

DISCUSSIONS OF THE ARMENIAN QUESTION AT THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE COMINTERN AND THE FIRST CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLES OF THE EAST¹

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Abstract

The Bolshevik authorities initially took steps to export the revolution to European countries, but after failing they directed their attention to the East. In 1919-1920 Soviet Russia took active steps to export the “socialist revolutions” to the eastern countries. The Bolsheviks re-established ties with former Young Turkish leaders of the Ottoman Empire and with former Young Turk Mustafa Kemal who had started the nationalist movement in Turkey. The Bolsheviks pinned their hopes on the Muslim East, believing that the latter could be “revolutionized” and directed primarily against Great Britain.

Keywords: Armenian question, Muslim East, Mustafa Kemal, Soviet Russia

The Bolshevik authorities initially took steps to export the revolution to European countries, but after failing they directed their attention to the East. In 1919-1920 Soviet Russia took active steps to export the “socialist revolutions” to the eastern countries. The Bolsheviks re-established ties with former Young Turkish leaders of the Ottoman Empire and with former Young Turk Mustafa Kemal who had started the nationalist movement in Turkey. The Bolsheviks pinned their hopes on the Muslim East, believing that the latter could be “revolutionized” and directed primarily against Great Britain, which led the other countries’ invasion of Russia.



Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938)

The “sovietization”² of Azerbaijan with the help of M. Kemal³ in April 1920, gave the Bolsheviks hope that they had “loyal” allies in the form of the Kemalists, but the Soviet government simultaneously used the former Young Turks⁴, namely Tala’at, Enver, Jemal⁵ and others, to carry out large-scale anti-British operations in the East. In their turn, both the Young Turks and the Kemalists wanted to take

¹ This study has been carried out within the framework of the joint grant received from the State Committee of Science, Republic of Armenia and the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (grant N. 20RF-103).

² Kvashankin et al. 1996: 122.

³ The first attempt by the Kemalists to establish contact with the Bolsheviks was made back in the summer of 1919. See Aralov 1960: 18-19.

⁴ Back in 1918 Enver and his associates had established ties with Soviet Russia, seeking to use the Bolsheviks in the struggle against Great Britain. See Vasilev 2018: 66.

⁵ In August 1920, the Soviet leadership sent Jemal to Afghanistan on a reconnaissance mission. Emir Amanullah Khan entrusted him with the reorganization and command of the army on the border with India. See Kvashankin et al. 1996: 176.

advantage of the anti-British policy of the Russian government and restore the former borders of the empire, first of all to review the Treaty of Sèvres of August 10, 1920.

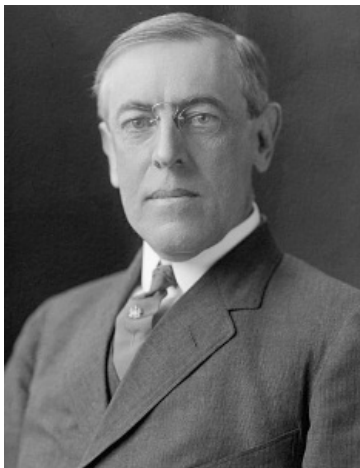


The grand opening of the 2nd Congress of the Comintern
(Petrograd, 1920)



The participants of the 2nd Congress of the Comintern
(Petrograd, 1920)

The Armenian question was discussed at the 2nd Congress of the Comintern in June-July 1920 where Armenia was represented by Avis Nurijanyan⁶ and Hmayak Nazaretyan⁷. The declaration adopted by the Comintern stated that the Turkish people wanted to abrogate the Treaty of Sèvres imposed on them. Moreover, by arming Greece, the British government wanted to bring the Ottoman Empire to its knees. As for Armenia, that country “was created without borders and without the opportunity to live”⁸. Hence, it can be inferred that it was openly stated that the Republic of Armenia had not been recognized by any state, it was in an uncertain military and political situation, its “revolutionization” was possible. At the same time, it was mentioned that US President W. Wilson refused to sponsor Armenia. In fact, the president was in favor of it, but the mandate given by the League of Nations was not accepted by the US Congress. As in other cases, here also we will see that the leadership of the Comintern sometimes resorted to blatant falsifications.



Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924)



Hmayak Nazaretyan



Avis Nurijanyan



**Vagharshak Ter-Vahanyan (1896-1936),
Delegate of the 2nd Congress of the
Comintern. Painter – I. Brodsky**



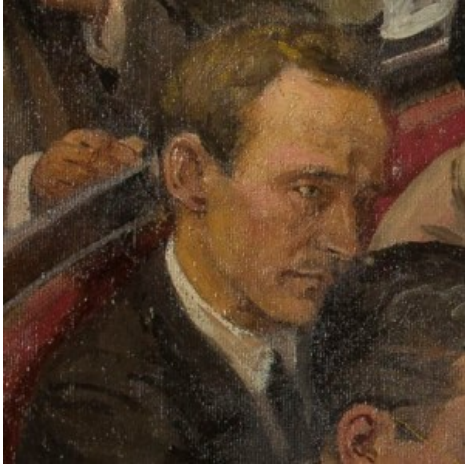
**V. Lenin at the 3rd Congress of the
Comintern. On the right – painter
I. Brodsky (1884-1939)**

⁶ Nurijanyan Avetis (Avis, 1896-1938) was a party and state figure, a Bolshevik. He held various party and state positions. He was known for his extreme views.

⁷ Nazaretyan Hmayak (1889-1937) was a Soviet party and state figure, a Bolshevik. He held various party and state positions. He was Head of J. Stalin's Secretariat. Nazaretyan fell victim to Stalin's terror. Pyatnitsky et al 1934: 620.

⁸ Pyatnitsky et al 1934: 543.

In his speech V. Lenin noted that after the World War China, Persia and Turkey were again in the spotlight of the imperialist powers⁹. According to him, the issue would be resolved through a victorious revolution¹⁰. It could be concluded from this speech that V. Lenin called for a permanent revolution, the essence of which was the export of revolution.



Otto Kuusinen (1881-1964), Delegate of the 2nd Congress of the Comintern. Painter – I. Brodsky

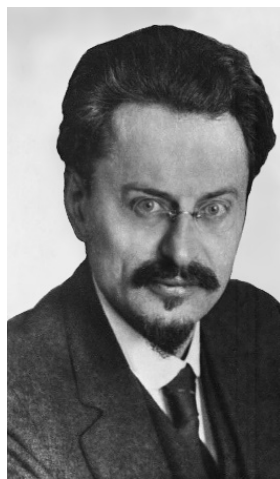


Anastas Mikoyan, Joseph Stalin, Georgy Orjonikidze

At the 3rd Congress of the Comintern, Sargis Kasyan, the representative of Soviet Armenia, stretching the truth, stated that Britain supported Armenia because it wanted not only to create a base to fight against Soviet Russia, but also against spreading socialist ideas in the East¹¹.



Sargis Kasyan (1878-1938)



Lev Trotsky (1879-1940)

S. Kasyan considered that the Turkish threat continued: "The Turkish government keeps showing imperialist aspirations at our border"¹². According to him, in case of any real threat from Turkey, Soviet Russia would support the Armenian workers and peasants¹³. That way he tried to justify the sovietization of Armenia, which would no longer be subject to Turkish invasion under the protection of the Bolshevik troops.

Among the leadership of Soviet Russia there were people who resorted to radical actions, including G. Orjonikidze. In a telegram on May 4, 1920, addressed to V. Lenin

⁹ Pyatnitsky et al 1934: 23.

¹⁰ Idem.

¹¹ First International Congress 1924: 469.

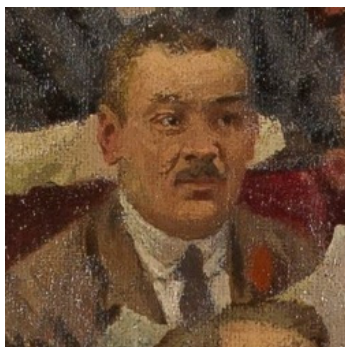
¹² First International Congress 1924: 470.

¹³ Idem.

and J. Stalin he directly demanded, even blackmailed them saying they should refuse to sign a peace treaty with Armenia, which would be negatively accepted by Muslims. The latter “will get the impression that we, the Christians, have occupied Azerbaijan, leaving aside Armenia and Georgia”¹⁴. Hence, it can be concluded that G. Orjonikidze was rushing to Sovietize the mentioned republics. According to Russian researcher V. Mukhanov, G. Orjonikidze was the main organizer and implementer of the sovietization of Transcaucasia. He enjoyed the personal trust of the Soviet leadership and first of all of V. Lenin¹⁵.



Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of Russia V. Lenin is talking to the participants of the 2nd Congress of the Comintern



Nariman Narimanov (1871-1925). Painter – I. Brodsky

The Soviet leadership knew that the Kemalists were preparing to attack the Republic of Armenia, but it was desirable for the Turks to know the position of the Bolsheviks in this matter¹⁶, thus, not only members of the former Ottoman government, but also the representatives of M. Kemal came to Moscow by different routes. After discussing these issues, on the initiative of Moscow, the so-called 1st Congress of the Peoples of the East was convened in Baku, organized by G. Zinoviev, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Communist

¹⁴ Kvashankin et al. 1996: 125.

¹⁵ Mukhanov 2017: 94.

¹⁶ As of May 1920, the Sovietization of Armenia was not yet part of the Bolsheviks' plans. According to V. Lenin: “Armenia is of no interest to us in the near future...”, Kvashankin et al. 1996: 124-125.

International. The members of the organizing body were N. Narimanov, G. Orjonikidze, J. Stalin, A. Mikoyan and others.

We do not think that J. Stalin's presence in Baku was accidental. In the telegram addressed to G. Orjonikidze, he directly stated that in the Armenian-Turkish-Tatar issue he and V. Lenin were eager to resolve the issue in favor of Azerbaijan and Turkey¹⁷. And in the summer of 1920, as a guarantee of their position the Turks were given 6,000 rifles, more than 5 million bullets, 17.6 thousand shells, and about 200 kg of gold¹⁸.



G. Zinoviev (with his hand raised) speaks at the 1st Congress of the Peoples of the East. September 1920, Baku

The 1st Congress of the Peoples of the East took place in Baku from September 1 to 8, 1920¹⁹. An enormous sum of money was allocated for its organization and realization at a time when the population of Russia was in a difficult socio-economic situation, followed by famine. Among those invited was Enver Pasha²⁰, the former military minister of the Ottoman Empire, a war criminal, one of the masterminds and perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide. It should be noted that before coming to Baku, in Moscow Enver had received a considerable amount of money from the Soviet government, most of which he had sent to former Young Turk leaders²¹. It should be noted that the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party had made a decision to provide M. Kemal with gold and weapons²².

Officially 1895 people arrived in Baku, and 1273 of them were communists²³. The Turks had the largest number of delegates at the Congress - 235, Persians - 192, Armenians - 157²⁴.

¹⁷ Kvashankin et al. 1996: 145-146, n. 1.

¹⁸ Mukhanov 2017: 96.

¹⁹ The congress officially finished on September 7, at 10:10 pm. See First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 123.

²⁰ Enver had come to Baku in the same car with G. Zinoviev. See Matonin 2016. 213. Some time later, Enver "was sent on a business trip" to Central Asia to form an anti-British front. However, he joined the local anti-Soviet forces and led the local rebel movement. He was killed on August 4, 1922, during a clash with the Bolshevik Red Army.

²¹ Sahakyan 1991: 4.

²² Kvashankin et al. 1996: 138.

²³ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 7.

²⁴ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 6.



Delegates of the Congress of the Peoples of the East, travelling from Moscow to Baku (1920). Center right - Anastas Mikoyan

On August 31, a joint solemn session of the Baku Council of Deputies and Trade Unions of Azerbaijan took place, welcoming those present and sending a special greeting to G. Zinoviev as “the leader of world communism” and K. Radek²⁵, as “the leader of world proletariat”²⁶. B. Kun was also mentioned as “the leader of the Hungarian Communist Revolution”²⁷. Representatives of the Communist parties of England, Germany, France, Italy, Eastern Europe and the United States were also reported to be attending the 1st Congress of the Peoples of the East²⁸. The Soviet leadership tried to present the Congress as an exceptional event, which gave an opportunity to unite the peoples of the East for the first time and guide them to the anti-colonial movement.



Meeting of the delegates of the Congress in Baku

²⁵ In 1919 K. Radek was released from a German prison due to the mediation of Tala'at Pasha. See Tanriverdi 2020: 127.

²⁶ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 7.

²⁷ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 8.

²⁸ It should be noted that during the whole Congress all the speeches ended or were interrupted by applause, “hurray” calls, and the brass band performed “International”.

