**The Russian Civil War and the Russo-Polish War**

The Bolsheviks soon moved their capital from Petrograd to Moscow, surrounding themselves with bodyguards. They knew that their policies were sure to alienate much of the population. Those who hated Lenin's regime scanned the political landscape for a savior. But no savior was available, only several desperate and vaguely monarchist "White" armies. Once again, Lenin's disciplined vanguard party proved itself able to defeat its confused and divided opponents, in a sequence of bloody battles known as the Russian Civil War.

The first opponents of Lenin's regime to take up arms were the Cossacks in the south of Russia. While their will to fight the Bolsheviks was great, they had a fatal weakness, as Landauer explains: "Although the Cossacks were dangerous enemies because of their highly developed military qualities, in political matters their scope was utterly limited. They had no common goal except the defense of their property and they failed to understand that the success of this defense depended on the annihilation of the Soviet regime in all Russia, and not merely on local victories." (*European Socialism: A History of Ideas and Movements*) A string of would-be supreme generals tried to bring the Cossacks and other anti- Bolshevik forces in southern Russia under a common banner. The first was General Michael Alexeyev, Kerensky's former chief of staff. Due to illness, Alexeyev was soon replaced by General Kornilov. Kornilov led the so-called White forces for a couple of months, but had the bad luck to die in battle. One General Anton Denikin assumed command of the Cossack forces, in an uneasy alliance with the pro-German General Krasnov.

The Denikin and Krasnov forces were no significant threat to Lenin's regime until the summer of 1918, when Trotsky provoked a bizarre international incident. A large army of Czech prisoners of war had been permitted by Kerensky's government to form units to fight the Central Powers. The plan was to transport the new Czech army by railroad across Siberia to the Pacific Ocean, and then sail them to France. Although the Czech units were in fact friendly to the Bolshevik cause, Trotsky strangely decided to halt the rail progress of the Czech army and instead ordered the Czechs to "join the Red Army to be pressed into 'labor battalions' - that is, become part of the Bolshevik compulsory labor force. Those who disobeyed were to be confined to concentration camps." (Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*) The Czechs resisted with force, seizing much of the rail system and emboldening the scattered Russian anti-Communists. Amidst this disorder, the Bolsheviks former allies, the Left SRs failed at an attempt to seize power. Around this time token Allied forces arrived in the Arctic port cities of Murmansk and Archangel, while more substantial Japanese forces moved to occupy Russia's Pacific coast. (As mentioned earlier, Allied intervention has been seriously misrepresented in many accounts of the Russian Civil War - for details, see the Museum's [Special Exhibit](http://econfaculty.gmu.edu/bcaplan/museum/allies.htm) on the topic). Amidst this flurry, Trotsky forged the Red Army out of peasant conscripts, long-time Bolsheviks, and sympathetic ex-Czarist officers. With assistance from the Czechs, anti-Bolshevik forces captured Kazan and Samara (*see map*). A September, 1917 conference in Ufa tried to unify anti-Bolshevik forces in Siberia, but within two months one faction had arrested the other and control fell to one Admiral Kolchak. With this move the Kolchak forces alienated the Czechs and provoked anti-Bolshevik SRs to declare a two-front struggle against Reds and Whites alike. Meanwhile the Japanese threw their support to the Ataman Gregor Semenov, who operated a yet another anti-Bolshevik government around Vladivostok, while the Anarchist armies of Nestor Makhno fought Reds and Whites alike throughout the Ukraine.

Kolchak had a few early successes, capturing Perm in December of 1918, and advancing further to the Volga. But the Red Army's counter-attack re-took Perm by July of 1919. Meanwhile Denikin's forces in southern Russia won several major victories - by October they were 130 miles from Moscow. While Denikin advanced, anti-Bolshevik armies in the Baltic countries clashed with the Red Army. (Riga, the Latvian capital, fell to the Red Army in January, 1919, but with German assistance Latvians re-took Riga four months later). Baltic forces joined with Russian Whites under General Yudenich and marched to capture Petrograd. Trotsky's successful defense of Petrograd broke Yudenich's forces, leading the Baltic countries to sign a separate peace with the Bolsheviks in early 1920.

