
On Killing Us Dead:

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It's hard to understand Palmer and his army of spies and raiders. We take it for granted that he is trying to preserve capitalism in good health and give it long life. We have not heard that he had been granted membership in the Communist Labor Party, and yet, he has accomplished more for us in the last weeks than we could hope to accomplish in many months.

Palmer and his raids plus the daily press have given millions of workers to understand just what kind of a cuss a communist is. And all this just about the same time that these same dailies announce to these same millions of readers that the imperialists of the world have been forced to bend the knee to Soviet Russia, hoping for peace with it. Russia victorious. Capitalism's agents place us on the side of the victors. And this, they think, will kill us.

Why all this crudeness? IF we must have a system of espionage, why not pick the best of those which have been tried out? There's the Russian system, for instance. Until the Soviets "got" Russia, its system of espionage had rounded fifty years of healthy existence.

The life of Russia under the Tsars was beautifully hemmed in. No one could engage a room in a hotel or rooming house without a passport. If a family moved into new quarters its passport had to be visaed at the police station. In the larger cities the janitors of apartment houses were, to all purposes, semi-official police.

Newspapers were licensed by a censorship board. The contents of all papers and literature was examined by this board before being given to the public. Printing shops had to have a permit from the police before being allowed to operate. The boss was compelled to submit a list of his employees to the authorities and discharge anyone of whom they did not approve. Manufacturers were not permitted to sell printing machinery or type to any but licensed print shops. The business of such concerns were subject to periodic inspection by officers of the law. All book shops were licensed.

Meetings could not be held without special permits. Even socials, dancing, and birthday parties had to be "permitted." Debating clubs

were not allowed, societies were not permitted, and the organization of any kind of association was taboo unless it could get an imperial charter. Organization of labor unions was prohibited. When workers organized secretly, it was considered a criminal conspiracy, strikes were looked upon as rebellions against authority and promptly shot up by the soldiery.

An efficient spying machine was necessary to carry out all these regulations. We suggest that Palmer study its workings. The secret service police had an agent as one of the leaders of the fighting groups of the Social Revolutionary Party of Russia. Another secret service agent whom Lenin trusted implicitly was high in councils of the Bolsheviks. Secret service agents were members of most important committees of every political party. Secret service agents were among the leaders of some of the greatest strikes.

The privacy of mails was never recognized in Russia under the Tsars. The police could enter a dwelling at any time of day or night and search for "seditious" literature and, if necessary, tear up floors, break down walls, tear up mattresses. Persons could be seized by the police upon suspicion and kept incommunicado as long as they deemed necessary, say for a year or two. Persons considered disloyal were "exported" to Siberia without previous trial of any kind.

Political offenses were, as a rule, not bailable. Trials by court-martial were frequent. The government did not trust a jury to try political offenders. Thousands of political offenders were executed following the 1905 Revolution. Persons arrested on suspicion and dealt with by government order during this same period is conservatively estimated at 100,000. The press was restricted in reporting court procedures in trials of political offenders.

The Russian government of the Tsar had a conscript army of a million men. It had its famous "Black Hundred." It had about everything needed to remain a going concern. It limited education particularly well, as everyone knows. This worked in Russia for years and then came the deluge!

Does Palmer want to give capitalism a lease of life for a few years? Then why not go at the job right? Close the schools at once. Workers who can read and write are dangerous. Close the public libraries. Then forbid every worker everything except to live at one address all his life and wear out shoes between his residence and his slave pen. Put the lid down tight, in real Tsars' style. Delve into the wisdom of [Konstantin] Pobedonostsev and [Pëtr] Stolypin — all first class Russian statesmen. Learn how and then do a good job.

This backing down and refusing to sponsor the Graham-Sterling sedition legislation won't do at all, Palmer. What is necessary is just such legislation, and worse — better, we mean. But don't get cold

feet. Never mind the growing wrath of the “underdogs.” Don’t look too far into the future or weigh the result of drastic Russianization, per pre-Soviet days, of the United States. Never mind the consequences. Don’t take your lessons from recent occurrences in Russia.

Hit ’em hard! Treat ’em rough! Or aren’t your masters sure of their ground, Mr. Palmer?

Edited by Tim Davenport

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