

# Three Leaders of Men,---Wilson, Gandhi and Lenin

By EVELYN ROY.

Three figures appeared upon the world's stage during the troubled period of the war and after, who will go down in history as three leaders of the greatest mass-movements of our times. They are Woodrow Wilson, the American; Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the Indian, and Vladimir Ulianov (Nicolai Lenin), the Russian. The first reached the zenith of his glory in 1918-19; the second caught the public ear as leader of the Indian movement for emancipation that reached its height from 1919-1922; the third retained the center of the world's stage from November, 1917 to the day of his death, January 21st, 1924. Woodrow Wilson died in an obscurity which a semi-state burial and public condolences were ineffectual to remedy. "Mahatma" Gandhi was released from prison by odd coincidence, on the day of his American contemporary's death, a sudden illness and operation which almost resulted in his own demise being responsible for his sudden release. The great Russian breathed his last week before Wilson. Thus the three names that had filled the press of the world in their heyday, again leaped into prominence and contiguity.

## A Striking Fact.

It is a striking fact to arrest the attention of the observer, that the three largest countries of the world produced each a leader unique after its own kind, to point a solution to the catastrophic times thru which our generation is passing. India, the country of an immeasurable past; America, the country of today, and Russia, the land of future promise, sent forth three prophets. Wilson has been most aptly characterized as "the last prophet of the bourgeoisie; Gandhi may be epitomized as the apostle of the petty bourgeoisie, and Lenin will go down in history as the leader of the revolutionary proletariat.

Men of such differing creeds must of necessity differ widely from each other, not in word alone but in deed. Such is the case. Wilson's claim to immortality is based upon his war slogans, his "Fourteen Points," and formulation of the idea of the "League of Nations." Gandhi's cry for "Swaraj," to be achieved by Non-violent Non-cooperation based upon suffering, sacrifice and soul-force, was meant to be applied not alone to India, but on an international scale as well. The goal of Nicolai Lenin was the International Social Revolution, which would overthrow the capitalist system with all its inherent evils, and replace it by a new society founded upon the rights of the working-class to the full product of its labor.

## The League.

These three goals are as different as the men who formulated them, and as the means which they proposed to bring them into being. The League of Nations, both in its original idea and in actuality, is grounded on the status quo of industrial civilization. Its modus operandi is arbitration and compromise with the existing order. Nothing to be fundamentally altered; classes and nations, free and subject, to remain in a perpetual state of suspended hospitality, subject to the final arbitrament of the League itself, so constructed as to prohibit any revolutionary change from below. The League of Nations has well been called the "Holy Alliance of the 20th Century." Like its predecessor, it is concerned mainly in perpetuating the existing system under the guise of humanitarianism and Christarianism and Christian brotherhood. It is the apotheosis of bourgeois culture and bourgeois liberalism. If it has remained ineffectual and deserving only of the epithet "organized impotence," it is because the idea itself is incapable of concrete realization in any better form, founded as it is upon inherent competition, jealousies and rivalries that arise inevitably out of the capitalist order of society. Wilson's Fourteen Points and League of Nations were a bourgeois vision of a bourgeois Utopia which has not and can never materialize, from the very

nature of the society and civilization it seeks to perpetuate.

## "Swarj."

The "Swarj" of Mr. Gandhi has never been clearly defined, but its implications can be gathered from the writings and speeches of its chief exponent, as well as of his immediate disciples. It rests, not upon the status quo, but upon a reversion to a previous state,—an imaginary "Golden Age", when the horrors of capitalist civilization from which it seeks to escape, had not yet been born. Swaraj or "Self-Rule" as applied to India means reversion to the pre-British, even the pre-Muslim era. It aims to go "back to the Vedas", to which history accords a respectable age varying from three thousand to fifteen hundred years. Its symbol is the wooden plough and the "Charka," or spinning-Wheel. It denounces modern civilization and industrialism in round terms and prescribes for the entire humanity the remedy it would apply to India. But this complete reversal of the existing order is not to be achieved by violence. Violence is the very negation of the doctrine of "Satyagraha," (soul-force) which seeks to overcome hate by love, force by non-resistance, and whose only weapon is Non-cooperation with existing institutions until these change themselves.

