

THE

NATIONAL

ARCHIVES

Crime and Punishment: Robert Peel

How was law enforcement changed by Sir Robert Peel's new Metropolitan Police Force?

SIR ROBERT PEEL

1788 ~ 1850

Prime Minister
Founder of the
Metropolitan Police
lived here



Key Stages 4 & 5 | Empire and Industry 1750 - 1850
Resource Pack

Introduction

In 1822, Sir Robert Peel was appointed Home Secretary. He would become closely associated with penal reform in Britain. He is remembered especially for the formation of the Metropolitan London Police Force in 1829. Police constables were called 'bobbies' or 'peelers' in reference to Peel. Before Peel's reforms, public order in London was a serious concern, with crime rates rising as the population of the city grew. London had previously been policed by an old system of 4,500 night-watchmen, the Hue and Cry, the Bow Street Runners, and 450 constables, who were generally seen as corrupt, inefficient, and jealous of one another's powers. Peel was convinced that the establishment of a state-funded, professional, and unified police force was the solution.

The Act for Improving the Police in and near the Metropolis in 1829 saw the establishment of the Metropolitan Police Force in central London, including eight superintendents, 20 inspectors, 88 sergeants and 895 constables.

Use this lesson with original documents, to explore the foundation of the Metropolitan Police Force, the nature of the new police force, and contemporary attitudes to this new system of law and order in London.

Suitable for:

KS 4 - 5

Time period:

Empire and Industry
1750-1850

Connections to the Curriculum:

Key stage 4

Edexcel History GCSE:
Crime and Punishment
in Britain, c1000-
present.

OCR History GCSE:
History B (Schools
History Project) Crime
and Punishment. c1250-
present.

Key stage 5

AQA GCE History:
Government and a
changing society, 1812-
1832.

OCR GCE History: British
Government in the Age
of Revolution 1783-1832:
Robert Peel at the
Home Office.

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Teacher's Notes

This lesson uses sources from The National Archives to explore how law enforcement was changed by Sir Robert Peel's new Metropolitan Police Force. Before starting, it would be helpful to ensure that students are familiar with these key terms and ideas: penal reform, Home Office.

For the first task, students look at the instructions on the powers of a police constable, and definition of his duties. Students can consider the large amount of power given to constables in the 1830s and anticipate any potential pitfalls to these definitions of police power. It also provides students with clues as to common crimes in the period, and the social conditions in which people lived and suffered at the time.

The second source that students examine is an advertisement for The Police Gazette dating from 1839, which allows students to consider how information regarding criminals and felonies was circulated amongst the police, also providing students with insights into common criminal activities in the period which the police were keen to prohibit.

The third source is a handbill dating from 1830 and allows students to explore the complex reactions of the British people to the establishment of the police. This handbill refers to the Metropolitan Police as "Peel's Police", showing how the force was synonymous with the Home Office and the Home secretary. The reference to the police as blue raw lobsters, which turn red when boiled, suggests that it would take only a heated or volatile situation to reveal the police as an army in red uniform, a form of peacetime army. This source provides the opportunity for students to consider anti-police sentiment in the period, and the grounds upon which they opposed the establishment of this new government force. The later cartoon source 4b source also examines hostility to the new police force and students can compare it for similarities and differences.

The fourth task comprises of two letters and a cartoon. The letters were written by members of the public expressing their concern or approbation of police conduct in the 1830s and 1840s. This task helps students to think about the nature of letters as a historical source. It also provides opportunities to consider the accusations levelled against new police recruits in the 1830s, which included reports of drunkenness and disorder. The two letters together can also be used to think about how public attitudes to the police changed as time went on. It may be useful to compare these sources to the to the handbill source 3 and cartoon source 4b looking for similarities and differences between the documents.

The fifth and final source is a newspaper extract concerning the establishment of a Rural County police force in Shropshire. Students can consider the growth of reformed policing across the county and the challenges and concerns raised by county officials regarding such reforms.

You may want to split the lesson for students working individually or use the sources in paired/ group work. Students should be encouraged to think about the limitations of looking at different kinds of evidence to evaluate their understanding of Robert Peel and the creation of the Metropolitan Police force, and the reaction of the English population to such reforms.

Teacher's Notes

All sources are transcribed, and difficult language is explained in the glossary or square brackets. To retain the spirit of the language we have not further simplified the transcripts.

Finally, although this lesson is aimed at Key stage 4, teachers could use these documents and provide their own questions and/or create simplified transcripts to use with younger students for the National Curriculum focus on 'Significant Individuals' and their achievements.