The Congress opened on September 1, at 9:40 pm. Those present were greeted by N. Narimanov, the Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of Azerbaijan, and then by G. Zinoviev, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (Comintern). He referred to the revolutionary movement in Russia, emphasizing the role of the workers of Baku in the struggle against Tsarism, and then proceeded to the defeats of the Red Army in the war against Poland²⁹.

G. Zinoviev emphasized the great importance given to the people of Asia and Africa, who, together with the working classes of Europe and America, would take part in the world revolution, and only then the domination of the bourgeoisie all over the world would be put to an end³⁰.



Sultan-Zade (Mikayelyan)



Haykaz Kostanyan

The speeches of the delegates of the Congress were translated into Russian, English, German, Persian, Turkish and other languages³¹. By the way, the translator of Turkish (Caucasian Tatar language) was Sultan-Zade, an Armenian, who, for whatever reason, introduced himself as a Caucasian Tatar³². At N. Narimanov's suggestion, the presidency of the

Congress of partisans and non-partisans was elected and Armenia was represented by Haykaz Kostanyan³³.

The opportunity to make the first speech was given to G. Zinoviev, who first of all valued the number of delegates in the Baku Congress, stressing that for the first time in human history it was possible to gather more than two dozen representatives of the East, most of whom had been hostile to one another and had not even met before³⁴.

²⁹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 11.

³⁰ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 12.

³¹ According to a contemporary, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the delegates were Turkic-speaking or understood Turkic languages. See Fayn 2018: 37.

³² First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 26. Avetis Sultan-Zade (Mikayelyan, 1888-1938) was a Bolshevik, one of the founders of the Persian Communist party, president of the Persian section of the Comintern. He was the author of studies concerning Persia, Editor-in-Chief of the journal "Economičeskoe stroitel'stvo" (1925). He fell victim to Stalin's terror (1938), but was later acquitted.

³³ H. Kostanyan (1898-1938) was a Soviet-Armenian party and state figure, a Bolshevik. He was the People's Commissar for ASSR Labor and Social Security and Internal Affairs (1920-1923), he held party and state positions both in Armenia and in the USSR. He fell victim to Stalin's terror.

³⁴ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 30.



The building of the Mailyan Brothers Theater, where the Congress took place. Now it is Azerbaijani State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre. The architect is Nikolay Bayev, an Armenian

G. Zinoviev addressed the issue of the Republic of Georgia and strongly condemned Noy Zhordania as the main representative of the II International³⁵. He believed that the peasants of Turkey, Persia, India, China, Armenia and other countries were deprived of land, but with the help of workers from the West they could rise and carry out an “extensive land revolution”³⁶. G. Zinoviev considered that the above-mentioned countries, including Armenia, “could and should directly start the struggle for Soviet rule”³⁷.

In his speech, G. Zinoviev also referred to Turkey, stating that not in all cases their interests corresponded, but Soviet Russia helped M. Kemal, without forgetting that his movement was not communist. In order to prove he was speaking the truth, G. Zinoviev referred to the transcript report of the first session of the government headed by M. Kemal where he said: “The Caliph and Sultan is sacred and inviolable”³⁸.

G. Zinoviev believed that it was necessary to “ignite a real sacred war against English and French capitalists... “You know ... in what condition Armenia is. Yesterday all the Entente powers wanted to protect it and now no one is protecting it”³⁹. At the end of his speech, he noted that the Comintern addressed the Eastern countries, saying: “Brothers, we call for a holy war against British imperialism” (Loud applause, long shouts of “hurray”. The members of the Congress got up shaking their weapons⁴⁰. The speaker could not continue for a long time. Everyone stood and applauded, shouting “We swear”)⁴¹.

³⁵ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 33.

³⁶ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 39.

³⁷ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 40.

³⁸ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 42.

³⁹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 45-46.

⁴⁰ English writer H. Wells, who watched the documentary film dedicated to the Congress in Petrograd, was especially shocked by the fact that the delegates raised their guns, swords and daggers and shook them. He came to the following conclusion: “This film should be shown with caution and only to adults. There are moments after which “The Morning Post’s” Mr. Gwin and Mr. Rudyard Kipling will start having nightmares, if only watching that movie will not deprive them of sleep for good”. See Wells 1960: 48: See the film at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRFeuHbxYSU>

⁴¹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 48.



