

# Romanticism or Realism

(“Underground Radicalism, An Open Letter to Eugene V. Debs and to All Honest Workers Within the Socialist Party,” by John Pepper.—Published by the Workers Party of America.)

**L**OGINICAL in its development, forceful in its presentation, conclusive in its proof, “Underground Radicalism,” by John Pepper, stands forth distinctive—a keen analysis of the conditions upon which the American Working Class movement of yesterday, to-day, and tomorrow, depend. Why did the Communist Party develop an underground organization? Was it romanticism or realism? With 6,000 warrants issued, with mass raids and wholesale arrests of its members taking place all over the country, was the organization of the “underground” the romantic play of imaginative children or was it the grim facing of threatened annihilation? John Pepper’s presentation of the facts of the Communist persecutions which forced the formation of the underground and the facts which resulted in the recent abolition of this form of organization should clear up many misunderstandings and misrepresentations which have too long clouded the question of the “Underground” organization of the Communists. In summarizing he states:

“The conditions of the class struggle made it absolutely necessary for the Communists to exist as an underground organization during the years 1920—1922. But the change in conditions made it possible and therefore necessary, for the Communist Party to be dissolved as an underground organization. This was done April, 1923.”

Continuing he points out the economic development from 1920—1923:

“1. The Industrial crisis which began in the middle of 1920. 2. The agricultural crisis”—resulted in aligning the two great groups of producers against their enemies—the “farmers against the capitalists and on the other hand, workers against bosses.” Daily the “Class-struggle is becoming more acute all along the line.” The author outlines the policies of the Communists under such conditions and places squarely before the militant American workers the question—to whom shall the workers and farmers look for leadership in their daily struggles?

From its own mouthpiece “The Call,” quotation after quotation is printed to present the case for the Socialist Party and never was a working class party so effectually and eternally damned. After allowing the Socialist Party to prove its own case, John Pepper sums up the situation in a few concise, dispassionate statements. The Socialist Party is no more. There remains only a small group of leaders of the Hillquit, Berger type, who, to-day, are eking out their numbered days on the “Revolutionary sentiment represented by Eugene Debs, and a fine culture represented by Scott Nearing.” To Debs, and all honest workers within the Socialist Party a vibrant appeal—nay, more, a stirring challenge—is issued—that they be true to themselves and the American workers—that they cease daubing rouge on the prostituted Socialist Party—and take their places in the front ranks of the revolutionary movement.

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