Sources:

Illustration image: Sir Robert Peel blue plaque erected in 1988 by English Heritage at 16 Upper Grosvenor Street, Mayfair, London, W1K 7EH, City of Westminster, Wikimedia Commons

Source 1: 'Instructions respecting the Duties and Powers of Constables'. 1839. Catalogue Ref. HO 45/6647.

Source 2: 'The Metropolitan Police Gazette and Criminal Recorder'. 1829. Catalogue Ref: HO 61/9

Source 3: 'Anti-police handbill'. 1830. Catalogue Ref: HO 44/21, f.326.

Source 4a: 'A letter regarding the Metropolitan Police Force'. 1830. Catalogue Ref. MEPO 2/9653.

Source 4b A satirical cartoon from The Political Drama, No.11. c.1834-5. Catalogue Ref. HO 61/9.

Source 4c: 'A letter regarding the Metropolitan Police Force'. 1848. Catalogue Ref. MEPO 2/67.

Source 5: 'Newspaper extract regarding the establishment of a county rural police force in Shropshire'. c.1835-9. Catalogue Ref. HO 73/3.

External links:

The National Archives Education Curriculum topic: 'Crime and Punishment'.

The National Archives research exchange blog: 'Peel's Police: Raw Lobsters and Blue Devils!', by Dr Claire Kennan, 2019.

Sir Robert Peel's 9 Policing Principles, Law Enforcement Action Partners.

Before the Bobbies: The Night Watch and Police Reform in Metropolitan London, 1730-1830, by Elaine Reynolds, 1998.

Background

Gary Mason's 'The Official History of the Metropolitan Police' (2004) gives details of the recruitment criteria for the new police force in 1829: male, under the age of 35, fit and healthy, and at least 5ft7in tall. Once in the force, the constables were paid 21/- (£1.05) a week. This amount was more than a labourer earned, but less than a skilled worker, and they also had to pay for their own blue uniforms. As Dr Claire Kennan has shown, the recruits were subject to strict prohibitions on their behaviour; they could not talk to sex workers, associate with known criminals, or visit public houses (pubs). They also worked a gruelling seven-day week, which was physically demanding. The main method of policing was patrolling their areas on foot, walking up to 10 miles a day across their 'beat', and reporting to their superior sergeants.

Recorded crime in London fell significantly after Peel's reforms, despite continuous population growth in the city. However, Peel's Metropolitan Police were not celebrated unanimously. Some parishes in London objected to the loss of jurisdiction over the way in which they were policed, particularly in wealthier parishes such as Marylebone. There was also real concern that the state-organised police were in fact a peacetime army, a military force that could be an instrument of political oppression. They were often the subject of derision and hostility in newspapers and other publications. Often, the constables were heckled, spat at, and subject to violence while on duty.

Feelings of resentment and anger towards the police was fuelled, in the early years of the force, by the low quality of those who entered the police force. A stricter position on officers' behaviour was enforced within two years of the Metropolitan Police's establishment, which led to a high turnover of recruits, with many officers being dismissed for drunkenness.

Despite some initial challenges, Peel's police force was a profound success, as crime rates fell continuously over the next century. Another indicator of its success was the 1835 Municipal Corporation Act and the 1839 Rural Constabulary Act which allowed counties to set up their own police forces, and Wiltshire was the first county to do this. Just as in London, there was initial opposition for the establishment of such rural police forces, including fears about the encroachment of a military force in towns and counties, and in the 1850s only 36 out of the 54 counties had created their own police force. With the County Borough Police Act of 1856, it became compulsory for all counties and boroughs to have a police force.

At The National Archives, the Records of the Metropolitan Police Office (MEPO) holds records concerning all aspects of the policing of the metropolis of London.

Tasks

Task One

'Instructions respecting the Duties and Powers of Constables', 1839. Catalogue Ref. HO 45/6647

This was one of the first attempts to describe the powers of a police constable.

- What powers were police constables given according to this document?
- How does this compare to police powers today?
- 'In each of these cases the Constable must judge from the situation and behaviour of the party what his intention is'. Can you see any potential problems in leaving decisions to the constable's judgement?
- What information can be inferred from this document about the social conditions of London in the early-mid nineteenth century?
- What crimes were commonly committed at the time?
- What are the differences with crimes committed today?

Task Two

'The Metropolitan Police Gazette and Criminal Recorder'. 1829. Catalogue Ref: HO 61/9

- How many police officers are there in London?
- What type of content will the 'Police Gazette and Criminal Recorder' include?
- What is the purpose of setting up a newspaper for the police?
- How might this publication help make the police force more efficient?
- The source states that the police force have been subject to the "hebdomadal and systematic attacks of a certain Sunday Paper", [line 20.] What does this suggest about public opinion regarding the police?
- What can this source tell us about the crimes that were being committed in London in the 1820s-1830s?

