (Well-hatched plans).
Key Drivers	Sensitiveness; requires superior tact from police to prevent at the fountainhead.	Economic opportunity, habitual theft. <i>"Burglary needs an architect to build a dwelling... it is the work of an expert."</i>	Hereditary trades, organised gangs.
Typical Offences	Riots and brawls.	Petty thefts, cattle-lifting, burglary, acting as receivers of stolen stolen property.	Deliberate murder, poisoning, dacoity, counterfeiting of coins, forgery.

ARCHIVAL RECORD
JAN. 23, 1986
Date

ARCHIVAL RECORD
1 JUL 26, 1992
Date

ARCHIVAL RECORD
1 NOV 1976
Date

ARCHIVAL RECORD
28 AUT. 1972

ARCHIVAL RECORD
29 AUT. 1878

Grassroots Innovation: The 1892 Spatial Mapping System

The Architect

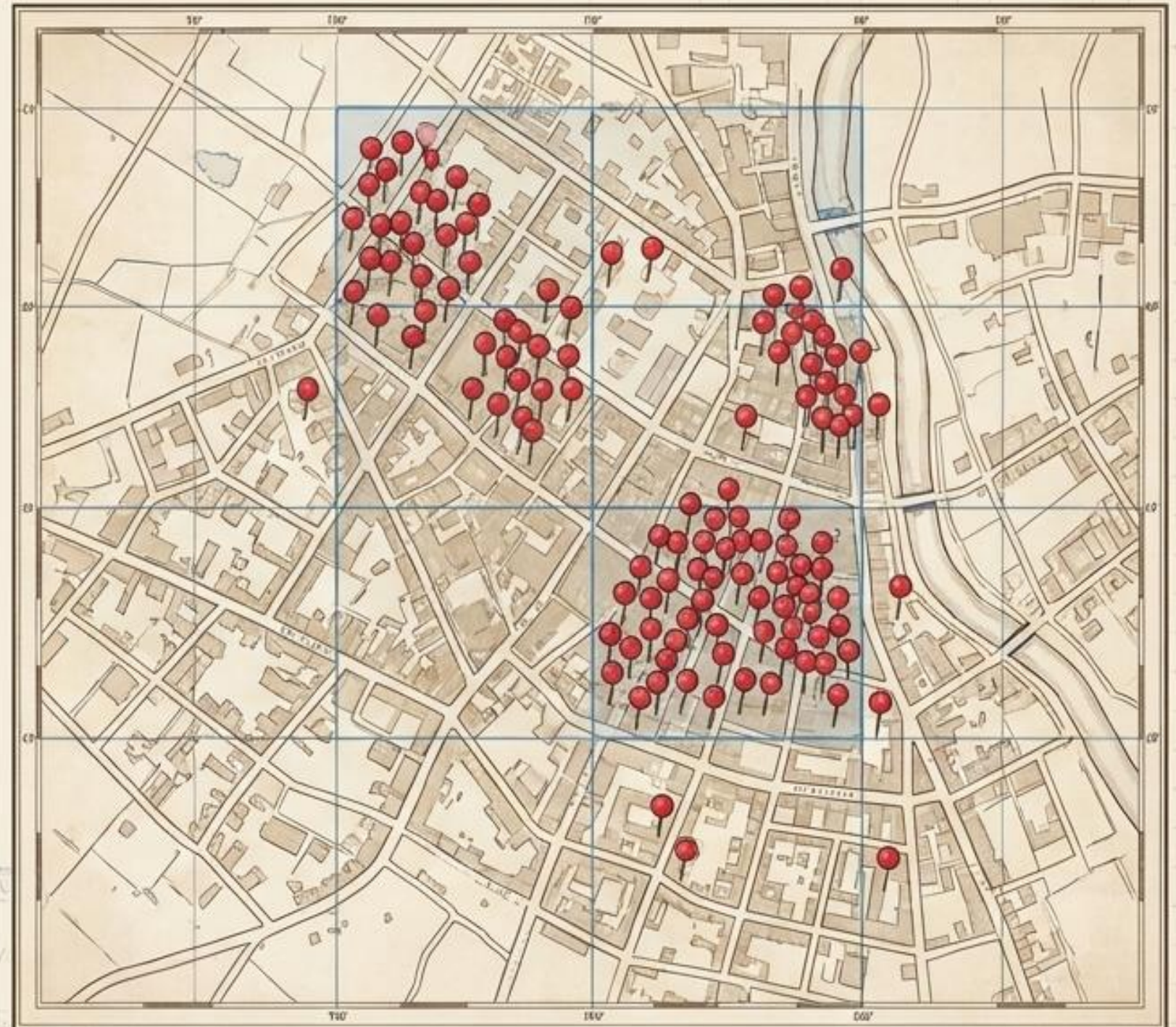
Mr. Jackson, District Superintendent of Delhi
(1892).

