Anarcho
Kronstadt 1921: the end of the Bolshevik Myth
July 16, 2008

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An anarchist overview of the Kronstadt rebellion, written to mark its 85th anniversay. It exposes the various slanders by Leninists against it.

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at any cost. That is the political lesson of Kronstadt." [Berkman, **Op. Cit.**, p. 89]

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Also see "An Anarchist FAQ" and its appendix on the Kronstadt Rebellion

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Why is Kronstadt important?

Kronstadt was a popular uprising from below by the same sailors, soldiers and workers that had made the 1917 revolutions. Its repression proves that Bolshevism is a flawed political ideology which cannot create a socialist society but only a state capitalist regime based on party dictatorship. This is what Kronstadt shows above all else: given a choice between workers' power and party power, Bolshevism will destroy the former to ensure the latter.

In this, Kronstadt is no isolated event. The Bolshevik state had proven itself to be counter-revolutionary continually since October 1917. Kronstadt was the final nail in coffin of Leninist claims to be in favour of soviet democracy and power. The civil war was effectively over, yet the regime showed no signs of changing. Rather it continued the authoritarianism and repression it had practiced **before** the civil war started.

Similarly, the Leninist justifications for their power and actions at Kronstadt have direct implications for current activity and future revolutions. The logic of these rationales simply mean that modern day Leninists will, if in the same position, destroy soviet democracy to defend "soviet power" (i.e. the power of their party).

The issue is simple — either socialism means the self-emancipation of the working class or it does not. Leninist justifications for the suppression of the Kronstadt revolt simply means that for the followers of Bolshevism, when necessary, the party will paternalistically repress the working class for their own good. If the party leaders decide a decision by the masses is incorrect, then the masses are overridden (and repressed). So much for *"all power to the soviets"* or *"workers' power."*

Kronstadt was the clash between the reality of Leninism and its rhetoric: *"The Kronstadt experience proves once more that government, the State — whatever its name or form — is ever the mortal enemy of liberty and popular self-determination. The state has no soul, no principles. It has but one aim — to secure power and hold it,*

March 17th 2006 marked the 85th anniversary of the crushing of the Kronstadt rebellion by the Bolsheviks. The saga of Kronstadt is a microcosm of the Russian Revolution. It had been an early supporter and practitioner of soviet power, forming a free commune in 1917 which was relatively independent of the authorities. The Kronstadt sailors had been in the vanguard of the revolutionary events of 1905 and 1917. In 1917, Trotsky called them the *"pride and glory of the Russian Revolution."* In 1921 he and Lenin crushed their revolt.

For anarchists, Kronstadt exposes the myth that Bolshevism was a genuine form of socialism. It marked the death of the Russian Revolution.

The revolt

The revolt of February/March 1921 cannot be understood in isolation. The Russian Civil War had ended in Western Russia in November 1920 with the defeat of General Wrangel in the Crimea. All across Russia popular protests were erupting in the countryside and in the towns and cities. Peasant uprisings were occurring against the Communist Party policy of grain requisitioning. In urban areas, a wave of spontaneous strikes occurred. Kronstadt was a direct result of these strikes. These started in Moscow, before spreading to Petrograd where (as elsewhere) a three-man Defence Committee was formed in Petrograd and Zinoviev *"proclaimed martial law"* on February 24th. *"Overnight Petrograd became an armed camp. In every quarter pedestrians were stopped and their documents checked ... the curfew [was] strictly enforced."* The Petrograd Cheka made widespread arrests. [Avrich, **Kronstadt 1921**, pp. 35–9 and pp. 46–7]

On February 26th, in response to this strike wave, the crews of the battleships ***Petropavlovsk*** and ***Sevastopol*** held an emergency meeting. They agreed to send a delegation to the city to investi-

gate and report back. On their turn two days later, the delegates informed their fellow sailors of the strikes and the government repression directed against them. Those present at this meeting on the ***Petropavlovsk*** then approved a resolution which raised the following 15 demands:

