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[From Zinoviev's speech delivered by him as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Communist International at the Baku Congress, September 1, 1920]

Pervyi sezd narodov Vostoka, Baku, 1-8 sent. 1920 g. Stenograficheskie otchety, pp. 36-48

Zinoviev. Comrades, my task is to tell you how the Communist International looks upon the aims and tasks of this Congress of Eastern Peoples.

The idea for this Congress was conceived at the time when the Second World Congress of the Communist International was being prepared and when some of the delegates to the Second Congress had arrived in Moscow. Together with the Executive Committee of the Communist International they addressed you, the Peoples of the East, on behalf of a number of countries with a proposal to prepare in Baku the Congress which we are all fortunate in attending today.

The Second World Congress of the Communist International was attended by representatives of Communist workers and peasants of thirty seven countries of Europe and America. At the Congress in Moscow there were also individual representatives of the East. But today we have managed to assemble a more complete representation of toilers of the entire East. We believe that the Baku Congress will be recorded in the annals of the liberation struggle as a supplement, a counterpart of, or the second half of the proceedings of the Congress which recently concluded its work in Moscow.

We are tremendously proud of the fact that today for the first time in the history of mankind the Communist International has succeeded in assembling under one roof representatives of more than two scores of Eastern peoples who heretofore either have been living at odds with each other or else have known each other only slightly and, in any event, have never had an opportunity to sit side by side, and discuss jointly all the burning questions which confront them.

We regard this Congress as the greatest historical event, for it demonstrates that now not only the advanced workers and toiling peasants of Europe and America have been awakened but also that we have at last lived to see the day when not only individuals, but tens, hundreds of thousands, and even millions of toilers of the Eastern peoples, who constitute the larger part of the population of the entire globe, are waking up and are thus placed in the singular position of being able to finally decide the contest between labor and capital.

Comrades, today's Congress was convened, as you know, by the Communist International - a party organization. At the same time, we have today at our Congress not only Communists but also hundreds of delegates who do not yet belong to the Communist Party, who consider themselves non-partisan, as well as groups which perhaps belong to different parties.

At first glance this might seem contradictory. As a matter of fact why does a party organization convene a congress which is not strictly a party congress, but which perhaps is made up in a large measure of non-party people?

But the contradiction here is purely formal. In fact this situation

completely conforms with the policy, the wishes, ideals, and aspirations of the Communist International. The latter called together the peoples of the East without asking the individual representatives [whether or not they belong to the Communist party].... We asked only one thing: "Are you a labor man? Do you belong to the toiling masses? Do you wish to stop the warfare between nationalities? Do you wish to organize the struggle against the oppressors? This suffices. Nothing else is required. You are not required to show your passport. We shall merely meet together in order to discuss questions which are now confronting the world as a whole."

Comrades, the dispute between the Second International, which has succumbed, and the Third International, which is now growing daily, is not a narrow party dispute, not a matter which should be of interest only to people already belonging to a definite party. No. It is a dispute between labor and capital, a dispute which concerns every party. No. It is a dispute between labor and capital, a dispute which concerns every toiling person.....

I can give you an illustration. If you desire to know what the Second International is really like take a look at Georgia.....There you have the embodiment of the Second International!....And every peasant of Georgia feels now on his own back what it means when a party belonging to the Second International is at the helm. It means that the peasants are not given land. It means that freedom of the press exists merely for the bourgeoisie; that there is no such freedom in reality, for it does not exist for the workers and peasants. It means that the

best leaders of the working masses are arrested(Applause).... In Germany the most renowned representative of the Second International is Noske - the executioner, who is shooting down thousands of German workers....

Comrades, this is what the dispute between the Second and the Third International really means. This is not a dispute between book-worms and scholars. It is a question of life or death for the workers and peasants....

[After describing briefly the oriental policy of the Second International Zinoviev goes on to say:]

The Communist International since the first day of its existence had said: "There are four times as many people living in Asia as in Europe. Eight hundred million people live in Asia. We want to free all people, all toilers, regardless of the color of their skin, be it white, black, or yellow.

We want to abolish all exploitation of man by man. We do not regard as socialists those who do not understand this. We struggle against those who aid the bourgeoisie instead of the oppressed peoples. We are in favor of organizing the Negroes, all other men of labor, all toilers, and all the exhausted long suffering mankind for struggle against the capitalists - the world oppressors....