The Methodology

Whenever an offence was reported, the locality was marked with a little pin flag on a city map.

The Tactical Advantage

Allowed police to visually identify where crime was most prevalent and immediately concentrate their forces precisely where required, abandoning random patrols for targeted enforcement.



Profiling the Criminal: The 1894 Modus Operandi System

Burglary Scene Investigated

Level 1
Man-hole in the wall

Level 1
Man-hole in the roof

Level 1
Lock-breaking

Level 1
Miscellaneous

Level 2
Round

Level 2
Oblong

Level 2
Square

Level 2
Rectangular

ARCHIVAL STAMPS
JUN 15, 1898
OFFICE of LAMONT

Logical

Forensic attention

Forensic

Adapted

Synthesis

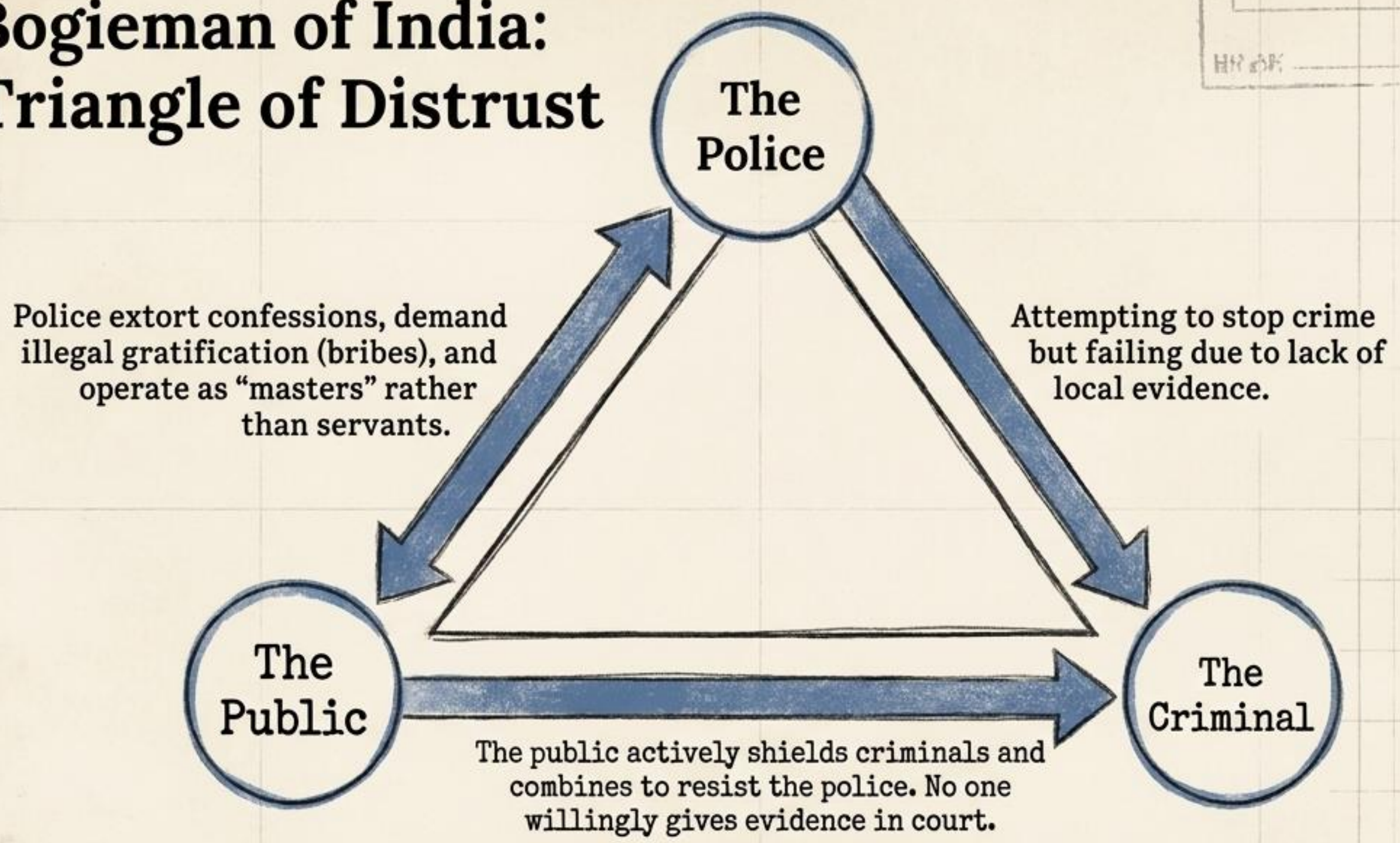
The Station House Officer conducts his investigation along these lines. By examining the methods employed, police determined whether it was gang-work or individual burglars. (Pioneered by Mr. J.A. Scott & Mr. Jackson).