By now White forces everywhere were in retreat. Denikin's army was beaten back all of the way to the Crimea. Increasingly unpopular, Denikin resigned his command in favor of General Peter Wrangel. Kolchak's forces suffered severe defeats, and the Czech decision to evacuate (and hand Kolchak over to SRs for execution). The war seemed to be essentially at its conclusion. But the outbreak of war between Lenin's regime and the new nation of Poland gave the Whites one last hope.

Initially Polish successes were very impressive. Minsk and Kiev fell to Poland's armies. Misled by this turn of events, Wrangel's armies in the Crimea made a final offensive northwards. But the Red Army decisive beat back the Poles and drove into the heart of Poland. Now that their enemies had been beaten back, the Red Army began what Franz Borkenau called "the attempt to carry revolution into the West with Russian bayonets." As Borkenau elaborates:

Trotsky, in the gazette of his armoured train, wrote an article in which he claimed to see the Red Army, after defeating the Whites, conquer Europe and attack America. And Sinovjev, in number 1 of the *Communist International*, prophesied that within a year not only would all of Europe be a Soviet republic, but would already be forgetting that there had ever been a fight for it. (Franz Borkenau, *World Communism*)

One year later, the second meeting of the Comintern coincided with the Red Army's offensive into Poland. Zinoviev addressed the conference, and joked about his overly optimistic prediction:

"[P]erhaps we have been carried away; probably, in reality, it will need not one year but two or three years before all Europe is one Soviet republic. If you are so modest that one or two years' delay seems to you extraordinary bliss, we can only congratulate you for your moderation." (quoted in Franz Borkenau, *World Communism*)

Representatives of the Polish Communist Party, slightly more informed of real conditions in Poland, voiced the concern that the Polish proletariat was unlikely to take up arms to aid the Red Army's invasion. Trotsky too had doubts, but Lenin urged on the attack. Many attribute the failure of this invasion to the refusal of Joseph Stalin to cooperate with Tukachevsky. In any case, the Poles routed the Red Army in what has been often called "the Miracle of the Vistula." A Russo-Polish treaty soon followed, leaving the Red Army to mop up the remnants of their opponents. Baron Wrangel's forces were beaten back and evacuated from the Crimea.

Allied forces had long since abandoned their positions, but Japanese forces remained in along Russia's Pacific coast. In April, 1920 the Bolshevik Alexander Krasnoshchekov declared the establishment of an "independent" Far Eastern Republic based in Chita and claiming sovereignty over territory occupied by Japan. While Krasnoshchekov was plainly a Leninist puppet, he purported independence won the support of many wavering factions who might have resisted a frankly Communist regime. Japan withdrew from Vladivostok in late 1922; soon afterwards, the Red Army (not the army of the Far Eastern Republic) took Vladivostok. Four weeks later the Far Eastern Republic puppet voted to unite with the rest of Soviet Russia. As Landauer observes, "[T]he Bolsheviks knew only too well how valuable the relative freedom of Finland had been to Russian revolutionaries under the tsarist regime. Lenin and Trotsky were not willing to run the risk of letting opponents find a refuge in Eastern Siberia; hence that country was ruled by the same relentless methods which were used against all dissenters from communism in the rest of the Soviet Republic..." (*European Socialism: A History of Ideas and Movements*)

As in most wars, the behavior and intentions of the various factions in the Russian Civil War ranged from bad to worse. The Whites have justly earned infamy for their anti-Jewish pogroms, mass executions of POWs, and innumerable other atrocities. But it should be pointed out that in most cases the Whites' brutality was rarely ordered from Denikin or Kolchak as official policy, but was instead largely the result of lower-level officers' initiatives. In contrast, the Communists' inhumanity was publicly ordered by the highest levels of Lenin's government. As Carl Landauer astutely points out:

Unlike their opponents, the Bolsheviks needed not only power to carry out the terror but also the arguments to defend it ideologically... One cannot imagine a White general writing an apology of terrorism in his spare time. Trotsky, in the midst of battles, wrote his booklet *The Defence of Terrorism* as a reply to Kautsky's attack upon Bolshevik methods. What would have been a waste of energy for one party was a necessity for the other...(*European Socialism: A History of Ideas and Movements*)

The war crimes of the Bolsheviks were numerous, and not nearly as well publicized as those of the Whites. Just as the Whites massacred large numbers of Jews, the Bolsheviks (apparently under Lenin's orders - see the documents in Richard Pipes *The Unknown Lenin*) were guilty of the mass extermination of the entire Don Cossack people - killing an estimated 700,000 out of around 1,000,000 of them. (This would prove to be only the first of several near-genocides of ethnic minorities within the Soviet Union). The Red Army showed especial brutality to surrendering Whites and civilians sympathetic to them. (Kolchak's armies and associated civilians suffered particularly awful treatment because the Allies made no effort to evacuate these refugees before departing, as they did with the Whites in the Crimea). In the train of the army followed the Cheka, eager to apply more systematic penalties for opposition to the Soviet state.

### "War Communism", the Red Terror, and Lenin's Famine

Almost immediately after they seized power, Lenin's Bolsheviks inaugurated an endless stream of economic decrees and policies. These proved to be disastrous, resulting in a horrific famine, depopulation of the cities, and an enormous decline in living standards. So unpopular were these policies that after they were finally altered in mid 1921, Lenin tried to re-write their history. It was at this point that the Bolsheviks economic policies from 1918-1921 were dubbed "War Communism," and declared to have been a temporary expedient forced upon Lenin's government by wartime conditions. In fact, so-called "War Communism" began before serious fighting erupted, and continued after the Whites had been decisively defeated. It was not a wartime expedient; it was the policy that Lenin wanted to pursue in war or peace. As Pipes explains, "War Communism as a whole was not a 'temporary measure' but an ambitious and as it turned out premature attempt to introduce full-blown communism." (*The Russian Revolution*) As noted earlier, Lenin's ideas on desirable economic policy were vague at best. So upon taking power, he looked around the world for inspiration; what caught his eye was the "War Socialism" of the German Kaiser. As Paul Johnson notes:

So one might say that the man who really inspired Soviet economic planning was Ludendorff. His "war socialism" certainly did not shrink from barbarism. It employed slave-labourers. In January 1918 Ludendorff broke a strike of 400,000 Berlin workers by drafting tens of thousands of them to the front in "labor battalions." Many of his methods were later to be revived and intensified by the Nazis. It would be difficult to think of a more evil model for a workers' state. Yet these were precisely the features of German "war socialism" Lenin most valued. (*Modern Times*)

The primary features of War Communism were:

* Uncontrolled inflationary printing press finance, ultimately leading to hyperinflation and nationwide reversion to barter
* Near universal nationalization of manufacturing; widespread nationalization of retailing
* Stringent price controls upon and forced requisitioning of agricultural products; state monopoly on grain purchases
* Forced labor for civilians as well as the military

The package fit together quite logically. The tax system had broken down, so the Bolsheviks just turned on the Czar's printing pressing to fund their activities. At the same time, the prices of most goods were fixed, so as the money supply increased without limit, the legal prices became less and less realistic. Rationing cards replaced rubles as the means of acquiring goods. But if money no longer bought goods, then what was the point of working? Hence, the imposition of compulsory labor.