After the announcement of "Jihad"



Karl Radek

As an example of England's and France's treachery and hypocritical policy K. Radek cited the pro-Armenian appeals and promises of those powers during the war. The French left the Armenians of Marash defenseless⁴² which allowed the troops of M. Kemal to suppress the resistance of the Armenians and kill most of the population. He also drew the delegates' attention to the US policy towards Armenia. K. Radek noted: "Recently America has been acting as a savior of Armenia, urging them to fight against all the peoples among whom they were historically destined to live. From time to time, Americans send ships loaded with bread to Armenia, which, however, cannot save Armenians from hunger and cold"⁴³.

It is evident that the Bolshevik figure resorted to blatant falsification, distorting historical facts. The fact remains that the aid received from the USA in May 1919 saved Armenians from starvation⁴⁴.

K. Radek stated that the Republic of Armenia, which was ruled by the Entente powers, hated Soviet Russia, and in the current situation it was forced to negotiate with

⁴² The retreat of the French army from Marash was conditioned by the necessity to relinquish Cilicia and keep Syria, which was economically advantageous to the French. See History of Armenia 2010: 226.

⁴³ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 60.

⁴⁴ Barkhudaryan 2010: 54.

Soviet Russia, realizing that the Entente powers could not help. The English did not take any steps to help Armenians, despite the fact that the British army was stationed in Mesopotamia⁴⁵.



Dadash Khoja oghli Buniatzade
(1888-1938)

Buniatzade⁴⁶ spoke on behalf of the Communist faction, but his speech was partially translated. It is interesting that the part referring to Enver was left out of the translation. After the complaints, the whole text of the speech was presented. Buniatzade categorically denied the 1918 myth about the Ottoman army and Enver's liberating role⁴⁷.

The next speaker was a certain Vahardin Shakir, who tried to justify the Ottoman Empire's involvement in the World War by saying that Turkey was forced to take part in the war "for self-defense"⁴⁸ and pursued no invasive goals.

V. Shakir tried to convince those present that Turkish officers were significantly different from Russian or European army officers, because "a Turkish officer is a real proletariat. He was not brought up in the spirit with which the officers in Europe and Russia were brought up"⁴⁹. According to the delegate, during the World War Turkey did not mean to occupy new territories, but wanted to create buffer zones from Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan between itself and Russia⁵⁰.

Haydarkhanov, representing the communist faction at the Congress, stated that he disagreed with and did not accept V. Shakir's assertion that during the war Turkey had defended itself, had not been an instrument of German imperialism and had had no invasive aspirations⁵¹.

G. Zinoviev, the chairman of the session, stated that the partisan and non-partisan factions had agreed to organize 4 sections on agricultural, national-and-colonial, Soviet construction and organizational issues. It was planned to send one person out of every 20 delegates into those sections. As a result, each section would include 90 people⁵². At the same time, it was informed that there would be no session the next day, as it was planned to hold a parade.

At the September 4 session, Narbutabekov, representing Turkestan, especially appreciated V. Lenin's and I. Stalin's speech addressed to the Muslims of Russia and

⁴⁵ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 60-61.

⁴⁶ Dadash Khoja oghli Buniatzade (1888-1938), an Azerbaijani state and political figure, a Bolshevik.

⁴⁷ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 76.

⁴⁸ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 77.

⁴⁹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 78.

⁵⁰ Idem.

⁵¹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 80.

⁵² Idem.

the East on November 20, 1917, in which they said that the agreement about Turkey's separation "and the seizure of Armenia from Turkey has been torn and destroyed, and that Constantinople must remain in the hands of the Muslims"⁵³. In fact, he not only welcomed, but also reaffirmed the decision of the Bolshevik leadership, for whom the Armenian question no longer existed.

The next speaker was Kumik⁵⁴ J. Korkmasov⁵⁵, who regretted not seeing among those present Enver Pasha, who "organized a counter-revolution to overthrow the Soviet rule"⁵⁶. The delegate strongly criticized the Young Turks Yusuf Izet and Nuri Pasha's anti-national activities in Dagestan in October 1918, with mass violence committed⁵⁷.

G. Zinoviev offered to limit speeches, announcing that translations would be only in Russian, Turkish-Azerbaijani and Persian⁵⁸. He said he wanted to read the written statements of "prominent Turkish politicians in Baku who are not members of our Congress"⁵⁹ – Enver Pasha and Ibrahim Tali, a representative of the Turkish government of Anatolia⁶⁰.



