

The Sozonov Case, 1910: The Making of a Revolutionary Martyrology

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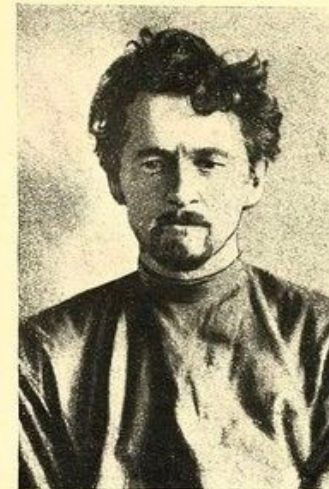
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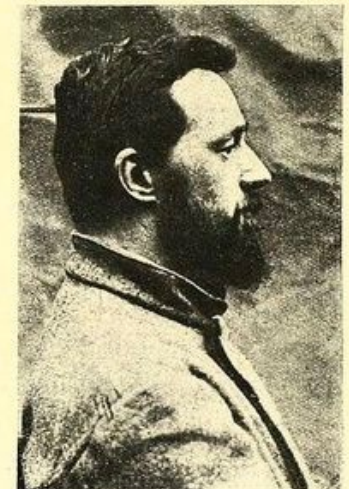
1902 г.



1903 г.

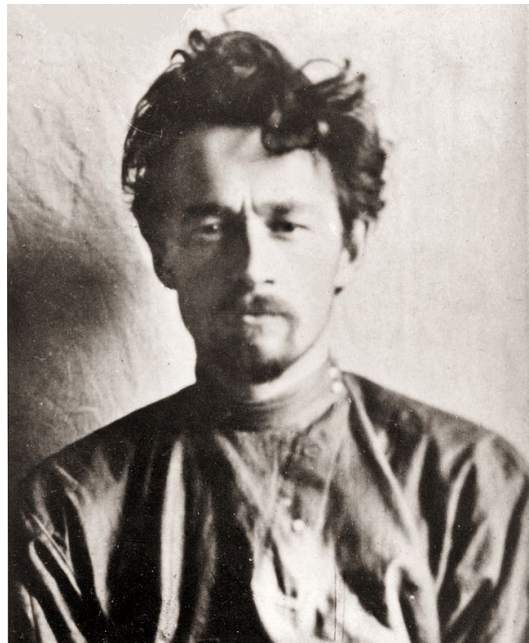


Со снимка департ. полиции
1902 г.