The outlines of Swaraj are vague, the implications are very clear. Capitalism would revert to landlordism and handicraft production. The wheels of time will turn not forward, but back. There will be no elimination of classes; Mr. Gandhi believes that "the rich and the poor are always with us." He is positively against class-strife. But he would soften and ameliorate exploitation and injustice by the application of the principles of religion and human brotherhood. Philanthropy would take the place of social justice.

## Leninism.

Lenin's goal of the Social Revolution, as its name indicates, implies the complete overthrow of capitalist society and its substitution by the Communist society, wherein the means of production, distribution and exchange pass to the hands of the producing class, which for the first time in history would be freed from the yoke of exploitation. Social production for use would replace production for exchange and profit. The laborer will receive the full value of his toil. Private ownership in the means of production, including land, will cease to exist. Only he who performs socially useful labor shall be counted as a member of society and entitled to its rights and privileges. "He who would eat, must work." Modern means of production, evolved by the capitalist order—machine production and all the conquests of science over nature—will be preserved and improved upon for the benefit of all mankind, not for a small class, as heretofore.

By the overthrow of capitalism, imperialism, its highest and ultimate expression, will also disappear. Subject races and nationalities will for the first time receive the right to develop unhampered in their own way. The emancipation of the peoples enslaved by imperialism is a necessary corollary of the emancipation of the classes enslaved by capitalism. International rivalries, hatred and competition, leading to war, will disappear, and with them the need for war itself. Science and human life will no longer be prostituted to the service of destruction, but to the evolution of the human race.

With the abolition of private property and the universalizing of the opportunity for education and useful service, classes will cease to exist, and a classless society, or rather a society composed of but one class, that of socially useful workers, will come into being. Humanity will progress and develop, not by competition with and exploitation of its fellow-men, but by emulation in the highest ideals of service to mankind which the society of the future will inculcate.

## The Need of Struggle.

Such a goal, natural and inevitable as it seems, taken logically as the out-

come of the present breakdown of capitalist civilization, will not come to pass of itself. The working class must acquire the state power and wield it during the transition period in the interests of its own class—that of the overwhelming majority of the population—just as in the past the state power was held and wielded in the interests of the bourgeoisie, and, before them, of the feudal nobility. Much as the workers abhor bloodshed, much as they detest the destruction of human life and of the wealth which they have produced by their labor, they cannot expect that the privileged classes now in possession of the state power will yield it without a struggle.

The first attempt to carry out in practice the principles of socialism, such as the nationalization of land and industry, will meet with the immediate opposition of the ruling class, which will call out all the forces of the state to defend its own interests. Therefore the workers must be prepared to meet force by force, and to wrest mastery from the hands of their opponents on the battlefield. During the transition period that must follow, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat will replace the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, now thinly veiled under the mask of bourgeois Democracy.

This dictatorship will continue until society as a whole accepts the new state of affairs, and a new generation is brought up in the ideals of the proletarian Socialist State.

## Lenin the Only Realist.

Such is the goal of Lenin. And of the three men who prophesied so differently, his was the only creed which has been carried into living and actual reality. The Fourteen Points have passed into oblivion since the framing of the infamous Treaty of Versailles; the League of Nations remains what it must always be, "organized impotence." Wilson, the last prophet of the bourgeoisie, died in obscurity after enjoying a dizzy adulation accorded by millions of human beings whose hearts turned to him in hope at his magnificent promises of "a war to end war"; "self-determination of small and subject nationalities"; "peace without annexations and indemnities"; "open covenants openly arrived at," and the promise of universal disarmament safeguarded by the League of Nations.