Task Three

Anti-police handbill, 1830. Catalogue Ref: HO 44/21, f.326

This handbill was written a year after the establishment of the Metropolitan Police.

Lobsters are blue when raw, but when they are heated or exposed to volatile conditions, they turn red, the colour not of police uniforms, but of army uniforms.

- What can you infer about the writer's attitudes towards the police from the handbill?
- How does the handbill writer describe police behaviour?
- The handbill refers to the police as 'Raw Lobsters' and 'Blue Devils'. What is it trying to say by referring to the police in this way? [Clue: Use the document caption to help.]
- What attitude is inferred by the handbill towards the government and monarchy?
- How are the British people being encouraged to defend themselves?
- Explain why the quotations at the end of the handbill might have been included?
- Why do you think this handbill was produced and for whom?

Tasks

Task Four

Source 4a

'A letter regarding the Metropolitan Police Force'. Catalogue ref. MEPO 2/9653.

- Where does the writer of this letter live?
- What complaint is being made against the policeman in this letter?
- How is the policeman described?
- What unique insights can a personal letter provide as a historical source that other documents may not provide?

Source 4b

Cartoon entitled: 'The Political Drama' with caption: 'Reviewing the Blue Devils, Alias the Raw Lobsters, Alias the Bludgeon men', 1833, printed and published by G. Drake, 12, Broughton Street, Clare Market, [London], Catalogue ref: HO 61/9

This cartoon is a contemporary reaction to the creation of the Metropolitan Police Force of London. It shows the British Secretary of State, pictured as a police sergeant, inspecting the newly created police force.

- What does the cartoonist say about the government responsible for the new police force? [See the 'sergeant's' speech to men. Paras.1&2.]
- How does the 'sergeant' suggest policemen should carry out their work? [See the 'sergeant's' speech to men. Para.2.]
- What kinds of people joined the police force according to the cartoonist? [Clue: Read the comments from the ten policemen]
- How has the cartoonist used language and drawing techniques to convey his views on the new Metropolitan Police?
- How does the cartoon title: 'The Political Drama' and its caption: 'Reviewing the Blue Devils, Alias the Raw Lobsters, Alias the Bludgeon men' help us to further understand the message of the cartoon? [Clue: use source 3 to help.]

Source 4c

'A letter regarding the Metropolitan Police Force'. 1848. Catalogue Ref. MEPO 2/67

- Where does the writer of this letter live?
- How does the writer describe the conduct of the police?
- The writer refers to the 'late disturbances' in his own and neighbouring districts. Research 'London disturbances in 1848' to find out more.
- Compare this letter to Sources 3, 4a and 4b. How did attitudes towards the police change over time?

Tasks

Task Five

'Newspaper extracts regarding the establishment of a county rural police force in Shropshire'.
c.1835-9. Catalogue Ref. HO 73/3.

- How effective, according to this source, was rural policing in Shropshire?
- Use The National Archives currency converter to work out how much £788 is worth in today's money.
- What challenges do local magistrates in Shropshire face in setting up a police force like the London Metropolitan Police?
- What arguments does Sir B. Leighton use in favour of setting up a paid rural police force like the Metropolitan Police?
- What can you infer about attitudes to the Metropolitan Police in Shropshire? [Clue: The new Act established a full-time, professional police force for the greater London area under the control of the Home Secretary.]
- Find about the terms of the 1839 Rural Constabulary Act and the County Borough Police Act of 1856. How did they change law enforcement in Britain?

Instructions respecting the Duties and Powers of Constables

Catalogue Ref: HO 45/6647

HO 45/6647

INSTRUCTIONS respecting the DUTIES and POWERS of CONSTABLES, prepared for the Guidance of CONSTABLES appointed under the Act of 2 and 3 VICT. c. 93.

[Transmitted in The Secretary of State's Letter to the Magistrates, 22nd November 1839.]

THE Constable may arrest one whom he has just cause to suspect to be about to commit a felony. Thus, when a drunken person or a man in a violent passion, threatens the life of another, the Constable should interfere and arrest.

Directions for
Constables. Power
to arrest.

He should arrest any person having in his possession any picklock-key, crow, jack, bit, or other implement with intent feloniously to break into any dwelling-house, warehouse, coach-house, stable or out-building, or any person armed with any gun, pistol, hanger, cutlass, bludgeon, or offensive weapon, or having upon him any instrument, with intent to commit any felonious act.

Every person found in any dwelling-house, warehouse, coach-house, out-house, or stable, or in any inclosed yard, garden, or area, and being there for any unlawful purpose, may be arrested.

