

# At the Fresh Grave of Kote Zinzadze

It took altogether extraordinary conditions like czarism, illegality, prisons and deportations, long years of struggle against the Mensheviks and especially the experiences of the three revolutions to produce militants like Kote Zinzadze. His life was bound up entirely with the history of the revolutionary movement for a period of more than a quarter of a century. He passed through all the stages of proletarian uprising, beginning with the very first propaganda circles to the barricades and the seizure of power. For long years he conducted menial labors of illegal organization, and at the time when the revolutionists were tied up in the net of the police he devoted himself to untying them. Later on he was at the head of the extraordinary Commission of Transcaucasia, that is, at the very center of power, during the most heroic period of the proletarian dictatorship.

When the reaction against the October had changed the composition and the character of the party apparatus as well as of its policies, Kote Zinzadze was one of the first to begin a struggle against the new tendencies hostile to the spirit of Bolshevism. The first conflict took place during Lenin's illness. Stalin and Ordjonikidze, supported by Dzerzhinsky, had made a coup d'état in Georgia, replacing the nucleus of old Bolsheviks by careerist functionaries of the type of Ellava, Orechakashvili and others. It is precisely on this question that Lenin was preparing to launch an implacable battle against the Stalin faction and the apparatus at the twelfth congress of the party. On the 6th of March 1923, Lenin wrote to the Georgian group of old Bolsheviks, of which Kote Zinzadze was one of the founders: "I am wholeheartedly with your cause. I am outraged by the coarseness of Ordjonikidze and the connivance of Stalin and Dzerzhinsky. I am preparing for you some notes and a speech."

The subsequent march of development is sufficiently well known. The Stalin faction crushed the Lenin faction in the Caucasus. This was the first victory for reaction in the party and opened up the second chapter of the revolution. Zinzadze, tubercular, bearing the weight of decades of revolutionary work, persecuted by the apparatus on every step, did not for one moment desert his post of struggle. In 1928 he was deported to Bakhshi-Sarail where wind and dust did their disastrous work on the remnants of his lungs. Later on he was transferred to Aloutcha where the rainy winter completed the work of destruction.

Some friends wanted to gain admittance for Kote to the Goulpriche Sanatorium at Suchom, where Zinzadze had already several times before succeeded to save his life during some particularly acute aggravations of his sickness. Of course, Ordjonikidze had "promised", Ordjonikidze "promises" much and to everybody. But the cowardliness of his character (coarseness does not exclude cowardice), has always made of him a blind instrument in the hands of Stalin. While Zinzadze was literally fighting against death Stalin struggled against all attempts to save the old militant. Send him over to Goulpriche on the coast of the Black Sea? And if he recovers? Connections might be established between Batum and Constantinople. No, impossible!

With the death of Zinzadze one of the most attractive figures of older Bolshevism has disappeared. This fighter who more than once risked his life and who knew well how to chastise the enemy, was a man of exceptional mildness in his personal relations. A debonaire mockery and an almost malicious sense of humor were combined in this tested terrorist with a tenderness one might almost call feminine.

The serious illness which did not for an instant release him from its hold not only could not break down his moral resistance, but did not even succeed in overpowering his ever jovial state of mind and his tender affection for humanity.

Kote was not a theoretician. But his clear thinking, his revolutionary flair and his immense political experience—the living experience of three revolutions—armed him better, more seriously and more firmly than does the doctrine formally digested by those who lack the fortitude and perseverance equal to Zinzadze's. As the Lear of Shakespeare he was every inch a revolutionary. His character revealed itself perhaps even more strikingly during the last eight years—years of uninterrupted struggle against the advent and the entrenchment of the unprincipled bureaucracy.

Zinzadze fought organically against everything resembling treachery, capitulation and disloyalty. He understood the significance of the bloc with Zinoviev and Kamenev. But morally he never supported this group. His letters testify to all the sim-

By LEON TROTSKY

plecity of his repugnance—it is impossible to find another word—toward revolutionaries who while wanting to safeguard their formal membership in the party, deceive it by renouncing their ideas.

No. 2 of the "Bulletin" of the Russian Opposition has published a letter from Zinzadze to Okudjava. It is an excellent document of tenacity, clearness of thought and conviction. Zinzadze, as has been said, was not a theoretician, and he voluntarily left it to others to formulate the tasks of the revolution, the party and the Opposition. But every time he detected a false note, he took his pen into his hand and no "authority" could prevent him from expressing his suspicions and from making his replies. His letter, written on the 2nd of May last year and published in the *Bulletin* No. 12-13. (p. 27) testifies best to this fact. This practical man, this organizer safeguarded the purity of doctrine more attentively than some theoreticians.