The Bolsheviks' forced labor policies gave new life to the concept of irony. The men who had proclaimed themselves liberators of the workers and denounced the exploitation of labor suddenly discovered the joys of serfdom. Trotsky stood at the theoretical vanguard of the literal proponents of slavery: "It is said that compulsory labor is unproductive. This means that the whole socialist economy is doomed to be scrapped, because there is no other way of attaining socialism except through the command allocation of the entire labor force by the economic center, the allocation of that force in accord with the needs of a nationwide economic plan." Initially the forced labor laws were applied to the (ex-)middle classes, but their application rapidly broadened to include not only workers and peasants but even minors. As Pipes explains:

By late 1918, it became common practice for the Bolshevik authorities to call up workers and specialists for state service exactly as they drafted recruits into the Red Army. The practice was for the government to announce that workers and technical specialists in a specified branch of the economy were "mobilized for military service" and subject to court- martial: those leaving jobs to which they had been assigned were treated as deserters... Efforts to organize industrial labor on the military model could not have worked well in view of the plethora of decrees on this subject, setting up ever new punishments for "labor deserters," ranging from publication of their names to confinement in concentration camps. (*The Russian Revolution*)

One would expect that the mere suggestion of compulsory labor, let alone its actual imposition, would have branded Lenin and Trotsky as demonic traitors to anyone who purported to care about the plight of workers. Ominously, it did not; Party intellectuals proclaimed the wonders of the new system. "Compulsory labour under capitalism, wrote Bukharin, was quite the reverse of compulsory labour under the dictatorship of the proletariat: the first was 'the enslavement of the working class,' the second the 'self- organization of the working class'." (Paul Johnson, *Modern Times*) At this point, the reluctance of Communists from Marx to Lenin to precisely explain their proposed policies takes on a new meaning. As the Russian emigre Ayn Rand put it: "**Intellectuals? You might have to worry about any other breed of men, but not about the modern intellectuals: they'll swallow anything.**" (*Atlas Shrugged*)

As the economy deteriorated, the Cheka waxed ever fatter. After an July 1918 revolt by SRs, the Cheka turned its guns on fellow socialists, executing 350 captured SR rebels. One month later, the SR Fanya Kaplan nearly succeeded in assassinating Lenin. Her noble effort unfortunately gave the Cheka the excuse to initiate the Red Terror, i.e., mass executions of people based not upon their actions but their class origins and beliefs. As Landauer explains, "The first conspicuous act of government-ordered reprisals on a large scale without regard for individual guilt came after the assassination of Michael Uritzky and the attempt on Lenin's life on August 30. These events were not in themselves apt to justify measures against the bourgeoisie, for the two assassins, Kenigiesser and Fania Kaplan, were both members of the Social Revolutionary party and therefore not "bourgeois." But the minds of the Soviet leaders were dominated by the theory that Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks were tools of the "class enemy," and it appeared logical to the Bolsheviks to strike at the group which allegedly had inspired the assassination. Five hundred hostages were shot in reprisal in Petrograd alone by order of Zinoviev, the head of the local soviet. On September 5, the people's commissars officially legalized the red terror..." (*European Socialism: A History of Ideas and Movements*)

From then on the Cheka's executions never ceased. The exact number murdered is usually estimated at between 100,000 and 500,000, but the chaotic wartime conditions make the accounting especially difficult. But execution was not the Cheka's only tool; it also pioneered the development of the modern slave labor (or "concentration") camp. Inmates were generally frankly treated as government-owned slaves, and used for the most demanding sorts of work - such as digging arctic canals - while receiving pitifully small rations. As Pipes explains, "Soviet concentration camps, as instituted in 1919, were meant to be a place of confinement for all kinds of undesirables, whether sentenced by courts or by administrative organs. Liable to confinement in them were not only individuals but also 'categories of individuals' - that is, entire classes: Dzerzhinskii at one point proposed that special concentration camps be erected for the 'bourgeoisie.' Living in forced isolation, the inmates formed a pool of slave labor on which Soviet administrative and economic institutions could draw at no cost." (*The Russian Revolution*) The number of people in these camps according to Pipes was about 50,000 prisoners in 1920 and 70,000 in 1923; many of these did not survive the inhuman conditions.