Jelal-ad-Din Korkmasov
(1877-1937)



Enver pasha (at the center), Baku, September, 1920

⁵³ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 90-91.

⁵⁴ The Kumiks are the second largest Turkic-speaking Sunni people in the Caucasus after the Azerbaijanis.

⁵⁵ Korkmasov Jelal-ad-Din (1877-1937) studied at the universities of Moscow and Sorbonne. In 1909-1910 he published the weekly newspaper "İstanbul News" with his own funds in Constantinople. He was a Soviet state and political figure, a diplomat, Bolshevik, founder of the Republic of Dagestan. He fell victim to Stalin's terror.

⁵⁶ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 94.

⁵⁷ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 95.

⁵⁸ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 99.

⁵⁹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 108.

⁶⁰ He refers to the government of Ankara headed by M. Kemal.

Enver's⁶¹ statement was full of the terms “imperialism”, “world imperialism”, “working classes”, “workers”, “revolution”, “international”, the meaning of which he had no idea of at all. He declared that they were the devoted and true allies of the Comintern⁶². By distorting the facts, he tried to prove that the Ottoman Empire went to war to prevent the Entente powers from “suffocating and destroying”⁶³ them, as Germany had agreed to defend them. At the same time, he accused the former ally of using the Turks for their occupation plans⁶⁴. According to Enver's statement, when Soviet Russia found itself in a blockade between the Whites and the Entente Powers, the Ottoman government decided to work together against a common enemy and to “become Russia's friend”⁶⁵.



D. Moore. Poster. “Comrades Muslims! Under the green flag of the Prophet, you went to conquer your steppes, your villages. The enemies of the people took away your native fields. Today, under the red flag of the Workers and Peasants Revolution, under the star of the army of all the oppressed and working people, gather from the east and west, from the north and south. Saddle up, comrades! Join the regiments of Vsevoluch!”

Enver sought to prove that the Ottoman Empire had been an ally of the Russian working class in the overthrow of the monarchy in Russia, when it closed the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits

for navigation. “Thus, we have supported the opening of a new way for saving the world. From the point of view of the oppressed, I consider it a victory”⁶⁶.

As historian H. Avetisyan mentioned: “Enver's words about the right of the peoples living in Turkey to self-determination, as if they had equal rights, sounded blasphemous”⁶⁷.

After Enver⁶⁸, the statement of Ibrahim Tali, the representative of the Ankara government was read out. He, like the previous one, condemned global imperialism,

⁶¹ According to the memoirs of S. Aralov, Soviet Plenipotentiary Representative in Turkey, Enver wanted to organize an Islamic army; and to conceal his real goals he presented himself at the Congress as a supporter of communism. See Aralov 1960: 22.

⁶² First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 108.

⁶³ Idem.

⁶⁴ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 109.

⁶⁵ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 110.

⁶⁶ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 110.

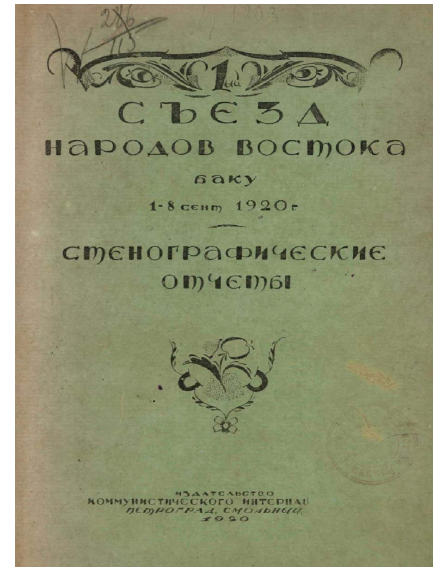
⁶⁷ Avetisyan 1987: 30.

which sought to take Turkey's "vital waterways"⁶⁹. I. Tali was trying to convince that Turkey (Turkish peasant was meant) had taken up arms solely for the purpose of protecting its national borders and "its productive forces"⁷⁰.

Continuing to falsify the facts, I. Tali stated that they were threatened by two accomplices of Western capitalism, namely the Republic of Armenia and Greece. And in such a "grave" situation, the Anatolian "revolutionaries" turned to the "red revolution rising like the dawn in the East"⁷¹. M. Kemal's representative tried to assure the Congress that they sincerely accepted the hand of friendship extended by Soviet Russia⁷².