In Kote's letters we often encounter the following phrases: "a bad 'institution' these hesitations". And further: "woe to the people who can't wait", or "in solitude weak people easily become subject to all

sorts of contagion". Sentiments of an unshakable fortitude penetrated Zinzadze and upheld his feeble physical energy. He considered even his sickness as a revolutionary duel. According to one of his letters he was solving in his struggle against death, the question: "who will conquer?" "In the meantime the advantage remains on my side," he adds, with the optimism which never abandoned him, several months before his death.

In the summer of 1928, speaking of himself, that is, of his sickness, Kote writes to the author of these lines from Bakhshi-Sarail: "... many of our comrades and friends have been forced to separate themselves from life, in prison or in some place of deportation but in the final analysis all this will only serve to enrich revolutionary history which educates new generations. The Bolshevik youth, clarified by the struggle of the Bolshevik Opposition against the opportunist wing of the party, will understand on whose side the truth rests..."

These words, simple and yet sublime, Zinzadze could write only in an intimate letter to a friend. Now that the author is no longer among the living, these lines may and must be published. They resume the life and the morale of a revolutionist

of a high order. They must be made public precisely because the youth must be brought up not only with theoretical formulas but also by examples of revolutionary tenacity.

The communist parties of the West have not yet produced militants of the type of Zinzadze. There is their principal weakness, which is determined by historic reasons, but which for all that does not cease to be a weakness. The Left Opposition of the western countries is not an exception—in this case—and it must well take note of it.

It is precisely to the Opposition youth that the example of Zinzadze can and ought to serve as a lesson. Zinzadze was the living negation of every sort of political careerism, that is to say, of the capacity to sacrifice the principles, the ideas and the tasks of the cause for personal ends. This does not at all mean the negation of justified revolutionary ambitions. No, political ambition is a very important force in the struggle. But the revolutionary begins there where personal ambition is entirely subservient to a great idea, submitting itself voluntarily to it and merging with it. To flirt with ideas, to dabble in them for purposes of a personal career—that is what Zinzadze pitilessly condemned through his life and through his death. The ambition of Zinzadze was an ambition of unshakable revolutionary loyalty. It should serve as a lesson to the proletarian youth.

January 7th, 1931.

## The Demagogy of the German National Socialists

By ROMAN WELL

It is not by accident that the German Fascists call themselves "national socialists". Socialist teachings are deeply rooted in the German proletariat. The forms and degree of organization of the German proletariat are higher than in any other capitalist country. Equally great are the traditions and experiences of the German workers in their economic and political struggles against the bourgeoisie.

The Fascists in Germany employ the word "socialist". By this means they hope to be able to draw close more easily to the "German workers poisoned by Marxism". Their principal task, with which they have been charged by the magnates of heavy industry, is to divert the proletariat from the class struggle and to destroy the proletarian organizations. The leading bourgeoisie understands the necessity for the German Fascists to employ radical phrases. It knows very well that this means is indispensable in the struggle for the destruction of the proletarian forces. That is why German Fascism, supported financially by the magnates of heavy industry, can afford to agitate with radical phrases.

In the *Voelkischen Beobachter* (January 15), the central organ of the German Fascists, a speech of the declassed officer, Goebbels is published. Here is what he said at a demonstration in Munich:

"It is only when the capitalist system will be abolished that socialism can be established."

Very radical! After similar declara-

tions made publicly by the chief of the Nazis, many naive people can only believe that the national-socialists are thinking seriously about socialism.

But quite different are the actions of the national-socialist leaders. They are the organizers of strike-breakers. Every workers' struggle is supported by them in phrases, but they undermine them in reality. They have learned not to come out openly for the abolition of strikes, because in this way they will close to themselves the road to the minds of the workers. An example of the "socialism" of the Nazis has already been pointed out here. They have pronounced themselves in the Reichstag against a proposal for special taxes on the profits of large stockholders.

Today we have a new example of their "hatred" of the trusts and particularly of Jewish financial capital. The Nazis demanded and voted a proposal for a subsidy of seven million marks for the German copper trust, Mansfeld A. G. Who are the principal stockholders in this trust? Otto Wolf and Jacob Goldschmidt. At the same time that the Nazi fraction pronounced itself for this proposal, the Berlin organ, *Angriff*, wrote on January 7:

"This business man Otto Wolfe. A perfect type of these great modern magnates, determined to the point of unscrupulousness, with no regard for the fate of thousands, and if need be, for tens of thousands of

men, one of the greatest powers in the German mining industry... The capital of Otto Wolf is estimated today at one hundred million marks."