In each of these cases the Constable must judge from the situation and behaviour of the party what his intention is. In some cases no doubt can exist, as when the party is a notorious thief, or acting with those who are thieves, or when the party is seen to try people's pockets in a crowd, or to attempt to break into a house, or to endeavour to take any property secretly from another. The Constable will not act hastily, in case the intention is not clear, but content himself with watching closely the suspected party, that he may discover his design.

The Constable must arrest any one whom he sees in the act of committing a felony, or any one whom another positively charges with having committed a felony,* or whom another suspects of having committed a felony, if the suspicion appear to the Constable to be well founded, and provided the person so suspecting go with the Constable.

Though no charge be made, yet if the Constable suspect a person to have committed a felony, he should arrest him, and if he have reasonable grounds for

* The principal felonies are, Murder, and Attempts to Murder or Maim; Manslaughter; Rape; Robbery, and Attempts to Rob; Burglary, House-breaking; Cattle, Horse, and Sheep-stealing; Stealing from the Dwelling-house, the Person, and Theft generally; Receiving Stolen Goods, Embezzlement, &c.; also Setting Fire to any House, Out-building, Stacks or Crops; and all cases of Forging and Coining. The minor offences are called Misdemeanors, such as Frauds, Uttering Counterfeit Coin, Riots, Assaults, Affrays, &c.

Transcript

Instructions respecting the duties and powers of Constables, prepared for the Guidance of Constables appointed under the Act of 2 and 3 Vict. [Victoria] C.93.

[Transmitted in The Secretary of State's Letter to the Magistrates, 22nd November 1839.]

The Constable may arrest one whom he has just cause to suspect to be about to commit a felony. Thus, when a drunken person or a man in a violent passion, threatens the life of another, the Constable should interfere and arrest.

He should arrest any person having in his possession any picklock-key, crow, jack, bit, or other implement with intent feloniously [illegally] to break into any dwelling-house, warehouse, coach-house, table or out-building, or any person armed with any gun, pistol, hanger [small sword], cutlass [short curved sword], bludgeon [heavy stick], or offensive weapon, or having upon him any instrument, with intent to commit any felonious act.

Every person found in any dwelling-house, warehouse, coach-house, out-house, or stable, or in any enclosed yard, garden, or area, and being there for any unlawful purpose, may be arrested.

In each of these cases the Constable must judge from the situation and behaviour of the party what his intention is. In some cases, no doubt can exist, as when the party is a notorious [infamous] thief, or acting with those who are thieves, or when the party is seen to try people's pockets in a crowd, or to attempt to break into a house, or to endeavour to take any property secretly from another. The Constable will not act hastily, in case the intention is not clear, but content himself with watching closely the suspected party, that he may discover his design.

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Though no charge be made, yet if the Constable suspect a person to have committed a felony, he should arrest him, and if he have reasonable ground for ...

The principal felonies are, Murder, and Attempts to Murder or Maim; Manslaughter; Rape; Robbery; and attempts to Rob; Burglary, House-breaking; Cattle, Horse and sheep-stealing; Stealing from dwelling-house, the Person and Theft generally; Receiving Stollen Goods; Embezzlement, Etc., also setting Fire to any House, Out-building, Stacks or Crops; and all cases of Forging and Coining. The minor offences are called Misdemeanors, such as Frauds, Uttering Conterfeit Coins [creating fake coinage] , Riots, Assaults, Affrays [brawls]. Etc.

Glossary for starred* words, other word meanings given in brackets.

- The term 'felony' is defined in the document itself and provided at the end.
- Embezzlement*: theft or misappropriation of funds placed in one's trust or belonging to one's employer.

The Metropolitan Police Gazette and Criminal Recorder

Catalogue Ref: HO 61/9

THE
METROPOLITAN
POLICE GAZETTE,
AND
Criminal Recorder.
(Price Threepence.)

On SATURDAY, the 29th of June inst.
will be Published, (to be continued
Weekly,) No. 1, of the "Metropolitan
Police Gazette, and Criminal Re-
corder."

This Publication which will be of the size of a Weekly Newspaper and of a form suitable for Binding, will contain (expressly written for the Gazette) Reports of the proceedings at all the Twelve Police Offices in the Metropolis during the Week.—Interesting Trials at Assizes, Sessions, Courts of Law, &c.—Records (most useful to every Police Officer) of all Serious Offences and Criminals, with descriptions of their persons and the amount of rewards offered for their apprehension.—Hue and Cry.—Police Anecdotes.—False and Cowardly attacks made on the New Police exposed, and their authors DISPATCH'd.—Gang of Miscreants. Prigs, Fences, Flash Houses and Gaming Houses.—Swell Mob.—Ascot and Hampton.—Feats at Windsor and Ben Lewis's Gang.—The Spa-fields affair considered a Radical Murder.—Caution to persons attending Theatres.—Criticisms, &c.—The whole forming an entertaining and useful Miscellany.