The mildest manifestation of the Red Terror was the official policy excluding "class enemies" entirely from the wartime rationing system; i.e., legally, it was often impossible for disfavored groups to even purchase food. As Landauer simply puts it: "As a consequence, the average "bourgeois" had only the choice between death and illegal activities." (*European Socialism: A History of Ideas and Movements*) Bourgeoisie with valued technical training could usually get around these rules, but otherwise their plight - and the plight of their families - was bleak indeed, though naturally far better than the inmates of the slave labor camps.

But the greatest crime committed by Lenin's regime was the civil war the Soviet government waged against the peasantry, and the famine this war precipitated. The alliance of "the workers and peasants" was an ingenious slogan given the fact that almost everyone in Russia was a peasant. But it was a slogan that Lenin and his followers never had the slightest intention of following. They despised the peasants as ignorant "petty bourgeoisie" who stood in the way of collectivized agriculture. With one hand Lenin's regime legally recognized the peasants' land seizures, but with the other hand it demanded food at ever more unreasonable terms (in the end, unrestrained printing press finance plus price controls effectively required peasants to give their food away for free). "The law provided that all the grain that the producer had left over after satisfying his personal needs and providing for seed belonged to the state and had to be sold to its agencies at fixed prices." (Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*) The consequences were a perfect illustration of the principles of "bourgeois" economics: with ever stricter price controls, peasants opted not to sell their grain to the cities. This made life ever harder for urban workers, who fled back to the country in huge numbers - often city populations declined by over 50%. Rather than repeal its price controls, the Bolshevik regime scapegoated black marketeers and speculators, unleashing the Cheka upon them with orders to administer summary executions. This merely drove up black market prices.

So Lenin's government advanced to the next stage: sending the Cheka and the Red Army to seize grain directly from the peasant. This was ideologically justified by dubbing peasants who resisted grain as wealthy "kulaks," though rich and poor alike found themselves staring down the muzzles of the Cheka's guns. Once again, the resort to ever greater brutality did not bring the desired results. Minimal food was collected, and the peasants went into open revolt. Lenin, who in every other matter seemed to be the master of the temporary compromise, could not control his hatred of the resisting peasants. He ordered kulaks to be deprived of not only surplus grain, but even seed grain, while in his speeches he exhorted:"Merciless war against the kulaks! Death to them." Even as the Red Army battled Kolchak and Denikin, they waged a less visible civil war with the peasants. By most estimates several hundred thousand peasants were killed as a result of this so-called "Bread War" - as usual, the Red Army and the Cheka executed not only captured rebels, but often families, friends, or entire villages associated, however vaguely, with counter-revolution.

The peasants had numbers on their side, and many soldiers were reluctant to fight them, but the government's superior organization ultimately gave them victory over the peasants. But the victory was hollow, for after the fruit of their labor had been seized, farmers generally decided there was no point in growing a surplus. Moreover, since seed grain was often taken, many peasants were unable to grow surplus crops even if they wished. When the perverse incentives of price controls and expropriation were mixed with a drought, the result was one of the great disasters of the century: the Russian famine of 1921. Official Soviet reports admitted that fully **30 million** Soviet citizens were in danger of death by starvation. The White forces shared little of the blame: as Pipes notes, the Civil War was essentially over by the beginning of 1920, but Lenin continued his harsh exploitation of the peasantry for yet another year. Moreover, the areas under White control had actually built up a food *surplus*. The horrific famine of 1921 was thus much less severe in 1920, because after the reconquest of the Ukraine and other White territories, the Reds shipped the Whites' grain captured grain north to Petrograd, Moscow, and other cities with less hunger but more political clout. Low estimates on the deaths from this famine are about 3 million; high estimates go up to 10 million - which would probably have been much higher if not for foreign relief efforts which Lenin had the good sense to permit. For perspective, the last severe famine in Russia hit in 1891-92, and costabout 400,000 lives.