The mockery of those promises need no longer be exposed. It is palpable to the whole world who looked to him for their fulfillment. Had the followers of Woodrow Wilson looked less at the man and more at the system of which he was the spokesman, they would have been spared the great disillusionment and despair that weighs upon them today.

## Gandhi's Impotent Programs.

The release of Mr. Gandhi by the British Government which imprisoned him sets the public seal upon the recognition of the utter defeat of his program. He, too, was at one period of his career a leader of masses of men; one-fifth of the human race contained within the confines of India alone looked to him for their redemption, while an ever-growing following of disappointed and disillusioned pacifists outside turned towards this new Messiah arising in the East to seek a solution for their weariness.

"Swaraj within a year"; "non-cooperation with the existing government until it changes its heart"; "boycott of schools, law courts, government institutions and titles"; "civil disobedience, including non-payment of rent and taxes"; such were the slogans of Gandhism which carried the movement among the masses of the people and swept him to the supreme position of command of three hundred and twenty millions of human beings.

There was a time when his rule was more real than that of the Government of India—when a leader more realistic than he might have forced that government to its knees and to make concessions, or contest-

ed its supremacy in the battle of an entire nation against the bureaucracy. But that moment passed, thanks to the retreat at Bardoli, when the Indian workers and peasants were ordered to pay rent and taxes to the landlords and government, and their attempts at mass action repudiated by the leader of the nation.

## Steady Decline.

From that moment to the arrest and imprisonment of Mr. Gandhi, his sentence to six years in jail and his release after serving two years, the Indian movement for freedom has suffered a constant decline until today the government is so sure of its strength and power that they can release the Prophet of Non-violent Non-co-operation, based upon Soul-Force, with impunity. No triser commentary is needed upon the collapse of a great movement.

## What of Lenin, the Communist?

Meanwhile, what of the Russian Revolution, whose leader lies cold beneath the winter snows of Moscow, mourned by a hundred and sixty millions of his fellow-citizens and by the millions of workers and peasants thruout the world who received, however remotely, his message of emancipation?

Has this revolution, successfully made and maintained against the onslaughts of its countless enemies during the past seven years, proved itself an illusion, a Utopia unrealized in actuality?

Has Russia returned to capitalism, as alleged by its capitalist foes who can make no worse allegation?

Has the Revolution of October, 1917, betrayed its declared ideal of being the precursor of the International Socialist Revolution?

By the answer to these questions must the life and work of Nicolai Lenin and his followers, the Russian Communist Party, be judged, and by the eventual working out of those problems which the Russian Revolution has propounded to the world, will Lenin's true greatness be revealed to posterity. Of Wilson and Gandhi we can say at once that they have failed; history awaits no verdict. But the work of Lenin remains unfinished, in a transition state as he himself predicted.

## Russian Revolution a Fact.

Meanwhile we can know this much, that the Revolution is an accomplished fact. The Russian autocracy and corrupt bureaucracy are no more. The old bourgeoisie has been overthrown. War and revolution have given way to peace. Military Communism has made way for the New Economic Policy, which is an expression of what Lenin termed "State Capitalism."

The dictatorship of the proletariat rules in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, which is the new name for the group of autonomous and independent federated states that once constituted the Empire of the Czar. Church has been separated from state. Land and great industries have been nationalized. Foreign trade remains in the hands of the state. The old secret treaties have been published and repudiated. Russian imperialism has ceased to exist. Freedom to subject peoples has been granted. The old form of state based upon property and privilege has given way to the new form known as the Soviet, based upon occupation. The Russian Revolution has given birth to a new form of government as well as to a new social system based upon social instead of private ownership in the principal means of production, distribution and exchange.

The slogans of the Bolsheviks in 1917-18: "Peace, land and bread"; "All power to the Soviets"; "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat"; "Freedom of Subject Nationalities within the Russian Empire"; "Abolition of secret treaties and repudiation of war debts"; "Destruction of capitalism and imperialism, and the freedom of all enslaved peoples"; finally, "International Proletarian Revolution and the foundation of the World Communist State"—these are either realized or in process of realization,

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