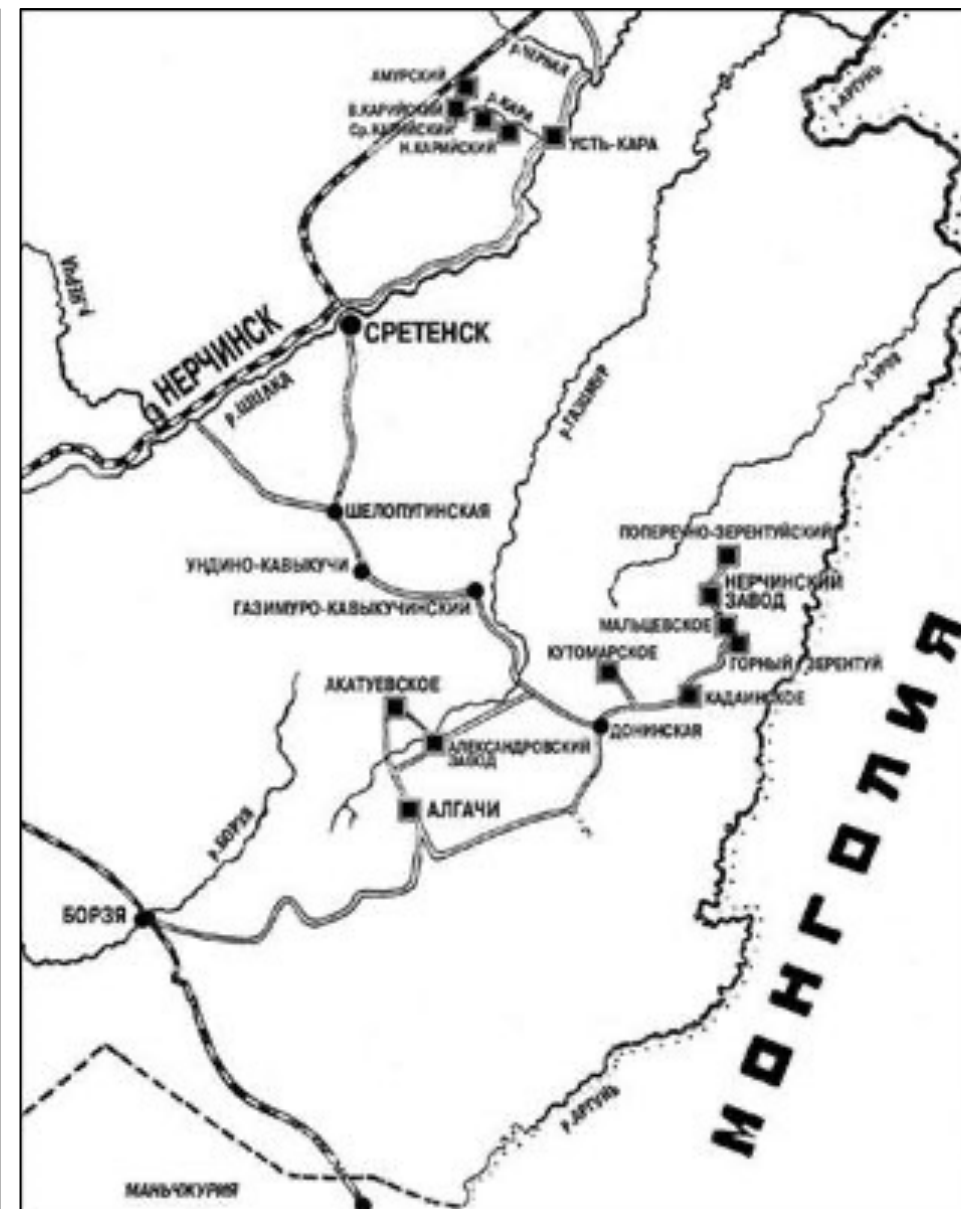