Thus, with the public approval of the Nazis, this multi-millionaire receives a gift of seven millions in taxes out of the millions of famished workers. There is no more obvious example of demagogy than that of these criminals. And yet the Nazis do not lose their influence. On the contrary, the results of the recent economic struggles, the abandonment without a struggle of the vital positions of the working class by the leadership of the reformist unions who participate directly and openly in the curbing of wages, the continual policy of treason of the social democracy, multiplies the ranks of the desperate and drives them into the arms of Fascism.

### Reformism and Fascism

This was recently recognized publicly by the "Left" social democrat, Seydewitz, in an article in the recent number of the *Klassenkampf*:

"The fact that the reductions of wages are accepted or will be accepted without fight by the trade unions, creates the premises for a more easy formation of the Fascist nuclei within the working class itself."

This means that the reformist bureaucracy renders deep services to the Fascist movement, that the social democracy is preparing the road for Fascism.

The Fascists today being called upon to decide. Their partisans, who have been systematically incited by the demagogy of the leaders now demand deeds. They are pushing their leaders into the path of a counter-revolutionary insurrection. This sentiment appears so strongly that it obliges Goebbels to calm his supporters. These gentlemen would like better to come to power without an insurrection, by compromises and coalitions. In one way or another, the decisive struggle between the proletariat and Fascism is approaching. Will the strength of the proletariat be strong enough to crush the Fascist bands? This question can be answered only from the point of view of the relations between the party and the working class.

Our party in Germany is not pursuing a policy that can gather the proletariat. It is precisely upon the degree of the assembling of the workers that depends for the most part the victory or the defeat of Fascism. The German working class has little confidence in the unity cries of the Centralists. The formation of Communist trade unions at this moment is considered by the social democratic and non-party workers as a breach in the united front of the working class. A little while ago the Central Committee of our party came together. The *Rote Fahne* considers its resolutions as decisive. We will return to them. Certainly the policy of the party will be decisive if the leadership changes its policy and adopts a correct one. Even now a consistent policy can consolidate immensely the positions of the working class.

Nothing but a Leninist policy of the united front can, on the one hand, strengthen the militancy of the proletariat, and on the other, unmask the Fascist demagogy before the pauperized workers.

Berlin, January 1931.

## The Ghezzi Case

The anarchist press has for some time now put forward the case of Ghezzi, an Italian anarchist imprisoned in the U. S. S. R. The party press has contented itself with replying by speaking of "anti-Soviet activity", etc. But the Left Opposition cannot be content with such replies.

Ghezzi is a revolutionary Italian worker, an anarchist-Communist. He participated in the struggle against Fascism in Italy, was compelled to flee to Germany, and once more could only escape the butchers by receiving asylum in the U. S. S. R. He lived there as a worker, and did not in any way abandon his ideas.

In 1928, he was arrested by the G. P. U.; he remains incarcerated in Suzdal, under the most miserable conditions, doomed to death like so many others. The Communist Opposition must express itself on this subject.

It is perfectly true that anarchists have committed and can commit acts directed against the proletarian dictatorship. In such a case, they must be judged. There are codes of proletarian justice in the U. S. S. R., worked out in the first years of the revolution. If the Soviet government considers it necessary to bring anarchists before the Soviet tribunals, it must bring proofs, obtain a conviction, and observe a prison régime compatible with the proletarian dictatorship.

But the Stalinist apparatus has brought its savageness into class justice also. It has replaced the Soviet tribunals by the administrative, discretionary justice of the G. P. U. We protest against this with all our strength. If Ghezzi is guilty, he should be tried. The Soviet government must bring

proofs of his guilt. If not, he should be liberated. The case of Ghezzi is not isolated: hundreds of anarchist, syndicalist, Communist and ultra-Left workers are in a similar position, victims of Stalinist arbitrariness, which reflects the pressure of classes hostile to the proletariat.

As to the Bolshevik-Leninist imprisoned or deported (Left Opposition), we do not demand that they be tried. Their activity, their point of view, are those of the vanguard of the proletarian dictatorship. We demand their immediate liberation, their recall to work in the party and Soviets, their readmission into the Communist party.

## BULLETIN of the RUSSIAN OPPOSITION

The latest issue of the official organ of the Russian Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition, published as a double number, has just been received. Some of the material contained in this highly interesting issue is as follows:

Success of Socialism and the Dangers of Adventurism — Declaration of comrade Rakovsky and Others—Statement of Rakovsky, Muralov and Others to the Central Committee of the Russian Party — Comrade Selinitchenko in Stalinist Exile — A New Victim of Stalin (Comrade Kote Zinzadze) etc., etc.

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