> *"1. Immediate new elections to the Soviets. The present Soviets no longer express the wishes of the workers and peasants. The new elections should be by secret ballot, and should be preceded by free electoral propaganda.*
>
> *2. Freedom of speech and of the press for workers and peasants, for the Anarchists, and for the Left Socialist parties.*
>
> *3. The right of assembly, and freedom for trade union and peasant organisations.*
>
> *4. The organisation, at the latest on 10th March 1921, of a Conference of non-Party workers, solders and sailors of Petrograd, Kronstadt and the Petrograd District.*
>
> *5. The liberation of all political prisoners of the Socialist parties, and of all imprisoned workers and peasants, soldiers and sailors belonging to working class and peasant organisations.*
>
> *6. The election of a commission to look into the dossiers of all those detained in prisons and concentration camps.*
>
> *7. The abolition of all political sections in the armed forces. No political party should have privileges for the propagation of its ideas, or receive State subsidies to this end. In the place of the political sections various cultural groups should be set up, deriving resources from the State.*
>
> *8. The immediate abolition of the militia detachments set up between towns and countryside.*

> *account of the policy of its leaders. The repression of Kronstadt, the suppression of the democracy of workers and soviets by the Russian Communist party, the elimination of the proletariat from the management of industry, and the introduction of the NEP, already signified the death of the Revolution."* [**Kronstadt Revolt**, p. 335]

Kronstadt's *"Third Revolution"* may have led to defeat. That is possible — just as in 1917. One thing is sure — by maintaining the Bolshevik dictatorship the Russian Revolution **was** crushed.

Self-reform of dictatorship?

The only alternative to the *"third revolution"* would have been self-reform of the party dictatorship, such the attempt of the **Left Opposition**. How viable was this? Could the dictatorship reform itself? Was soviet democracy more of a danger than the uncontrolled dictatorship of a party within a state marked by already serious levels of corruption, bureaucracy and despotism? History provides the answer with the rise of Stalin. The **Left Opposition** received the crop that Lenin and Trotsky sowed the seeds of in 1921.

Not that the Left Opposition presented much of an alternative. At no time did it question the need for party dictatorship. The only guarantee that the party dictatorship would govern in the interests of the proletariat would be the good intentions of the party. However, being unaccountable to the masses, such a guarantee would be worthless — as history shows. Kronstadt is the obvious end result of such politics.

So when Leninists argue that Kronstadt would have opened the gate to counter-revolution, they do not understand that the Bolsheviks **were** the counter-revolution and that their regime **was** Serge's "anti-proletarian" dictatorship.

chanical, governmental 'Communist' construction." [**No Gods, No Masters**, vol. 2, p. 194]

Yes, the problems facing the Russian working class were difficult in the extreme (some of which, incidentally, were due to the results of Bolshevik economic policies which compounded economic chaos via centralisation). Yet they could never be solved by anyone else bar the thousands of workers taking strike action all across Russia at the time: *"And if the proletariat was that exhausted how come it was still capable of waging virtually total general strikes in the largest and most heavily industrialised cities?"* [Ida Mett, **Op. Cit.**, p. 81]

The question for anarchists, as for the Kronstadt rebels, was what the necessary pre-conditions for this reconstruction were. Could Russia be re-built in a socialist way while being subject to a dictatorship which crushed every sign of working class protest and collective action? There are two possibilities for reconstruction — either from above or from below. Such a reconstruction could **only** be socialist in nature if it involved the direct participation of the working masses in determining what was needed and how to do it. Any bureaucratic, top-down re-construction would rebuild the society in a way which benefited a few. Which was what happened.

Anarchists and libertarian socialists who defend the Kronstadt revolt and oppose the actions of the Bolsheviks are not foolish enough to argue that Kronstadt's *"third revolution"* would have definitely succeeded. Hence Ante Ciliga:

> *"Let us consider, finally, one last accusation which is commonly circulated: that action such as that at Kronstadt could have **indirectly** let loose the forces of the counter-revolution. It is **possible** indeed that even by placing itself on a footing of workers' democracy the revolution might have been overthrown; but what is **certain** is that it has perished, and that it has perished on*