[He quotes from the manifesto issued by the Second Congress of the Communist International]

✓ see above pp. 000

Comrades, I told you that the Communist International wants a

fraternal union with all the Eastern peoples, all the oppressed masses. I think that you, comrades, also desire this union and cannot but desire it.....Your first task upon your return home is to explain to every peasant man and woman, every shepherd, every man of labor, everyone who will listen to you that now we are unable to take a single step without one another, that the proletarian forces of the West must coalesce with the toiling masses of the entire East, of the entire world, in order to strike jointly and to defeat completely the dangerous enemy, who still has enough strength in him....

Comrades, the Third International in its very first statements pointed out the division of the world into power and non-power nations, into oppressor nations and oppressed nations. The Second International abstained from talking about this. [Zinoviev refers the audience to his book "War and the Crisis of Socialism" written by him in collaboration with Lenin]

It is the task of this Eastern Congress to take this fact into account to explain it to every toiler. Try to understand this. Every British capitalist of the higher brand compels not only tens and hundreds of British workers to carry water for him, but also hundreds and thousands of peasants of Persia, Turkey, India, and of many other countries which are dependent on British capital..... And the representatives of the Communist workers all over the world address you and offer you their helping fraternal hand in this difficult but necessary struggle. We have every confidence that this outstretched hand of the European and American workers will be accepted by you in complete honesty and that you will answer us with a friendly handshake.

(Applause).

We know that the toiling masses of the East, through no fault of their own, are in some places very backward: they are illiterate, ignorant, wallow in prejudice, believe in evil spirits, are unable to read newspapers, do not know what happens in this world, do not understand the most primitive rules of hygiene. Only the lackeys of imperialism can laugh at this situation. It is not the fault of the unfortunate Turkish and Persian toilers that they are illiterate. It is their misfortune....

It is the duty of the more civilized, literate, and better organized workers of Europe and America to come to the aid of the backward toilers of the East....

We know that in certain countries of the East the clergy and feudal lords are skillfully at deception; they know how to dupe the peasant, to make him think that he has obtained land, whereas in reality he has been given nothing.....We must expose this deception and arouse the peoples to the East to an agrarian revolution similar to the one accomplished by the peasants of Russia, who were serfs only fifty years ago and are still in a large measure illiterate.....

This is what the Communist International is proposing to you.

The proletariat wants to help you seize the land and establish a free union of all peoples of the world. This is the simple and unsophisticated program which has been inscribed in the hearts of

every honest toiler of Europe and which must now be inscribed also by you, the representatives of the Eastern toilers.

Comrades, our Congress in Moscow has discussed the question of whether or not a socialist revolution can take place in countries of the remote East before these countries have passed through capitalism. You know that for a long time there existed an opinion that every country must go through capitalism, must have large factories large ownership; large numbers of workers in cities before the question of socialism could be brought up. We now believe that this is not so. From the moment at least one country broke the chains of capitalism, as Russia did; from the moment the workers placed the question of the proletarian revolution on the order of the day we can say that China, India, Turkey, Persia, and Armenia can and must also open an outright struggle for the Soviet regime. It stands to reason that the European workers are seizing power not for the purpose of robbing Turkey, Persia, and the other countries, but in order to help them. If this is so then these countries can and must at present prepare themselves for a Soviet revolution.....

In this conjunction we have raised the question before you: What will be the form of state organization in the East? We have come to the conclusion that Soviet must be established even where there are no urban workers. In this event we must set up states of toiling peasant Soviets. Not "Soviets" - playtoys like those which now are being offered you occasionally in Turkey -- but real Soviets, in which every toiling peasant has the right to vote.

We turn not only to those who already adhere to Communism, but also to those who are not in the party. We have two streams. One is wide, stormy, and powerful - the stream of the workers' proletarian Communist struggle in Russia, Germany, France, Italy, a stream which is growing wider everywhere. But there is also another stream, not yet strong enough and making occasional zigzags. This is the movement of oppressed nationalities, which have not yet selected their own road, which do not yet know what they want, but feel the straps rub against their backs, and feel the French and British capitalists sit on their necks.

It is our wish that these two streams should come closer and closer together; that the second stream should purge itself of prejudice; that they should both fuse into one stormy and powerful stream, which, like an ocean, would tear down all barriers along its path and would clear the earth of all the evil which we have endured so long.