G. Zinoviev, speaking on behalf of the presidency of the Congress, proposed to adopt a resolution on Enver's and Tali's speeches. B. Kun took the floor for this and the resolution he read out hailed the "revolutionary" struggle in Turkey, but noted that it was directed against foreigners, did not protect Turkish workers and peasants from exploitation. At the same time, it called to exercise caution towards those leaders of the movement, who had previously led Turkish workers and peasants to the death⁷³.

G. Zinoviev's proposal to put the resolution to the vote caused some noise in the assembly hall. Some delegates demanded that they be given the floor, but the chairman insisted on voting on the resolution that had unanimously been approved by the presidency without discussion⁷⁴. It is self-evident that G. Zinoviev took advantage of the noise and mess in the assembly hall and put the resolution to the vote, which was accepted with applause⁷⁵.



The cover page of the transcript report of the Congress

⁶⁸ On August 10, 1921, Enver arrived in Batumi. He wanted to secretly cross to Turkey in order to start the struggle against M. Kemal. Under various pretexts Soviet authorities prevented him from carrying out his intention. At that time, the Soviet leadership was finally oriented towards M. Kemal. See Vasilev 2018: 67.

⁶⁹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 112.

⁷⁰ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 113.

⁷¹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 115.

⁷² First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 116.

⁷³ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 117.

⁷⁴ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 118.

⁷⁵ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 118.



John Reed (1887-1920)

The transcript of the conference separately presents the speech of the US representative John Reed. It seemed that J. Reed was supposed to focus entirely on the US occupation policy in Mexico, Cuba and other Latin American countries, racial issues, but again the Armenians and Armenia became the center of discussion. He reported that the Middle East and particularly Armenia were the center of attention of American capitalists, and the wealthy Americans had raised millions of dollars to help Armenia⁷⁶. J. Reed believed that rich Americans, on the one hand, helped the suffering Armenian people, and on the other hand, robbed their own and neighboring peoples, giving some of that robbed money to help the hungry people of Armenia. As an example, he referred to wealthy K. Dodge who published articles about how Turks had

driven Armenians to deserts but at the same time he had mines where the workers' protests were brutally suppressed, and they were driven to the desert like the Armenians⁷⁷. According to J. Reed, American capitalists helped Armenia because there were rich mines and cheap labor there which would be exploited by wealthy Americans⁷⁸.



The presidency of the Congress

⁷⁶ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 122.

⁷⁷ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 123.

⁷⁸ Idem.

We do not consider such a comparison appropriate. Probably the keynote speakers had been instructed to mention Armenia and Armenians from now and then in order to turn the public opinion against them and to ideologically secure Kemalist Turkey's attack on Armenia and prepare for its sovietization.

The next, fifth session started on September 5, 1920. At the suggestion of the presidency, topics related to national and colonial issues would be discussed, and Pavlovich reported on them⁷⁹. He stated that "Dashnak" Armenia and "Menshevik" Georgia were the "enemies" of the peoples of the

East, as European imperialism supported them with weapons and bread so that they would sever ties with revolutionary Russia and separate the Caucasus from "revolutionary" Turkey, Persia and India, adding that the imperialists, in their turn, had provoked Greece to attack Turkey, and Poland - to attack Russia⁸⁰.

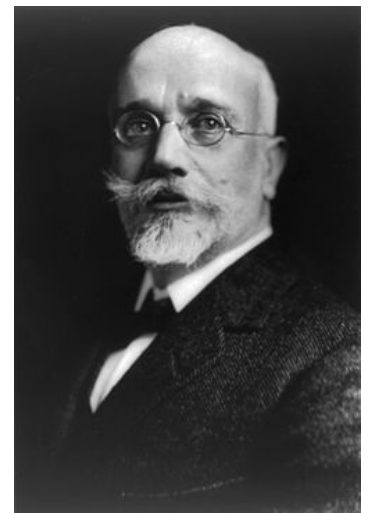
Probably referring to the Armenian massacres in the Ottoman Empire in the 1890s, Pavlovich noted that they were condemned by the II International; and anti-Sultan demonstrations were organized only to allow capitalist governments to interfere in Turkey's internal affairs⁸¹.

