

# Doonping, or, the Stalin School Orientalist Speaks Up

By JOSEPH CARTER

Once again the noted scholar Doonping tries his hand at "Trotsky-killing" in the current issue of the *Communist*. While ostensibly discussing the present events in China in relation to the Comintern's policy there, he devotes most of his time to a ruthless (!) attack on comrade Trotsky and the standpoint of the Left Opposition. But to what avail? Has he not informed us that "the revolutionary proletariat and oppressed masses in the colonies can only laugh at the embarrassment and doomed fate of these renegades"? (*Communist*, March, 1930) Or is he merely trying to develop the sense of humor of the colonial oppressed? Be that as it may.

Some of the points raised have already been taken up in the *Militant* in a reply to Doonping's previous article. I will therefore limit myself to some of the more outstanding arguments presented.

As to the characterization of the present period in China and the stage of the revolutionary movement Doonping repeats the Stalinist fable about 70,000,000 workers, peasants and soldiers being under Soviet rule in China, led by the Chinese Communist Party. He does not explain or mention the "if this is true" of Stalin, or why the official Party press is compelled to quote the capitalist press in Shanghai on the activities of the peasants in China, that is, activities which the Communist Party, is supposed to be leading; Added to this is the unique statement that "the struggle of the proletariat is no longer lagging behind the forward march of the agrarian revolution." This light-hearted exaggeration is one of the greatest barriers for a real awakening of the revolutionary spirit of the Chinese proletariat by the Communist Party.

Comrade Trotsky, immediately following the Sixth Congress of the Comintern wrote a letter to a comrade in this connection (*Militant*—3-15-1929, "Some Remarks on the Sixth Congress"). There Trotsky speaks of the necessity of transitional demands which would correspond to the objective situation, the "Stolypin period of Chiang Kai-Shek", in order to arouse the masses in preparation for the organization of Soviets and the proletarian dictatorship. Doonping gets excited about Trotsky's characterization of the period as the "Stolypin period of Chiang Kai-Shek". This is interpreted as a belief in a long democratic period for China, as "liquidationism," etc. Anyone who understands even the broad outlines of Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution (even Doonping's confused notions of it might suffice!) and its application to the problems of the Chinese Revolution knows how false and intentionally dishonest such an interpretation is. The meaning of Trotsky's phrase is obvious. Just as the period following the defeats of the Russian Revolution of 1905 was characterized by a depression in the revolutionary mood of the workers and peasants; a period of reaction to which the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, adapted themselves by raising democratic slogans, fighting for immediate economic interests of the workers, consolidating their forces and preparing the ground for the proletarian revolution,—so it is with the period following the Chinese revolution of 1925-27. The duration of the "Stolypin period," and even certain of its economic characteristics are obviously not identical when applied to conditions and relation of forces as different as those in Russia after 1905 and China after 1927. To be sure, Doonping is not entirely unaware of this simple fact; but he is cautious enough to omit any acknowledgment of it.

Doonping even mistakes the official position of the Comintern as expressed both in its activities in China since 1925 and in the colonial theses adopted at the Sixth World Congress. Instead of the activities of the Communists in the colonies being divided into two stages (struggle for a "bourgeois-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" and then a proletarian dictatorship) as Doonping would have us believe, the Comintern held that there should be three stages. The two mentioned above were preceded both theoretically i. e., on paper, and practically, by a joint national revolutionary struggle of all "anti-imperialist classes" (i. e. the bourgeoisie, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the proletariat, united into one national organization) (the Kuo Min Tang) which was supposed to struggle against foreign imperialism and for a people's gov-

ernment. For example, the Enlarged Executive Committee meeting of the Comintern in February-March 1926 stated in its resolution on China:

"The Canton government, which is the vanguard in the liberation struggle of the Chinese people, serves as a model for the future revolutionary-democratic order of the whole country. The Communist Party and the Kuo Min Tang should help in every way to extend the work of democratizing on the lines of the Canton government, freedom of speech, press, assembly, etc., organizing democratic local organs in the various localities, into agrarian reforms. (*Imprecor*, Vol. VI No. 40 p. 648). Doonping very carefully omits this and is thereby able to accuse Trotsky of having "democratic illusions", of being a "liquidationist" and playing the game of the Left Kuo Min Tang! The Stalinists are trying to forget that period of the Chinese Revolution! But their programmatic and strategical position, as elaborated in the Program and Colonial Theses of the Sixth Congress, basically condones such policies and thereby makes possible or rather, inevitable, debacles in India, Latin America, etc. This in spite of the "Left" tactical changes in India today.