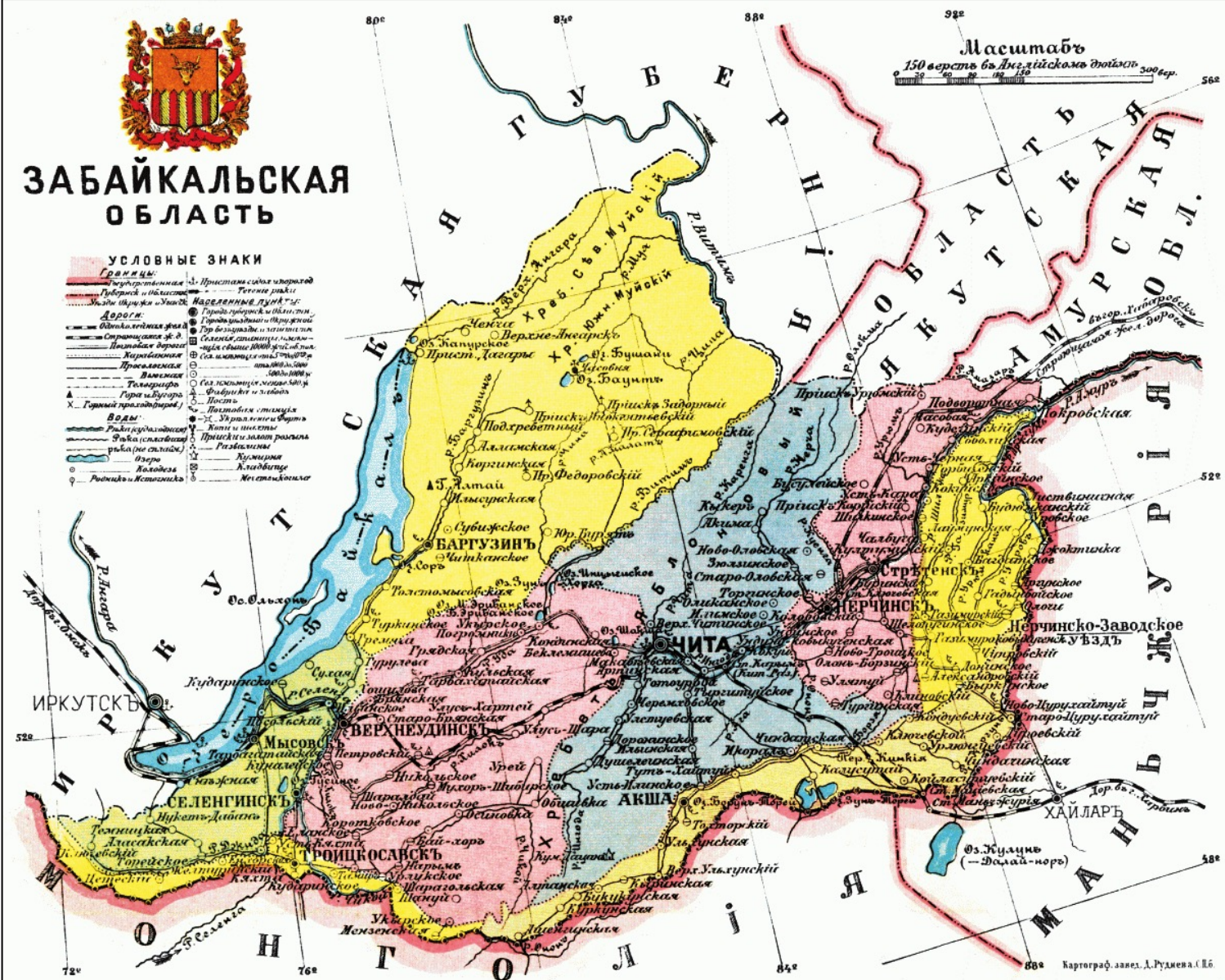