No Police Constable connected with the Force will hesitate to become a Subscriber to a Work so useful, so cheap, and so devoted to his interest and the interests of the Public generally; and which at all times will fearlessly, zealously, and impartially vindicate the Commissioners and Officers from the hebdomadal and systematic attacks of a certain Sunday Paper, which has (like the Boy in the Fable) cried "Wolf" so long, that at last the cries are almost unheeded. Some dirty work of a certain junta in the Kilburn case of ADAMS v. SOPER and others exposed.

To be Sold by all respectable Booksellers and Newsmen. Advertisements respecting Property Lost, Stolen, &c. and of Servants Wanted and wanting Places will be inserted.

J. W. PEEL, Printer, 9, New Cnt, Lambeth.

Transcript

The Metropolitan Police Gazette and Criminal Recorder (Price Threepence). [Three pennies]

On Saturday, the 19th of June inst. Will be Published (to be continued Weekly,) No.1, of the 'Metropolitan Police Gazette, and Criminal Recorder.'

This Publication which will be of the size of a Weekly Newspaper and of a form suitable for Binding, will contain (expressly written for the Gazette) Reports of the proceedings at all the Twelve Police Offices in the Metropolis during the Week- Interesting Trial at Assizes, [courts] Sessions, Courts of Law, &c.- Records (most useful to every Police Officer) of all Serious Offences and Criminals, with descriptions of their persons and the amount of rewards offered for their apprehension,- Hue and Cry.*- Police Anecdotes [accounts]- False and Cowardly attacks made on the New Police exposed, and their authors DISPATCH'D- Gangs of Miscreants [trouble makers], Prigs [thieves] Fences, Flash Houses* and Gaming Houses.- Swell Mob*- Ascot and Hampton.- Feats at Windsor and Ben Lewis's Gang- The Spa-fields affair considered a Radical Murder.- Caution to persons attending Theatres- Criticism, &c.- The whole forming an entertaining and useful Miscellany.[collection of articles.]

No Police Constable connected with the Force will hesitate to become a Subscriber to a Work so useful, so cheap, and so devoted to his interest and the interests of the Public generally; and which at all times will fearlessly, zealously, and impartially vindicate the Commissioners and Officers from the hebdomadal* and systematic attacks of a certain Sunday Paper, which has (like the Boy in the Fable) cried "Wolf" "Wolf" so long, that at last the cries are almost unheeded. Some dirty work of a certain junta* in the Kilburn case of ADAMS V. SOPER and others exposed.

To be sold by all respectable Booksellers and Newsmen. Advertisements respecting Property Lost, Stolen, &c. and of Servants Wanted and wanting Places will be inserted.

J.W.PEEL, Printer, 9, New Cnt, Lambeth.

Glossary for starred* words, other word meanings given in brackets.

- Hebdomadal- weekly
- A flash house- a house frequented by thieves, vagabonds, and sex workers. Also, a place where stolen goods were received.
- Swell mob- thieves and swindlers who are fashionably well dressed.
- 'Hue and Cry'- a historical common law dating back to medieval times whereby bystanders in the community were summoned to assist in the pursuit and capture of criminals.
- Junta- a military or political group that rules a country after taking power by force.

Anti-police handbill

Catalogue Ref: HO 44/21, f.326

Peel's Police, **RAW LOBSTERS,** *Blue Devils,*

Or by whatever other appropriate Name
they may be known.

Notice is hereby given,

That a Subscription has been entered into, to supply the **PEOPLE** with **STAVES** of a superior Effect, either for Defence or Punishment, which will be in readiness to be gratuitously distributed whenever a similar unprovoked, and therefore unmanly and blood-thirsty Attack, be again made upon Englishmen, by a Force unknown to the British Constitution, and called into existence by a Parliament illegally constituted, legislating for their individual interests, consequently in opposition to the Public good.

—ooo—

“Put not your trust in Princes.”—DAVID.

“Help yourself, and Heaven will help you.”—FRENCH
MOTTO.

10th Nov 1830
Eliz. Soulby, Printer, 91, Gracechurch Street.

Transcript

Peel's Police

RAW LOBSTERS

Blue Devils,

Or by whatever appropriate Name they may be known.

Notice is thereby given,

That a Subscription has been entered into, to supply the PEOPLE with STAVES* of a superior Effect, either for Defence or Punishment, which will be in readiness to be gratuitously [freely] distributed whenever a similar unprovoked, and therefore unmanly and blood-thirsty Attack, be again made upon Englishmen, by a Force unknown to the British Constitution, and called into existence by a Parliament illegally constituted, legislating for the individual interests, consequently in opposition to the public good.