Doonping poses the quintessential question: "What is the difference between the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry and the dictatorship of the proletariat if the proletariat plays the leading role in both? And after 'proving' how the Opposition confuses the question by speaking of the "democratic dictatorship" as bourgeois democracy, Doonping adds:

"The dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry differs from the dictatorship of the proletariat in the same way as the bourgeois-democratic revolution differs from the proletarian dictatorship!" Here is breath-taking profundity for you! An ordinary polemic seems futile against it, until the next sentence is read:

"Just as there are no 'pure' types in the revolutionary process, there is neither 'pure' democratic-dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry nor 'pure' dictatorship of the proletariat. Whether a government is the one or the other depends upon the relative share of the proletariat, peasantry and city poor in the power of the state, as well as the predominant characteristics of the socio-economic policies of the state which are concrete expressions of the stage the revolution has reached." (Our emphasis, J. C.). In the "democratic-dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" of Doonping, the proletariat is to have the hegemony, which means that the first distinction (emphasized in the quotation) is done away with, therefore the real difference must apparently lie in the second, that is, "the predominant characteristics of the socio-economic policies." In other words, since the socio-economic content is anti-feudal, (bourgeois democratic), the regime will have to be a democratic-dictatorship. Then what were "the socio-economic policies" of the state in Russia following the October revolution? It executed the tasks of the "democratic revolution" in the agrarian revolution, workers' control, etc. Then why was it a proletarian revolution? In other words, the Comintern superficially calls for the same kind of revolutionary government in China as came into existence in October 1917 in Russia. Yet in one case, it is called the democratic dictatorship, while in the other, the proletarian dictatorship! Doonping does not answer this question and thereby gives no reply to his own rhetorical question mentioned above.

However, the quotation above gives him away. For does it not mean that the "democratic-dictatorship" is a form of government where the "relative share . . . in the power of the state" of the proletariat is unfavorable as compared to the "peasantry and city poor" (read urban petty bourgeoisie, J. C.)? That is precisely the point! The "democratic dictatorship" in real life means either a proletarian dictatorship or "revolutionary" Wuhan government, a Kerensky regime. And this is why today after the October revolution, after the experiences in China—1925-27 the slogan of democratic-dictatorship must be rejected. It leaves the door open for workers' and peasants' parties, for in-

tegral unity with the petty bourgeoisie of the "Left" Kuo Min Tang for the establishment of another "Wuhan government", or even worse traps for the proletariat.

However for China the question has special significance. The interconnection between the gentry and the city capitalists, the intricate relation between the usurer, —who is one of the chief exploiters of the poor peasantry—and the town and city, the relation between the rich peasantry (kulak) and the poor peasantry the intimate economic and political relations between the native bourgeoisie and foreign capital, make the character of even the first stage of the revolution, anti-bourgeois, i. e. socialist, as well as anti-feudal. That is the agrarian revolution and the democratic revolution in the cities, cannot be carried out without at the same time encroaching on bourgeois property rights. The Comintern leadership, which even as late as the Sixth Congress laughed at the idea of a "kulak question" in China now calls for leadership of the "poor and middle peasants" (as a matter of fact the latter form an insignificant part of the peasantry) instead of its previous slogan of the struggle of the "whole peasantry" in the revolution. The Canton uprising of December 1927 was a direct proof of the contention of the Left Opposition; the proletariat in face of the Comintern's official standpoint, was immediately compelled to make inroads on bourgeois property rights.

Doonping repeats the wisdom borrowed by Stalin-Kuusinen from Kamenev in 1917 about the democratic revolution "peacefully growing into" the proletarian dictatorship. How this is to take place neither Stalin, Kuusinen nor, to drop a few pegs, Doonping tells us. All we are told is that it will not be a "violent revolution", that there will be "a continuity of 'government'" with a "gradual progressive shifting of the class forces" (p. 1025). And all this is handed out as Marxism, as Leninism! It runs directly counter to the Marxist view of the role of the state in a revolution; it is almost word for word a repetition of the phrase-mongering of the "Left" Social Democracy. Even a casual perusal of Lenin's "State and Revolution" should make this clear even to a Doonping! A peaceful growing over of the "bourgeois democratic revolution," characterized by its anti-feudal social content, to a socialist phase can only take place as two stages of the proletarian dictatorship.

Nevertheless let us see how and when this "growing into" is scheduled to take place. The colonial theses states:

"As in all colonies and semi-colonies, so also in China, the development of productive forces and the socialization of labor stands at a comparatively low level. This circumstance, together with the fact of foreign domination and also the presence of powerful relics of feudalism and pre-capitalist relations, determines the character of the immediate stage of the revolutionary movement of these countries. In the revolutionary movement of these countries we have to deal with the bourgeois democratic revolution, i. e., of the stage signifying the preparation of the prerequisites for the proletarian dictatorship and socialist revolution."