> *9. The equalisation of rations for all workers, except those engaged in dangerous or unhealthy jobs.*
>
> *10. The abolition of Party combat detachments in all military groups. The abolition of Party guards in factories and enterprises. If guards are required, they should be nominated, taking into account the views of the workers.*
>
> *11. The granting to the peasants of freedom of action on their own soil, and of the right to own cattle, provided they look after them themselves and do not employ hired labour.*
>
> *12. We request that all military units and officer trainee groups associate themselves with this resolution.*
>
> *13. We demand that the Press give proper publicity to this resolution.*
>
> *14. We demand the institution of mobile workers' control groups.*
>
> *15. We demand that handicraft production be authorised provided it does not utilise wage labour."* [Ida Mett, **The Kronstadt Revolt**, pp. 37–8]

A mass meeting of fifteen to sixteen thousand people was held on March 1st and what has became known as the ***Petropavlovsk*** resolution was passed. Only two Bolshevik officials voted against the resolution. As the term of office of the Kronstadt soviet was about to expire, the mass meeting also decided to call a *"Conference of Delegates"* for March 2nd. This conference consisted of two delegates from each of the ship's crews, army units, the docks, workshops, trade unions and Soviet institutions. It endorsed the ***Petropavlovsk*** resolution and elected a five-person *"Provisional Revolutionary Committee"* (enlarged to 15 members two days later by another conference).

Red Kronstadt had turned against the Communist government and raised the slogan of the 1917 revolution *"All Power to the Soviets"*, to which was added *"and not to parties."* They termed this revolt the *"Third Revolution"* and would complete the work of the first two Russian Revolutions in 1917 by instituting a true toilers republic based on freely elected, self-managed, soviets. The Communist Government responded with an ultimatum on March 2nd. This asserted that the revolt had *"undoubtedly been prepared by French counterintelligence"* and that the ***Petropavlovsk*** resolution was a *"SR-Black Hundred"* resolution. They argued that the revolt had been organised by an ex-Tsarist officers led by ex-General Kozlovsky (who had, ironically, been placed in the fortress as a military specialist by Trotsky and played no role in the revolt).

While the Kronstadt revolt was peaceful, the Bolshevik response was not. While there was at least three to four weeks before the ice was due to melt after the March 2nd *"Conference of Delegates"* meeting which marked the real start of the revolt, the Bolsheviks started military operations at 6.45pm on March 7th. According to Victor Serge (an ex-anarchist turned Bolshevik) *"right from the first moment, at a time when it was easy to mitigate the conflict, the Bolshevik leaders had no intention of using anything but forcible methods."* [Victor Serge, **Memoirs of a Revolutionary**, p. 127]

The revolt was isolated and received no external support. The Petrograd workers were under martial law and could little or no action to support Kronstadt (assuming they refused to believe the Bolshevik lies about the uprising). A combination of force, propaganda and (economic) concessions was used to defeat the strike: *"there is no denying that the application of military force and the widespread arrests, not to speak of the tireless propaganda waged by the authorities had been indispensable in restoring order. Particularly impressive in this regard was the discipline shown by the local party organisation. Setting aside their internal disputes, the Petrograd Bolsheviks swiftly closed ranks and proceeded to carry out the*

Too exhausted for revolution?

Once all the lies and slander are corrected, Leninists still tend to support the crushing of the rebellion. This perspective finds its clearest expression in Victor Serge:

> *"the country was exhausted, and production practically at a standstill; there was no reserves of any kind, not even reserves of stamina in the hearts of the masses. The working-class **elite** that had been moulded in the struggle against the old regime was literally decimated. The Party, swollen by the influx of power-seekers, inspired little confidence … Soviet democracy lacked leadership, institutions and inspiration …*
>
> *"The popular counter-revolution translated the demand for freely-elected soviets into one for 'Soviets without Communists.' If the Bolshevik dictatorship fell, it was only a short step to chaos, and through chaos to a peasant rising, the massacre of the Communists, the return of the emigres, and in the end, through the sheer force of events, another dictatorship, this time anti-proletarian."* [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 128–9]

In other words, the country was exhausted by civil war and anarchists, by ignoring this fact, fail to understand the objective circumstances forcing the Bolsheviks to repress the revolt.