"Put not your trust in Princes"- DAVID.

"Help yourself, and Heaven will help you." -FRENCH MOTTO

10th October 1830

Eliz. Soulby, Printer, 91 Gracechurch Street.

Glossary for starred* words, other word meanings given in brackets.

- Staves- a wooden rod or truncheon.

'A letter regarding the Metropolitan Police Force' 1830

Catalogue Ref: MEPO 2/9653

Dear Sir,
 Ap. 22. 1830.
 Gentlemen,
 We are all so deeply
 interested in the good manage-
 ment and efficiency of the
 New Police, that I feel myself
 reluctantly bound to inform
 you of the misconduct of
 the Superintendent in the
 removal of Brixton by being
 on duty on Tuesday night
 in a state of intoxication.
 If this is the first time since
 I have had a report of this
 gentleman of an unparalelled
 nature, I beg my name may
 not be mentioned, should you
 think proper to caution him.
 But should it be otherwise I
 have no objection to substan-
 tiate my statement, much as
 I should regret being called on
 for that purpose.
 Mr. Chamblane is an entire
 stranger to me, and I have no
 means of learning his general
 character or I should perhaps
 have taken a different course.
 I am,
 Gentlemen,
 Your M. O. &c. &c.
 E. Becknell.
 * My writing house is in
 High St. Newington Butts.

Transcript

Herne Hill

April 22, 1830

Gentlemen,

We are all so keenly interested in the good management and efficiency of the New Police, that I feel myself reluctantly bound to inform you of the misconduct of the Superintendent in this division of Brixton by being on Duty on Thursday night in a state of intoxication. [drunkenness]

If this is the first time you have had a report of this Gentleman of an unfavourable nature, I by my name may not be mentioned, should you think proper to caution him. But should it be otherwise I have no objection to substantiate [support with evidence] my statement, much as I should regret being called on for that purpose.

Mr. Chamberlain [the Superintendent] is an entire stranger to me, and I have no means of having his general character or I should perhaps have taken a different course.

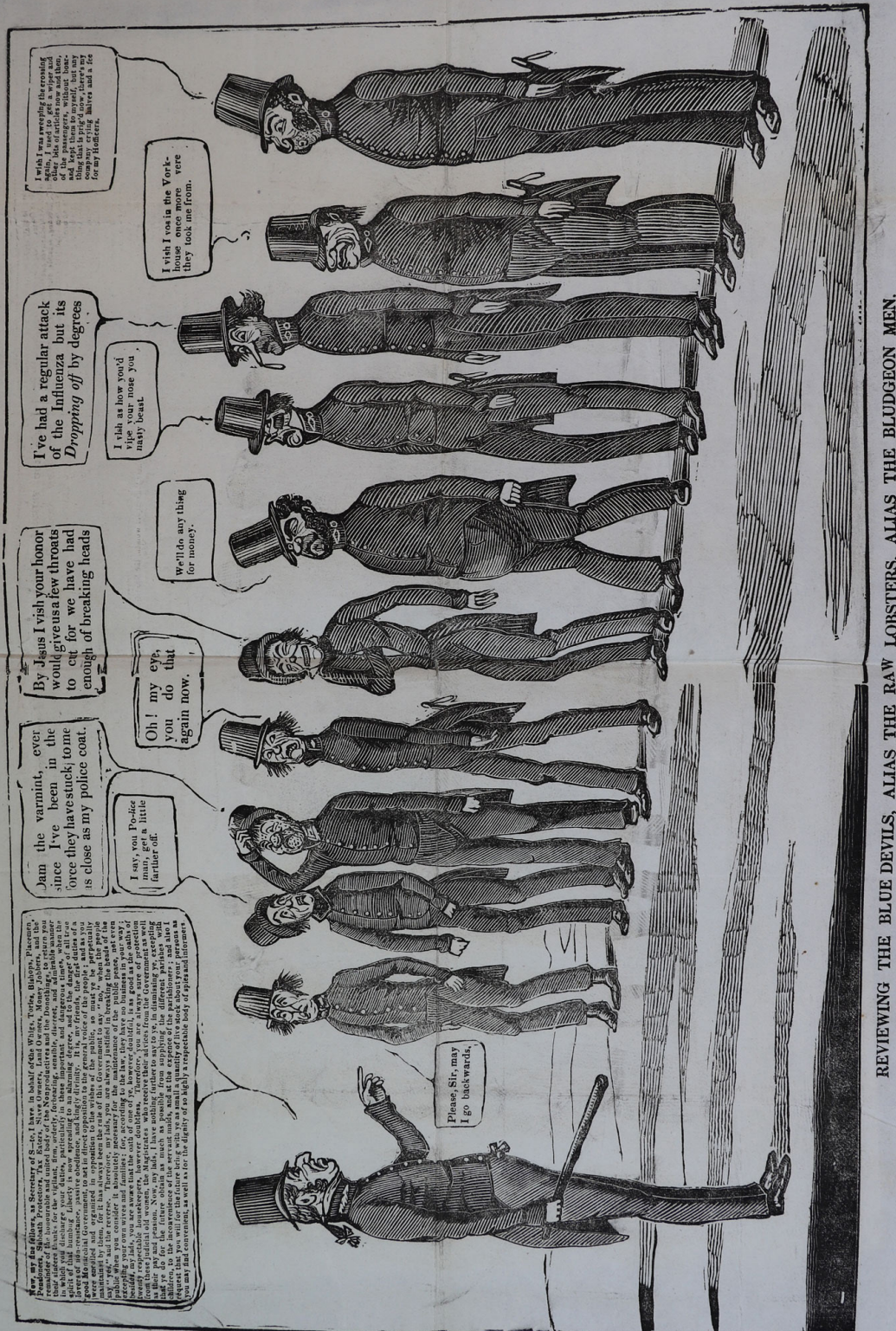
I am Gentlemen, your most ...