Bonus Tactic: Ear-tattooing

Eastern Range tactic of registering village and cattle numbers in everlasting ink inside cattle ears to combat rampant cattle-lifting.



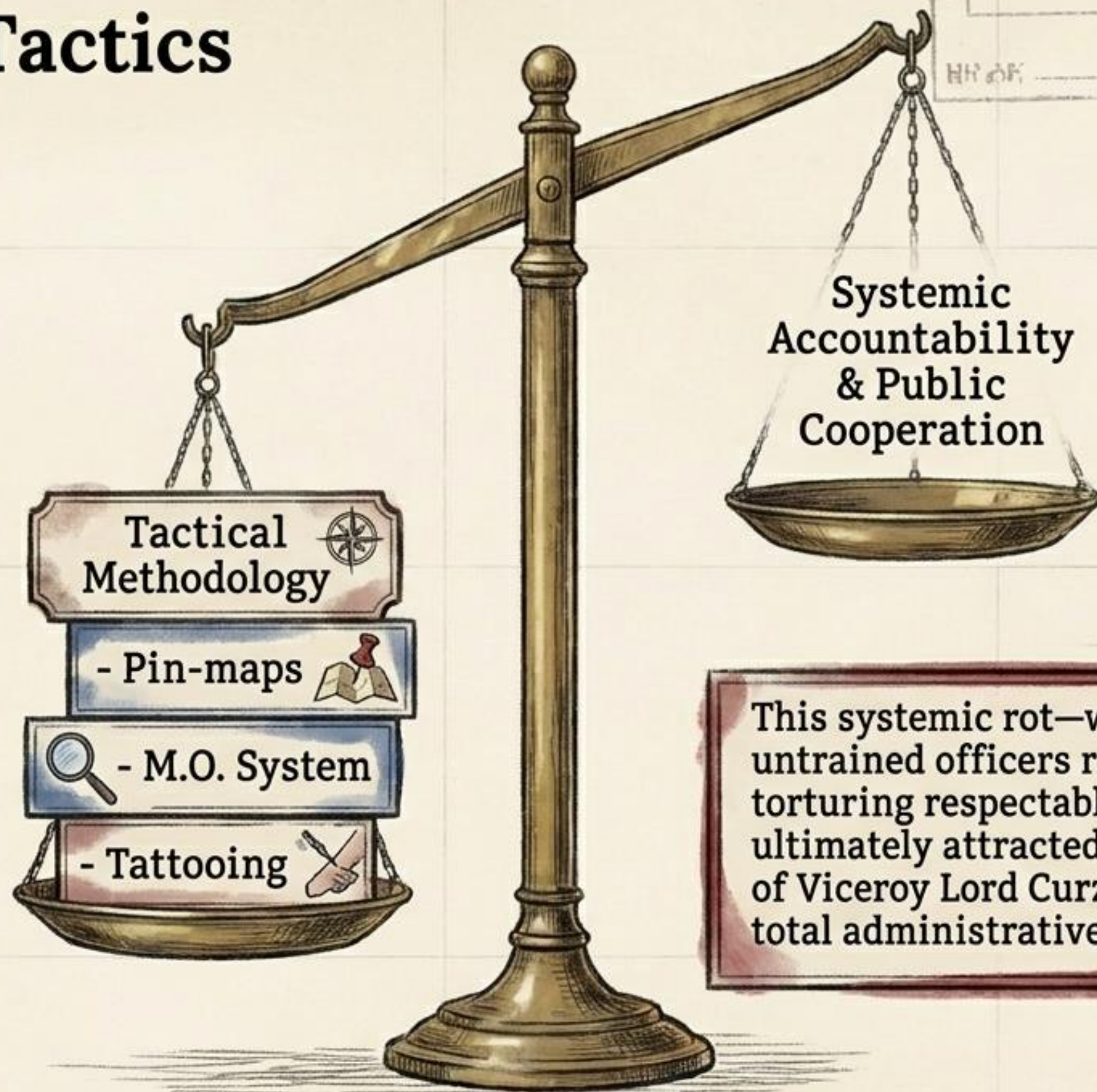
The Bogieman of India: The Triangle of Distrust