He mentioned that Armenians claimed Karabakh (Artsakh) and Zangezur (Syunik), referring to some secret letter by D. Kanayan. In addition, Armenia wanted to become a major Mediterranean power and occupy a territory where Armenians make up 50% of the population. It is self-evident that the Bolshevik figure meant Cilicia. As Pavlovich stated: "Armenian newspapers offer Greece, namely Venizelos (Prime Minister of Greece – R. S.) to occupy Trabzon. It is a real provocation"⁸².

At the end of his speech, the speaker came to the expected conclusion: "in order to end the fratricidal war" between Armenian, Georgian and Turkish workers and peasants "it is necessary to first establish Soviet power in those countries, and then form a federation of the peoples living there"⁸³.



M. Pavlovich (1871-1927)



E. Venizelos (1864-1936)

⁷⁹ Veltman Mikhail who acted under the pseudonym Mikhail Pavlovich (1871-1927), was an Orientalist, revolutionary, Bolshevik. He was one of the organizers of the Baku Congress.

⁸⁰ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 137.

⁸¹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 141.

⁸² First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 149.

⁸³ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 151.

At the end of this session, a number of written statements were submitted to the presidency, including the “Declaration of the Representatives of the Armenian Working Class”⁸⁴, but they were not read out, so the chairman proposed to attach them to the minutes of the session as documents.



Béla Kun (1886-1938)

The sixth session of the congress took place on September 6. The chairman announced the agenda – “The issue of Soviet construction in the East”, on which B. Kun reported⁸⁵. At the end of his speech, he referred to Armenia. B. Kun noted that the transition of the democratic Republic of Armenia to a parliamentary system took place “under the slogan of freedom and equality”⁸⁶, which was in fact false.

On September 7, 1920, the last, 7th session of the Congress was convened, chaired by G. Zinoviev. He informed that a permanent executive body would be elected, which would lead the work until the next congress, which was planned to be convened once a year⁸⁷. G. Zinoviev said that the two factions of partisans and non-partisans had discussed the issue of establishing a permanent council of “propaganda and actions” and had decided to call it the “Council of Propaganda of the Peoples of the East”⁸⁸, which would consist of 47 people⁸⁹. At G. Zinoviev’s suggestion, the composition of the council was read out: first the names of the party members, then those of non-partisans. The name of infamous Avis Nurijanyan was mentioned among the former⁹⁰. Despite the large number of Armenian delegates, none of them was given the opportunity to speak.

The chairman could not leave out Armenia, noting that it was a “bourgeois-democratic republic”⁹¹. G. Zinoviev announced: “There is no united Armenia; on the one hand there is the worker-and-peasant Armenia, to which we extend a fraternal hand, and on the other hand there is the cursed, executioner Dashnak, bourgeois Armenia”⁹² (loud applause).

⁸⁴ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 170.

⁸⁵ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 174.

⁸⁶ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 183.

⁸⁷ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 211.

⁸⁸ Idem.

⁸⁹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 212. At the beginning of 1921, “The Communist University of Eastern Workers” was established in Moscow, which was to train national personnel for Eastern, including Soviet countries.

⁹⁰ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 219.

⁹¹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 226.

⁹² Idem.



**A monument dedicated to the republic in Takvim Square in Ankara.
To the right of M. Kemal are the statues of the head of the
Soviet delegation K. Voroshilov and Ambassador S. Aralov.**

Thus, after failing in European countries, Soviet Russia took steps to export the socialist revolution to the East. That goal was pursued by the Congress of the Comintern and the First Congress of the Peoples of the East convened in Baku. The Republic of Armenia was mentioned almost throughout the whole Congress. Most of the delegates described Armenia as a representative and defender of the interests of British and French imperialism in the region. Soviet Russia was ready to make concessions to the Kemalists and the Young Turks for the sake of the world revolution, thus during the whole process of the sessions the RA and its foreign and domestic policy were criticized. By spreading blatant lies some of the delegates tried to distort the real situation and concluded that the salvation of Armenia could only be found in its Sovietization. In fact, the Congress ideologically prepared for the Sovietization of Armenia, which took place due to the Kemalist attack on September 23, 1920.

It should be noted that Soviet authorities failed to get the support of Muslims. Moreover, while in Central Asia Enver provoked a mass anti-Soviet nationwide armed struggle - Jihad, which lasted until the 1930s.

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