Anarchists, however, are well aware of the problems facing the revolution. Berkman (who was in Petrograd at the time) pointed out the *"[l] ong years of war, revolution, and civil struggle"* which *"had bled Russia to exhaustion and brought her people to the brink of despair."* [**The Russian Tragedy**, p. 61] Like every worker, peasant, sailor and soldier in Russia, anarchists knew that reconstruction would not take place overnight. The Kronstadters' recognised this and argued for "*fresh socialist construction as opposed to me-*

This political perspective reappeared in 1921: *"On nearly every important point the Kronstadt program, as set forth in the rebel **Izvestiia**, coincided with that of the Maximalists."* [Avrich, **Op. Cit.**, p. 171] Given the continuity of the sailors, this was to be expected. Heavily influenced by anarchist and semi-anarchists in 1917, in 1921 the same political ideas came to the fore again once the Kronstadters had freed themselves from Bolshevik dictatorship.

Petrograd and Kronstadt

For Leninists, the inaction of the Petrograd workers during the revolt is significant. Trotsky argued that from *"the class point of view"* it is *"extremely important to contrast the behaviour of Kronstadt to that of Petrograd in those critical days."* The *"uprising did not attract the Petrograd workers. It repelled them. The stratification proceeded along class lines. The workers immediately felt that the Kronstadt mutineers stood on the opposite side of the barricades — and they supported the Soviet power. The political isolation of Kronstadt was the cause of its internal uncertainty and its military defeat."* [Lenin and Trotsky, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 90–1]

Yet Trotsky was insulting the intelligence of his readers by this argument. By failing to mention *"the campaign of slander, lies and calumny against the sailors"* conducted by the Soviet Press or that *"Petrograd was put under martial law"* Trotsky, quite clearly, *"deliberately falsifies the facts."* [Emma Goldman, **Trotsky Protests Too Much**] **If** the Bolsheviks **had** rested on the working class then they would **not** have had to turn Petrograd into an armed camp, repress the strikes, impose martial law and arrest militant workers. Significantly, the state of siege was finally lifted on the 22nd of March, five days after the crushing of Kronstadt.

unpleasant task of repression with efficiency and dispatch." [Avrich, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 48–50]

The Communist government started to attack Kronstadt on March 7th. After 10 days of constant attacks the Kronstadt revolt was crushed by the Red Army. The next day, as an irony of history, the Bolsheviks celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Paris Commune. This year, Leninists will mark the 50th anniversary of the crushing of the Hungarian uprising of 1956 by Stalinism while, simultaneously, attacking Kronstadt.

The *"defeated sailors belonged body and sole to the Revolution; they had voiced the suffering and the will of the Russian people"* yet *"[h]undreds of prisoners were taken away to Petrograd; months later they were still being shot in small batches, a senseless and criminal agony"* (particularly as they were *"prisoners of war ... and the Government had for a long time promised an amnesty to its opponents on condition that they offered their support"*). The *"responsibilities of the Bolshevik Central Committee had been simply enormous"* and *"the subsequent repression ... needlessly barbarous."* [Serge, **Op. Cit.**, p. 131 and p. 348]

Not content in crushing the rebellion, Leninists slandered it from the start. Modern day followers of Lenin and Trotsky still repeat the same old lies. It is, therefore, necessary to refute these claims before discussing why Kronstadt it important and what lessons it has for revolutionaries today.

A White revolt?

From the start, the Bolsheviks lied about the uprising. They attempted to paint the revolt as being organised and lead by the Whites. Serge remembered that he was first told that *"Kronstadt is in the hands of the Whites"* and that *"[s]mall posters stuck on the walls in the still empty streets proclaimed that the counter-revolutionary General Kozlovsky had seized Kronstadt through*

conspiracy and treason." Later the *"truth seeped through little by little, past the smokescreen put out by the Press, which was positively berserk with lies."* The Bolshevik press *"lied systematically"* and the official line was *"an atrocious lie."* In fact, *"the sailors had mutinied, it was a naval revolt led by the Soviet."* However, the *"worse of it all was that we were paralysed by the official falsehoods. It had never happened before that our Party should lie to us like this. 'It's necessary for the benefit of the public,' said some ... the strike [in Petrograd] was now practically general."* [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 124–6]

Even Isaac Deutscher, Trotsky's biographer said that the Bolsheviks *"denounced the men of Kronstadt as counter-revolutionary mutineers, led by a White general. The denunciation appears to have been groundless."* (**The Prophet Armed)** Lenin admitted as much on the 15th of March at the Tenth Party Conference: *"they did not want the White Guards, and they do not want our power either."* [quoted by Avrich, **Op. Cit.**, p. 129]

A White plot?