Со снимка, сделанного на каторге
в 1906 г.

Егор Созонов.



Clockwise from top left: Viacheslav von Pleve; the crime scene of 15 July 1904; Egor Sergeevich Sozonov, Pleve's assassin





SR terrorists in Akatui katorga, 1906 (Sozonov in the back row, furthest to the right)

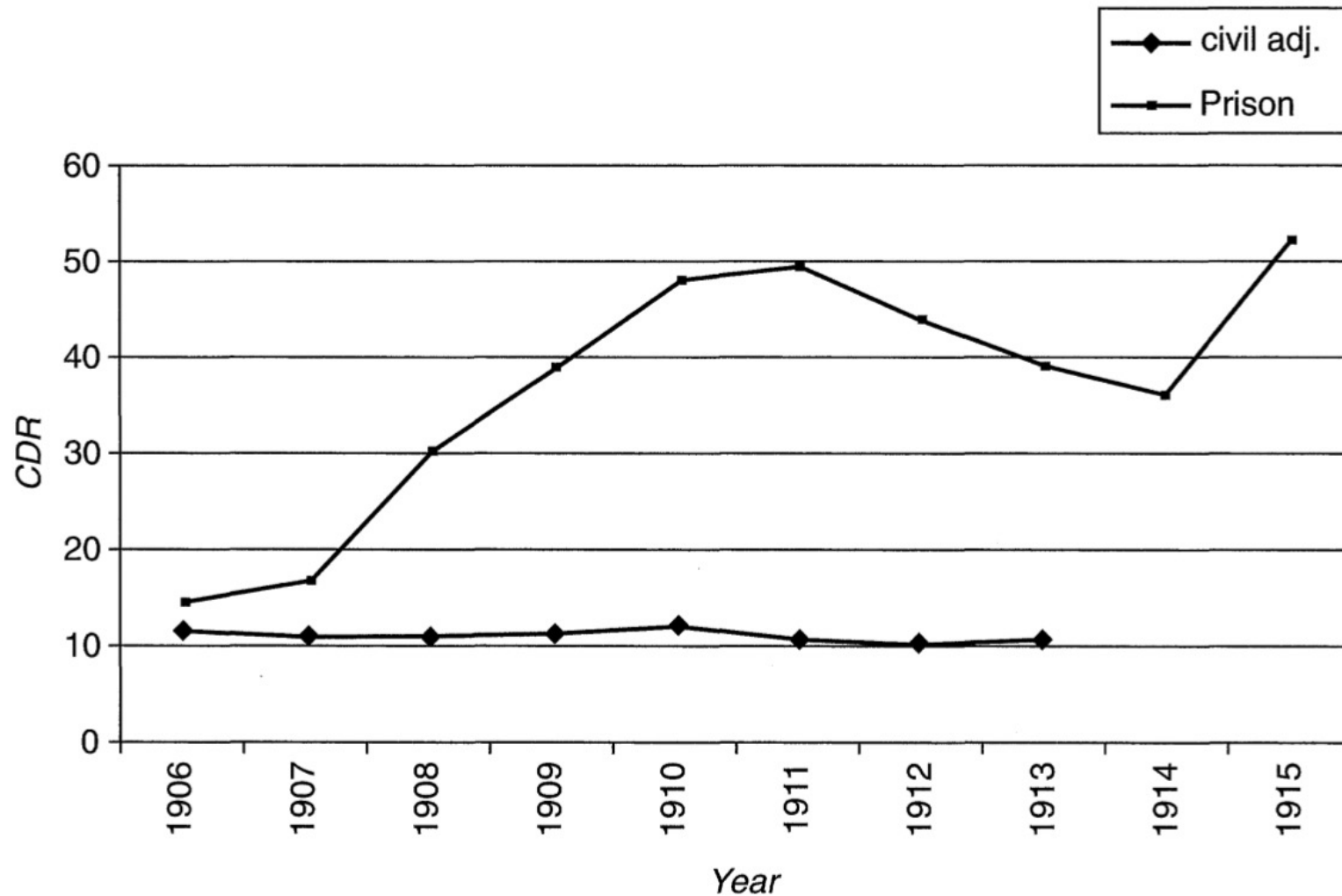


Figure 2.2 Russian crude death rates per thousand population: civil adjusted and prisoner, 1906–15

Source: Stephen Wheatcroft, 'The Crisis of the Late Tsarist Penal System', *Challenging Traditional Views of Russian History* (Palgrave, 2002), pp. 27-54 (41).



Виды и типы Нерчинской каторги.—Les galères à Nertschinsk. № 3.
Арестанты на молитвѣ предъ горно-Зерентовской тюрьмой.—Les galèriens sont en prière.

Zerentui katorga prison, 1891

служащие, во всякомъ случаѣ, не виноваты въ недостаткахъ по пищевому и одежному довольствію арестантовъ.

Относительно письменныхъ сношеній арестантовъ съ находящимися внѣ тюремъ сообщенія, вѣроятно, соновательны. Такому сношенію, конечно, способствуетъ разрѣшеніе арестантамъ имѣть при себѣ бумагу и письменныя принадлежности. Начальники Зерентуйской и Алгачинской тюремъ /временные/ шт.-капитанъ Чемодановъ и Гаринъ, врачъ Круковский и фельдшеръ Крыловъ весьма серьезные и вполне политически благонадежныя дѣятели, и я считаю совершенно неосновательнымъ оговоръ ихъ въ томъ, что они будто бы передаютъ тайно переписку отъ политическихъ; этотъ слухъ, вѣроятно, исходитъ отъ тѣхъ лицъ, для которыхъ нежелательны въ составѣ тюремной администрации столь благонадежныя служащіе, какъ указанныя лица. О надзирателѣ Кадаинской тюрьмы Ерохинъ и фельдшеръ Акатуевской тюрьмы ничего опредѣленнаго сказать не могу, но мѣстная администрація даетъ хорошій отзывъ о нихъ. Указанный фельдшеръ даже проситъ перевести его изъ Акатуевской тюрьмы. Едва ли бы объ этомъ онъ настойчиво просилъ, если бы онъ былъ "партийный" человекъ и желалъ бы оказывать разныя противозаконныя содѣйствія политическимъ, которые преимущественно и сосредоточены въ Акатуевской тюрьмѣ.

