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# Wild-Eyed Palmer Waves Red Flag: His Fake May Day “Rebellion” Makes Him Laughing Stock of Nation.

by Robert M. Buck

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Unsigned article, attributed to editor Robert M. Buck.

May Day was a bitter disappointment for Alexander Mitchell Palmer, Presidential aspirant and “red” chaser.

In spite of front page newspaper warnings by Palmer that the United States was to be plunged into a bloody revolution May 1 [1920] by the “reds,” not a red revolted. No one expected them to, except Palmer and his press agents. He built a man of straw, stuffed his pockets full of bolsheviki literature, adorned him with false whiskers and a red flag — then kicked him to pieces, and announced that the Department of Justice under his guidance had the “reds” in control.

The whole “red” scare was a farce from beginning to end. Palmer knew it — so did the editors of the kept press, who solemnly printed his asinine “warnings and tremblings,” supplemented by news stories of “possible outbreaks” in big type. The Chicago newspapers told how the “reds” had run up a crimson flag over a school house and how a brave Yank climbed the pole and tore it down and similar episodes to inflame kept press readers and inspire them with the watchfulness of the government, typified by Mr. Palmer, Presidential aspirant.

## Not Even a Harsh Word.

On May 2 [1920], the much heralded red clash having not even developed into a fist fight, the kept press turned their shafts of ridicule upon Palmer. The Hearst papers, which profited most by serious publication of Palmer’s dope, later treated the affair and its

perpetrator, Palmer, as a huge joke.

Other expressions indicated that Palmer’s wild and irresponsible assertions were irritating the very plutes he was trying to please. One Chicago paper asserted that he was doing more to create disturbance and advertise bolshevik propaganda than he was doing to curb any danger from this source.

All the newspapers were agreed that the whole May Day “red plot” was improvised to make political capital for Mr. Palmer and for no other reason. His previous charges that the union miners, railroad workers, and steel workers were “reds” and affiliated with the soviet forces of Russia, were proven groundless. The attacks on these organizations by Palmer were apparently part of his plan to inflame the public mind against labor organizations in general and cause friction between groups of citizens that would give excuse for calling out the military forces on May 1, known an international labor day.

## Silk Hat Reds Raise Prices.

In Chicago 600 persons were arrested as “red” suspects. Most of these were homeless persons tramping the streets in search of a job or a place to live. New York swallowed Palmer’s bait, hook, sinker and all, judging from press reports. Troops with loaded guns guarded various public buildings there. They were of course not needed.

The only disturbing feature of May Day was the announcement by the sugar profiteers that their prod-

uct had advanced to 31 cents a pound. This price boost was made possible by Attorney General Palmer's agreement with the sugar planters, establishing an unprecedented wholesale price, while he was carrying on a "campaign" to reduce the high cost of living. He later admitted that his efforts to reduce prices were a failure.

The National Security League also seized on May Day as the proper time to make a protest against Bolshevism by means of parades and demonstrations. The response to the League's much advertised program was weak in all parts of the country. Citizens, terrorized by Palmer's warnings, feared that they would be taken for "reds" and mowed down with machine guns if they attempted to march en masse.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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