As the facts of Kronstadt became better known, Leninist claims on the revolt changed. Rather than being a White revolt, they argued that it was inspired by a White plot. The sailors were mislead by conspirators. The evidence for this claim at the time was non-existent. Trotsky pointed to reports in "*foreign newspapers"* of *"an uprising in Kronstadt"* in *"the middle of February"* and argued this proved the work of *"Russian counterrevolutionary organisers promised."* On the *"basis of the dispatch"* he *"sent a warning to Petrograd to my naval colleagues."* [Lenin and Trotsky, **Kronstadt**, p. 68]

To see the truth of these claims it is simply a case of looking at how the Bolsheviks reacted to this announcement of an uprising in Kronstadt. They did nothing. J.G. Wright, in his defence of Trotsky's position, acknowledged that the *"Red Army command"* was

meant that the sailors had to remain there. Moreover, sailors who had been sent to other battlefronts returned by the end of 1919. [Getzler, **Op. Cit.**, p. 208 and pp. 197–8]

Kronstadt: 1917 vs. 1921

This continuity of personnel is also reflected in the politics of the revolt. Kronstadt in 1917 was **never** dominated by the Bolsheviks, who were always a minority. Rather a *"radical populist coalition of Maximalists and Left SRs held sway, albeit precariously, **within** Kronstadt and its Soviet"* (*"**externally** Kronstadt was a loyal stronghold of the Bolshevik regime"*). [Getzler, **Op. Cit.**, p. 179]

Even in the October revolution, the Bolsheviks did not prevail. The soviet majority was made up of SR Maximalists and Left SRs. It was only in the January elections of 1918 that the Bolsheviks improved their position, gaining 46% of seats. The soviet still elected a Left SR as its chairman and sent a Maximalist, anarchist and Bolshevik to the Fourth Congress of Soviets. By the April 1918 elections, as in most of Russia, the Bolsheviks found their support had decreased (down to 29%). Their influence was so weak that on April 18th, the Kronstadt soviet denounced the Bolsheviks attack against the anarchists in Moscow. [Getzler, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 182–4]

Politically, the climate in Kronstadt in 1917 was very close to the politics of the Socialist Revolutionary Maximalists, a left-wing split-off from the SR Party, politically located somewhere between the Left SRs and the Anarchists. They argued for soviet power, not party power, as well as workers' self-management rather than the state capitalism of the Bolsheviks. It *"rejected party factionalism"* and *"stood for pure sovietism"*. They sought an immediate agrarian and urban social revolution, calling for the *"socialisation of power, of the land and of the factories"* to be organised by a federation of soviets based on direct elections and instant recall, as a first step towards socialism. [Getzler, **Op. Cit.**, p. 135]

stadt demands reflected peasant needs are mistaken. They reflected the needs of the whole working population, including the urban working class who raised these demands continually throughout the Civil War period in their strikes.

Peasant sailors?

The most common Trotskyist assertion to justify the repression of the revolt is that of Trotsky. It argues that the sailors in 1921 were different than those in 1917. Trotsky started this line of justification during the revolt, stating the Baltic Fleet had been *"inevitably thinned out with respect to personnel"* and so a *"great many of the revolutionary sailors"* of 1917 had been *"transferred"* elsewhere. They had been *"replaced in large measure by accidental elements."* This *"facilitated"* the work of the *"counterrevolutionary organisers"* who had *"selected"* Kronstadt. [Lenin and Trotsky, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 68–9]

Recent research disproves Trotsky's claims. Getzler has demonstrated that of those serving in the Baltic fleet on 1st January 1921 at least 75.5% were drafted before 1918. Over 80% were from Great Russian areas, 10% from the Ukraine and 9% from Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Poland. Thus the *"veteran politicised Red sailor still predominated in Kronstadt at the end of 1920."* He also investigated the crews of the ***Petropavlovsk*** and the ***Sevastopol***. His findings are conclusive: of the 2,028 sailors where years of enlistment are known, 93.9% were recruited into the navy before and during the 1917 revolution. Only 6.8% of the sailors were recruited in the years 1918–21.[Getzler, **Kronstadt 1917–1921**, pp. 207–8] Moreover, the majority of the revolutionary committee were veterans of the Kronstadt Soviet and the October revolution.