Needless to say, Lenin had no plans to respect the freedom of religion. But until the famine, most of the persecution of religion appears to have been taken on local initiative. Most religious property was ordered expropriated, although in fact clergymen usually continued to occupy and use their church buildings. Parents lost the right to give their children religious education - although again, during the Civil War years, this does not seem to have been enforced. (Interestingly, while the state subsidies to the church greatly declined, the Orthodox Church under Lenin essentially remained a bureau of the state). Serious government persecution of the Orthodox Church began with the famine, which gave Lenin the chance to bring the Orthodox Church into line. He demanded that the Church hand over valuable relics to help famine victims (or so he said). The Church resisted, resulting in around 8000 executions of persons resisting the confiscation of relics. Similar but milder persecution began against Jews, Catholics, and to a lesser extent, Muslims. (These religions, however, had less to lose than the Orthodox Church, because they had no subsidies for the Bolsheviks to cut off).

Can Lenin and his associates be held morally culpable for the deaths of these millions of famine victims? If the famine were a natural catastrophe, this would be unreasonable. But the famine was largely man-made, the result of draconian price controls and requisitioning. Most of the evidence is that Lenin and his associates knew the probable results of their agricultural policies, but were willing to take the risk: according to Pipes, Lenin repeatedly said that he would sooner the whole nation die of hunger than allow free trade in grain. In short, Lenin and his comrades knew with **substantial certainty** that their policies would **cause** widespread death from starvation. Under any sensible definition of murder, this makes Lenin the murderer of millions.

### Naked Power: The First Show Trials, The Conquest of the Caucasus, and Kronstadt

With the Civil War over and the peasant rebellions crushed, Communist rule was uncontested. What now? In spite of all the horrors of their regime, Lenin and his followers still had a chance to turn back from the abyss. As Carl Landauer speculates:

If everybody had been assured of protection from arbitrary arrest or exile, if everybody had been granted a sphere of economic activity in which to make some sort of living and have some reasonable degree of security, non-Communists, who had gone through the terrors of the civil war, ostracism, and famine, would have been content, at least for a considerable time, with a modest amount of political rights... If the Bolsheviks had taken the attitude that revolutionary terror had been necessary only as long as the revolution was endangered, and that with the end of the civil war and of the gravest economic difficulties the regime could afford to lay aside the sword and use only the normal means of judicial procedure to protect itself from subversive activities, they would have restored the connection of their own movement with the humanitarian tradition of socialism. (Carl Landauer, *European Socialism: A History of Ideas and Movements*)

In short, with a supreme act of will, Lenin could have used his last years to disarm the malevolent machine of totalitarianism he had invented. This was not the course he chose. Instead, he spent his last years fine-tuning his creation and finishing off remaining enemies.

While struggling to retain power, Lenin took whatever help he could get. Now it was time to finish off these myopic dupes who deemed Communism the least of political evils. "As long as the Civil War was in progress, the SRs and Mensheviks had been tolerated because they helped Moscow against the Whites. Their persecution began the instant the Civil War was over. Surveillance followed by arrests started in 1920 and intensified in 1921." (Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime*) Aside from traditional forms of persecution such as prison, Lenin satisfied his quest for revenge by inventing the "show trial" - a new form of theater which Stalin would later develop into the high culture of the USSR. In June of 1922, 34 SR leaders were publicly tried for high crimes against the Soviet state. The judges were all Communists, and while apparently the accused were not tortured, there were other ways of pressuring them to confess to the trumped-up charges. While the SRs - due to an international campaign in their defense - were allowed foreign lawyers, these lawyers walked out when the prosecution reneged on its promise not to seek the death penalty. All were naturally found guilty, although in the end international pressure led to the commutation of the death penalty. (Although later all but 2 of the defendants would later be executed by Stalin). Similar show trials of dissident Orthodox priests went on at the same time. All ideological rivals, secular or religious, had to be broken.