Начальница Горно-Зерентуйскаго приюта арестантскихъ дѣтей Тольвинская - человекъ очень строгихъ правилъ, несомнѣнно политически благонадежная и вообще прекрасная служащая. Она бываетъ въ квартирѣ полковника Забѣлло, и очень вѣроятно, получаетъ отъ него нѣкоторыя служебныя свѣдѣнія и даже въ разговорахъ передаетъ о нихъ своимъ знакомымъ, но, конечно, безъ злого намѣренія посягнуть на какое либо неправомерное вѣдѣніе въ тюремной мѣстной жизни. Учителемъ въ

The commandants of Zerentui and Algacha prisons [...] are conscientious and entirely politically dependable individuals, and I consider the slander that they allegedly convey letters from the political prisoners to the outside world in secret totally unfounded. This rumour probably comes from those who would rather not have such sound (blagonadezhnye) officials in the prison service.

I. P. Sementovskii, report to Main Prison

Administration, 25 September 1910. GARF f.

122.1.6157.



N. E. Markov (aka Markov
vtoroi), 1866-1945

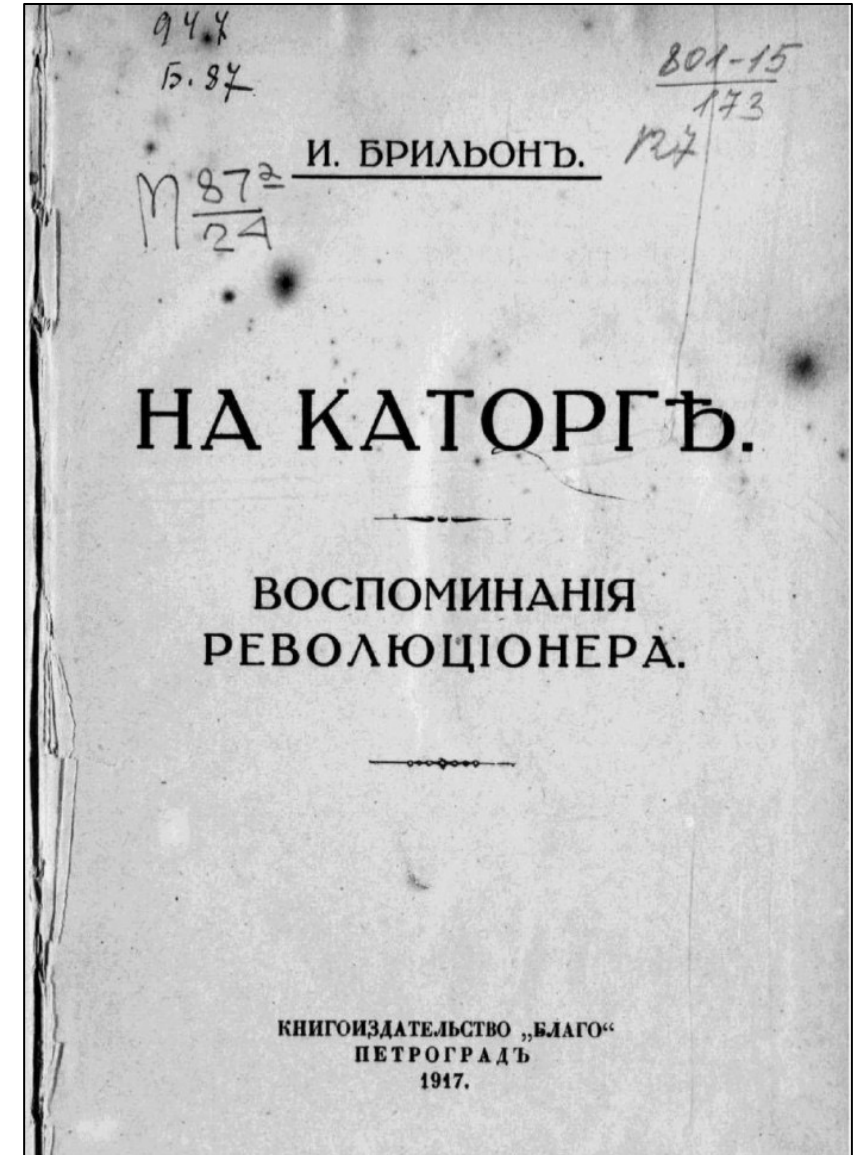
All of this is most unfortunate for anyone planning to do prison time in the near future [...] By the way, the motion says that Sozonov, the murderer of Pleve, is dead. The only thing I regret is that he was not hung at the time, and if he is now dead, I am simply delighted. If all these Sozonovs, Konopliannikovas and Spiridonovas were hung, drawn and quartered, it would be no more than they deserve.