E. Bicknell

My country house is in High Street, Newington Butts [Small village or hamlet, now an area in the London Borough of Southwark.]

A Satirical Cartoon from the Political Drama

Catalogue Ref: HO 61/9



REVIEWING THE BLUE DEVILS, ALIAS THE RAW LOBSTERS, ALIAS THE BUDGEON MEN.

Printed and Published by G. Drake, 12, Houghton Street, Clare Market.

Transcript

[Transcript reads from left to right.]

THE POLITICAL DRAMA. No.11

Now, my fine fellows, as Secretary of State, I have in behalf of the Whigs, Tories, Bishops, and Placemen*, Pensioners, Sabbath Protectors, Tax Eaters, Slave Owners, Land Owners, Money Jobbers*, and the remainder of the honourable and united body of the Nonproductives and Donothings, to return you their sincere thanks for the vigilant, firm, orderly, forbearing, sensible, discreet, and admirable manner in which you discharge your duties, particularly in these important and dangerous times, when the spirit of that humbug* Liberty is now spreading to an alarming degree, and to the danger of all true lovers of non-resistance, passive obedience, and kingly divinity.

It is, my friends, the first duties of a good Monarchical Government, to act in direct opposition to the general voice of the people: and as you were enrolled and organized in opposition to the wishes of the public, so must ye be perpetually maintained by them, for it has always been the rule of this Government to say "no," when the people say "yes," and the reverse. Therefore, my lads, you are always justified in breaking the heads of the public when you consider it absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the public peace, not even excepting your own wives and families; for, according to the law, they have no business in your way; besides, my lads, you are aware that the oath of one of ye, [you] however doubtful, as good as the oaths of twenty respectable housekeepers, however doubtless. Therefore, you are always sure of protection from these judicial old women, the Magistrates who receive their advices [advice] from the Government as well as their pay and pensions.

Now, my lads, I have nothing further to say to ye [you], in dismissing ye, excepting that ye do for the future obtain as much as possible from supplying the different parishes with children, to the inconvenience to the servant maids, and at the expense of the parishioners ; and also I request that you will for the future bring with ye as small a quantity of livestock about your persons as you may find convenient, as well as for the dignity of so highly a respectable body of spies and informers.

[From first policemen to the tenth in order.]

1. Please, Sir, may I go backwards.
2. I say, you Policeman, get a little farther off.
3. Dam the varmint, ever since I've been in the force, they have stuck to me as close as my police coat.
4. Oh! my eyes, you do that again now.
5. By Jasus I wish your honour would give us a few throats to cut for we have had enough of breaking heads.
6. We'll do anything for money.
7. I wish as how you'd wipe your nose you nasty beast.
8. I've had a regular attack of the influenza but it's dropping of by degrees.
9. I wish I was in the workhouse once more where they took me from.

Transcript

10. I wish I was sweeping the crossing again, I used to get a wiper and other bits of articles now and then, of the passengers, without board and kept them to myself, but anything that is prig'd [stolen] now, there's my company crying halves and a fee for my officers.

REVIEWING THE BLUE DEVILS, ALIAS THE RAW LOBSTERS, ALIAS THE BLUDGEON MEN.

Printed and Published by G. Drake, 12, Houghton Street, Clare Market.

Glossary for starred* words, other word meanings given in brackets.

Placemen: a person appointed to a position, especially in government service, for personal profit and as a reward for political support.

Money jobber: buying and selling stocks and shares for their own account.

Humbug: deceptive or dishonest (freedom in this case.)

Tax Eaters: person getting support from public funds.