And it is therefore that I tell you: we are patiently supporting those groups which as yet are not with us and which on certain matters are even against us. In Turkey, for instance, as you know, the Soviet Government supports Kemal. Not for an instant do we forget that the movement headed by Kemal is not a Communist movement....The movement headed by Kemal wishes to free the "sacred" head of the Calif from the hands of the enemies - such is the standpoint of that party. Is it a Communist standpoint? No. We respect the religious attitudes of the masses. But at the same time we know how to reeducate the masses. This requires many years of work. With caution we approach the religious beliefs of the toiling masses of the East and of the other countries.

It is our duty, however, to tell this Congress: regardless of what is now being done by the Government of Kemal in Turkey; we must not support the power of the Sultans, however much this might be demanded by religious considerations. You must go forward and not permit yourselves to be dragged backwards. We believe that the eleventh hour of the Sultans has struck and that you must not endure autocracy. You must scatter and defeat the faith in the Sultan and must achieve the establishment of real Soviets. The Russian peasants, likewise, had a great faith in the Tsar. But, when a real people's revolution broke out practically no trace was left of that faith in the Tsar. This will happen also in Turkey and all over the East when the real black earth peasant revolution is kindled.....Therefore we repeat: the policy which is being pursued by the present people's government in Turkey is not the policy of the Communist International; it is not our policy. And at the same time we say that we are ready to help any revolutionary struggle against the British Government. Now the scales in Turkey are down on the side of the rich people. But the time will come when this will be different.....We must deal the heaviest blow to British imperialism, strike it in its very heart. This is true. But at the same time we must bring up in the toiling masses of the East, hatred and the desire to struggle against the rich in general, whether Russian, Jewish, German, or French.....

Therefore we are directly and definitely telling those non-party delegates who are here: Pan-Islamism, Musavatism - all these currents are not our currents. Our policy is different. We cannot support the

democratic policy as it has now been outlined in Turkey, and as it might be outlined tomorrow in other countries.... "I support," the Communist worker says," the present day democratic national movement of the Turks, and at the same time I regard it as my sacred duty to call upon the oppressed Turkish peasants, the Persian peasants, the downtrodden, oppressed toiling peasants of the entire East to despise all kind of rich people, all kind of oppressors, to teach them the simple truth that we require a real economic equality of all people, a real fraternal union of all laboring people.

....At this historic assembly no one must hide behind diplomacy and equivocation.....We conceal nothing from you; we tell you clearly what distinguishes us from the representatives of the present day national movement and what we have in common with them. We tell you: this movement's task is to help the East free itself from British imperialism. But we have our own task, which is no less great - to help the toilers of the East in their struggle against the rich; to help them already now to build their Communist organizations, to explain to them what Communism is, to prepare them for a real workers' revolution, real equality, the liberation of men from all oppression.....

I say that we are now faced with the task of kindling a Real Holy war against the British and the French capitalists..... He gives examples of the British policy in Turkey, Persia, Armenia, India, and China

Finally it is necessary that we close the book of the past in order

never to return to it again, and that we open a new page of history in which the oppressed peoples of the East will not longer be slaves, in which they will not permit the British officers shamelessly to rob the Indians and the Persians, and to kill, berate, and ridicule everybody.

Comrades! In the course of recent years much has been said about a holy war.... When in 1914-1916 people spoke of a "Holy War" - it was a monstrous deception. And now you comrades who have gathered for the first time in a Congress of Eastern peoples must proclaim a real Holy War against the robbers, the British and French capitalists. Now we must say that the hour has struck when the masses all over the world are able to shake up and arouse tens and hundreds of million of peasants, are able to organize a Red Army; also in the East; when they can arm themselves, can organize a revolt in the rear of the British, can burn out the bandits, and know how to poison the existence of every impudent British officer who does as he pleases in Turkey, Persia, India, and China.

....Today the Communist International addresses itself to the peoples of the East and tells them: "Brothers, we call you to rise in a Holy War first and foremost against British imperialism! (A storm of applause; protracted cries of "Hurrah". The members of the Congress rise to their feet, brandish their weapons. For a long time the speaker cannot proceed with his speech. All the members stand and applaud. There are cries: "We vow")....