The same applied principles were applied to foreign policy. In the Caucasus, independent states of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia had been formed during the Civil War. Now it was time for Lenin to show how much he truly cared about national self-determination. Azerbaijan fell first: a coup backed up by the Red Army sovietized Azerbaijan in April of 1920. Next came Armenia. Here, Lenin made a deal with the Turks, who had barely completed the extermination of Turkey's ethnic Armenians. (The Armenian genocide, said Hitler, gave him much inspiration). Turks invaded Armenia from the south, the Red Army from the north; by December the bulk of Armenia was under Communist rule.

Georgia fell last, and captured the most international attention. The Mensheviks had been democratically elected in Georgia, and international visitors had a quite favorable impression of their humanity and sanity. But Lenin was sick of heeding world opinion; he preferred dealing with Mustapha Kemal, the dictator of Turkey. Turkey issued Georgia an ultimatum while the Red Army invaded. Georgia fell in February of 1921; a year later, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia were united as the Transcaucasian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic.

This was one case where the Western socialist movement took a stand against Communist aggression. Karl Kautsky, veteran socialist of Germany, had the courage to note that for all his diatribes against imperialism, Lenin was an imperialist himself: "[W]e would render our protest against the imperialism of the capitalist powers ineffectual if we did not dare to oppose imperialism where it has resulted from a proletarian revolution, which it discredits." Unfortunately, the opprobrium from this act did not stick. Most of the world continued to view Britain and France as the only imperialist powers of note; indeed, Western countries would be called "imperialists" decades after the fall of their empires while the Soviet Empire remained "Russia, One and Indivisible."

The rebellion at *Kronstadt* was a final, bloody demonstration that despotism would be a permanent feature of the Leninist state. The sailors at the Kronstadt island fortress had long had a reputation for socialist (and anarchist) extremism. But in early 1921, they braved their lives by voting for the virtual destruction of Lenin's state. Their resolution demanded new elections by secret ballot, freedom of speech and press (except for non-socialists), free trade unions, and the right of the peasants to use their land as they pleased. Lenin had a mutiny on his hands. Meeting the demands was out of the question; instead he called in Trotsky, the Red Army, and the Cheka.

It was Trotsky who led the assault on Kronstadt, with the ideological fig leaf that the Kronstadt mutineers were "White Guards." Trotsky ordered the wives and children of the sailors taken hostage. But the mutineers held firm, begging like-minded forces to follow their example and rise against Lenin's dictatorship. A manifesto of the Kronstadt rebellion trenchantly attacked Communist rule:

In carrying out the October Revolution, the working class hoped to achieve its liberation. The outcome has been even greater enslavement of human beings.

Power has passed from a monarchy based on the police and gendarmerie into the hands of usurpers - Communists - who have given the toilers not freedom but the daily dread of ending up in the torture chambers of the Cheka, the horrors of which exceed many times the rule of tsarism's gendarmerie.

The rest of the nation was too terrorized to respond. The waters around Kronstadt were frozen, so the Red Army was ordered to march across the ice. The Cheka stayed in the rear, machine guns ready, with orders to kill all retreating soldiers. The battle was tragic, for plainly the attacking troops sensed that the Kronstadt rebels were not their enemies but their friends. As Pipes relays, "Some Red soldiers refused to charged; about one thousand went over to the rebels." (*Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime*) But the outnumbered Kronstadt defenders could not hold out. The fortress fell on March 18. Rebels who survived the battle and the executions that followed were sentenced to concentration camps. Few would live to tell the tale. Trotsky, who did live to tell the tale, chose not to tell it; he chose to leave Kronstadt out of his memoirs.

Kronstadt did frighten Lenin enough to relax his draconian economic policies. Grain requisitioning was replaced with a flat grain tax to give incentives to produce. But the New Economic Policy (or NEP) came too late to avert the 1921 famine. By getting rid of War Communism, Lenin stabilized his regime. Less than a decade later, the Soviet state under Stalin's rule would be too powerful for even the most monstrous economic policies to topple.