Key Insight Text: The policeman was viewed as an oppressive figure—the “bogieman” of India. The public formed a third side in a triangle, entailing the curse of a Punjabi proverb: “Jithe teja rallia, othe ghar galyia” (Where the third person joins, he ruins the whole party).

The Futility of Tactics Without Trust

Synthesis: Technological and tactical innovations are rendered entirely inert without institutional integrity. The Punjab Police possessed the methodology to track crime, but the deep-rooted conviction among lower ranks that they were the 'masters of the people' ensured the public would never cooperate.



Systemic
Accountability
& Public
Cooperation

This systemic rot—where even untrained officers resorted to torturing respectable citizens—ultimately attracted the attention of Viceroy Lord Curzon, forcing a total administrative overhaul.

'Grave Abuses': The 1902 Police Commission

The Catalyst

Lord Curzon, noting that allegations against the police in other provinces were even worse than the Punjab, declared in his third Budget speech that 'grave abuses had crept into this branch of the service.'

The Action

The Police Commission assembled in October 1902 (submitting their report in May 1903) to spin out every detail thread by thread.

Terms of Reference

- Investigate magisterial supervision over junior ranks.
- Propose measures to prevent junior ranks from oppressing the public.
- Assess the creation of a structured Criminal Investigation Department (CID).
- Separate Railway and Municipal police structures.

The Systemic Pivot: Pre vs. Post-1902 Reforms

The 1861 System	
Investigation	Dishonest Head Constables routinely conducted unsupervised investigations.
Recruitment	Ad-hoc; poorly educated officers acting out of touch with the populace.
Organisation	Merged duties (Railway, Municipal, and District policing tangled together).



The 1902 System	
Investigation	Head Constables strictly debarred from investigating crime independently.
Recruitment	Direct competitive exams in England (Imperial) and India (Provincial).
Organisation	Separation of Railway Police, abolition of local Cantonment police forces, and the birth of a central Criminal Investigation Department (CID) .

The Post-Commission Chain of Command

Inspector-General (Province)

Head of Railway, CID, and General police.

Deputy Inspector-General (Ranges)

E.g., Ambala, Lahore, Rawalpindi. Acts as the 'school-master' advising the Superintendents.

District Superintendent

The real 'mai bap' (parents/guardian) of the public.
Directs operations, leads dacoit raids, distributes rewards up to Rs. 100.

Sub-Inspector (Station)

In charge of 4-5 police stations. The primary investigator of crime.

Head Constable & Constable (Outposts)

Restricted to patrols, summonses, and mechanical duties. Cannot investigate crime.



Standardising the Constabulary

Stringent Recruitment Metrics

Age: 18 to 25 years.

Height: Minimum 5 feet 6 inches.

Chest: Normally 32 inches.

Character: Strictly referenced;
capacity and integrity are
chief merits.



Training & Morale

- No candidate sent on duty offhand. All undergo provincial training at the Fort at Phillaur.
- Annual police sports tournaments held at Phillaur to keep the spirit of sportsmanship alive and ensure the career is not 'dull and dreary.'

Beyond the Mechanical Work of Justice

“

Neither crime detection nor crime prevention is mechanical work. It needs great ability and exceptional human insight. For every crime there are intertwined and confused causes.

”

The evolution of the Punjab Police from an overburdened constabulary in 1861 to a structured, specialised force in 1902 proves that systems alone cannot solve sociological problems without public trust and rigorous training.

The ultimate triumph of the 1902 reforms was recognising that the police must be servants of the public, not their masters.