In other words, the present stage is to be a prolonged one, for surely it would take some time for such "minimum prerequisites" for a proletarian dictatorship to develop. This paraphrasing of Kautsky Plechanov, Martov, and Co., about the "absence of minimum prerequisites for a proletarian dictatorship and socialist revolution," is a result of the logic of the Stalin-Buchaarin theory of national socialism that is, state power should be taken by the proletariat only where it has the possibilities of developing a complete national socialist economy (where it has "the material prerequisites for the building of socialism"). We can reply to such arguments in the same manner as Lenin answered the pseudo-Marxists of 1917: Since the entire world has the material prerequisites for socialism (as Kautsky had already stated in 1909, in his "Path to Power") the question is not whether an individual country is ripe for socialism, but rather this: Are the conditions present for the leadership of the peasantry by the proletariat so as to make the revolution in that country a link in the chain of the world proletarian revolution? ("The Proletarian Revolution and Kautsky

the Renegade," Lenin.)

At the Sixth Congress the confusion wrought by the Comintern's theories and policies on the colonial question was especially reflected in the discussion on the question of the so-called "growing into". Neumann—who at the time of the Canton uprising saw in it the ending of the "bourgeois-democratic" and the beginning of the proletarian revolution, that is, the actual "growing into"—stated that the "mutation" ("growing over") is a question of the relation of forces; is "decided by the struggle." A number of other speakers expressed similar views. This is obviously a repudiation of the "minimum prerequisite" theory. Kuusinen, the author of the colonial theses, polemized against the latter and reiterated the formulation of the theses.

Since then little progress has been made in clarifying the question; on the contrary more confusion has been injected by the "Left" turn after the Sixth Congress. For example an editorial in *Pravda* stated: "Changsha under the Soviet rule means the proletarian revolution in South China has captured its first big town!" (Our emphasis, J. C., quoted in *Daily Worker*—8-16-30. What does Doonping think of the slogan in the October 12th statement of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party: "Long live the socialist revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasants of China!" (My emphasis. —J. C. (*Daily Worker*—12-2-30). To us this is but an added sign of the confusionist and bankrupt position of the Comintern. And even after Doonping's article under consideration appeared, peculiarly enough, confusion still exists!

However, nothing seems to deter Doonping! He continues to make logical (!) the illogical; shatters the illusions and false views of the reader! "It is sometimes erroneously assumed that there can only be Soviets in a proletarian revolution" and then he adds that this is wrong because Lenin spoke about the propaganda for the idea of Soviets for the East as early as the Second Congress of the Comintern. Perfect! What happened in 1926-27 to Lenin's advice on China? In May 1927, that is, seven years after Lenin's speech, the Plenum of the E. C. C. I., in its decision on China stated: ". . . With the development of the revolution, when it begins to change from a democratic into a socialist revolution it will be necessary to set up Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' deputies, (as the slogan of the Party". And the Stalinist specialist on China at that time commented: "The proposal to organize Soviets sounds very Left Wing. In the tenth year of existence of the Proletarian Republic we cannot regard the Soviets merely (!) as a form of organization and mobilization of the masses. The Soviets live in the eyes of humanity as an incarnation of proletarian dictatorship. The organization of Soviets can be advocated only when it is a question of undertaking the revolution, under the leadership of the proletariat, with the purpose of establishing a new proletarian government. Otherwise to advocate Soviets is merely playing with words or deception pure and simple." ("War—the Communist International Position," by A. J. Bennett.)

"It is sometimes erroneously assumed"! We are literally at a loss for words. And by whom has this erroneous assumption been made? It was made by the Comintern spokesman of an earlier "period" And not by Bennett alone, but by the sacrosanct Stalin himself, to saying nothing of the official theses of the C. I. To quote Bennett, then, we would say that not only Doonping but also his teachers in the international Stalinist apparatus, are either "playing with words or deception pure and simple." They are adept at both.

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## MOLOTOV ON THE SKIDS?

Elsewhere in this issue, we indicate that the scapegoat for Stalin's ultra-Left swing, as soon as he prepares to shift to the Right, will be Molotov. The subsequent removal of Rykov and his replacement by Molotov, would seem to invalidate this prediction. But only superficially. Molotov has been removed as one of the Party secretaries, and as head of the Comintern, and invested with what has become a more or less formal post. It should be remembered that Rykov and Syrov both occupied the place Molotov was just given. And look at them today!