'A letter regarding the Metropolitan Police Force' 1848

Catalogue Ref: MEPO 2/67

2 Gibson Square
Islington
June 6th 1848

Gentlemen,

I have much pleasure by
this opportunity of expressing my warmest
thanks to the Police Force of this district
for the able, patient, and careful assis-
tance through the severe and trying
duties imposed upon them through the
late disturbances in this and the
neighbouring districts, and do consider
that the peace we are now so quietly
enjoying is entirely through their
perseverance.

I am Gentlemen
Yours very obediently
George Hill

Transcript

2 Gibson Square

Islington

June 6th 1848

Gentlemen,

I have much pleasure by this opportunity of expressing my warmest thanks to the Police Force of the district for the able, patient, and careful and discrimination through the severe and trying duties imposed upon them through the late disturbances in this and the neighbouring districts and do consider that the peace we are now so quietly enjoying is entirely through their perseverance.

Yours very obediently

George Slice

Source Five: Newspaper extract regarding a police force in Shropshire Catalogue Ref: HO 73/3

COUNTY RURAL POLICE.—*The Chairman* read a letter from the High Sheriff calling the attention of the Magistrates to the state of the Rural Police of the county, which was very inefficient, and subjected the inhabitants of country districts to much plundering and annoyance from the Black Sheep whom the diligence of the town police doove in the country.

J. A. Lloyd.—It has been ascertained that the Magistrates have no power to pay a police force from the county rates, however desirable such a force may be. All they can do, therefore, is to represent to the Government the necessity for establishing such a body, and urge on other counties to make similar representations.

Sir B. Leighton.—The expence of the new system is the chief bar to its adoption; but that is an objection which a little inspection of the present outlay for a useless and inefficient police contrasted with the small increase for a powerful and efficient body, will soon dissipate. The present body constables costs the county £788 a year, and are a nearly:—ffuseless cient force to protect the whole of the county might be established and paid, for a very small increase, if any, on that sum. The great object was, when a depredation was committed in any part of the county, that the whole constabulary force could be brought to act on that single point, so as to render any chance of escape next to impossible. Nothing would tend more to the prevention or detection of crime than the establishment of such a police; and the property they would save, would more than pay all their expenses. In the Hundred of Ford, where a single officer had been appointed, crime had diminished at the rate of nearly ten to one: nearly the whole of the suspected characters of the district had been apprehended, and sent from the country; and the officer had recovered property equal to the amount of the salary paid him. Much greater results would follow were a combined system adopted; and the constitutional objection raised in some quarters to throw such a powerful engine into the hands of Government, would not prevent him from supporting its establishment, as he was confident, that, watched and controlled as it would be, no Government could use it but for the public benefit.

A Committee was then appointed to draw up resolutions in favour of the establishment of a Rural Police Force; and the Chairman was instructed to communicate such resolutions to the Chairman of each Quarter Sessions in England and Wales.

Transcript

[Other word meanings given in brackets.]

County Rural Police- The Chairman read a letter from the High Sheriff calling the attention of the Magistrates to the state of the Rural Police of the county, which was very inefficient, and subjected the inhabitants of country districts to much plundering and annoyance from the Black Sheep whom the diligence of the town police drove in the country.

J.A. Lloyd.- It has been ascertained [shown] that the Magistrates have no power to pay a police force from the county rates, however desirable such a force may be. All they can do, therefore, is to represent to the Government the necessity for establishing such a body and urge on other counties to make similar representations.

[...]

Sir B. Leighton- The expense of the new system is the chief bar [obstacle] to its adoption; but that is an objection which a little inspection of the present outlay [cost] for a useless, and inefficient police contrasted with the small increase for a powerful and efficient body, will soon dissipate [crush]. The present body constables cost the county £788 a year and are a nearly: ffiuseless cient [useless inefficient] force to protect the whole of the county; might be established and paid, for a very small increase, if any, on that sum. The great object was, when a depredation [robbery/looting] was committed in any part of the county, that the whole constabulary force could be brought to act on that single point, so as to render any chance of escape next to impossible. Nothing would tend [help] more to the prevention or detection of crime than the establishment of such a police, and the property they would save, would more than pay all their expenses. In the Hundred of Ford [a district of the county], where a single officer had been appointed, crime had diminished [reduced] at the rate of nearly ten to one: nearly the whole of the suspected characters of the district had been apprehended [arrested] and sent from the country; and the officer had recovered property equal to the amount of the salary paid him. Much greater results would follow were a combined system adopted; and the constitutional objection raised in some quarters to throw such a powerful engine into the hands of Government, would not prevent him from supporting its establishment, as he was confident, that, watched and controlled as it would be, no Government could use it but for the public benefit.

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