Gosudarstvennaia дума tret'ego sozyva.

Stenograficheskie otchety 4.27 (29 November 1910), pp.
2216-2231 (2223).

Everyone loved Sozonov. He often received money and parcels from the outside world. At first the common criminals used to cheat him, borrowing money from him for their card games and, obviously, never repaying it. When Sozonov was in a position to help someone, he would never refuse them, and as a result he was always poorer than the others – people took advantage of his good nature. Soon enough, however, the common criminals saw what kind of person he was, and, out of shame, stopped cheating him. I once saw a convict asking Sozonov for money when one of the prison elders came up and took [the convict] aside, unleashing a tirade: ‘Do you know who you're stealing from? Don't you know he won't refuse you, he'll give you his last kopeck and go hungry himself...He's not a man but a saint.’

I. Bril'on, *Na katorge: vospominaniia revoliutsionera* (1917), p. 103.





Yesterday [30 November] police-master Galle told us that he had to restore order at [St Petersburg] university. He was under orders not to allow student gatherings in any event. But yesterday in the university there gathered about two thousand students in the great hall [aktovyi zal]. Galle entered the hall with 250 police officers and asked the students to disperse, but since they refused to do so, he and his men had to chuck them out one at a time. Galle thinks he had to remove about six thousand poods of human meat altogether, and that it took four hours.

Diary entry for 1 December 1910, A. V.

Bogdanovich, *Tri poslednikh samoderzhitsa* (1990), p. 492.

The [funeral] train was met by a band playing a first a funeral march, and then the Marseillaise [...] On 22 May the train was met at Novonikolaevsk by a crowd of people so huge that they ended up sitting on the roofs of the train carriages. Beside the train a military honour guard was formed, and an orchestra played. Thus our liberated motherland honours its fallen sons, martyrs in the cause of freedom.

Sibirskaiia zhizn' on Sozonov's repatriation,
May 1917 (right: his grave in Ufa)



Sozonov offered up his life twice - once on the streets of Petersburg, when he threw a bomb and, badly wounded by the shrapnel, fell on the pavement. That time fate did not accept the offer of his life. The second time, he took poison to spare his comrades the shame of corporal punishment. This double self-sacrifice gives us the measure of Sozonov as a revolutionary. To sacrifice oneself as he did, one must, of course, have a very big heart - perhaps unique in the history of the Russian revolutionary movement.

V. N. Figner, 'Rech' na vechere pamiati E. Sozonov, 26 noiabria 1921 goda', *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, t. 5. *Rechi, ocherki, stat'i* (1932), pp. 447-456 (456).