Why had the sailors remained? The most obvious reason was that the Communist commander at Kronstadt would not have left Petrograd totally undefended. Also, Kronstadt's ships and defences required a high level of technical knowledge and experience which

"[c]aught off guard by the mutiny." [**Op. Cit.**, p. 123] This clearly shows how little weight the newspaper reports were held **before** the rebellion.

As proof of a White plot, this evidence is pathetic. The *"publication of false news about Russia was nothing exceptional. Such news was published before, during and after the Kronstadt events... To base an accusation on a 'proof' of this kind is inadmissible and immoral."* [Mett, **Op. Cit.**, p. 76] Both Lenin and Trotsky admitted that the imperialist press printed a great number of fictitious reports about Russia but also maintained that the reports on Kronstadt were not! [Lenin and Trotsky, **Op. Cit.**, p. 69, p. 50 and p. 51] The question of **why** the counterrevolutionary plotters would given their enemies advance notice of their plans never crossed their minds.

Decades later historian Paul Avrich **did** discover an unsigned hand written manuscript labelled *"Top Secret"* and entitled *"Memorandum on the Question of Organising an Uprising in Kronstadt."* However, reading the document quickly shows that Kronstadt was not a product of a White conspiracy. Avrich rightly rejects the idea that the *"Memorandum"* explains the revolt, arguing they had *"no time to put these plans into effect."* The *"eruption occurred too soon, several weeks before the basic conditions of the plot ... could be fulfilled."* It *"is not true,"* he stresses, *"that the emigres had engineering the rebellion."* The revolt was *"a spontaneous and self-contained movement from beginning to end."* Moreover, revolt *"caught the emigres off balance"* and that *"[n]othing ... had been done to implement the Secret Memorandum, and the warnings of the author were fully borne out."* [Paul Avrich, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 106–7, pp. 111–2, pp. 126–7, p. 212 and p. 123] If Kronstadt was a White conspiracy then how could the conspirators have been caught unawares?

Lastly, we must comment upon the fact that members of Kronstadt's revolutionary Committee took refuge in Finland along with around 8,000 others. This does not indicate any "White guardist" connections for where else **could** they go? Anywhere else would

have been in Soviet Russia and so a Bolshevik prison and ultimately death.

The White threat

The lack of foreign intervention during the Kronstadt revolt suggests more than just the fact that the revolt was not a "White conspiracy." It also suggests that the Whites were in no position to take advantage of the rebellion or even support it. This is significant simply because the Bolsheviks and their supporters argue that the revolt had to be repressed simply because the Soviet State was in danger of White and/or foreign intervention. The facts are different.

Firstly, the Kronstadt revolt broke out months after the end of the Civil War in Western Russia. Wrangel had fled from the Crimea in November 1920. The Bolsheviks were so afraid of White invasion that by early 1921 they demobilised half the Red Army (some 2,500,000 men). Secondly, the Russian emigres *"remained as divided and ineffectual as before, with no prospect of co-operation in sight."* Thirdly, as far as Wrangel, the last of the White Generals, goes, his forces were in no state to re-invade Russia. His troops were *"dispersed and their moral sagging"* and it would have taken *"months ... merely to mobilise his men and transport them from the Mediterranean to the Baltic."* A second front in the south *"would have meant almost certain disaster."* Indeed, in a call issued by the Petrograd Defence Committee on March 5th, they asked the rebels: *"Haven't you heard what happened to Wrangel's men, who are dying like flies, in their thousands of hunger and disease?"* [Avrich, **Op. Cit.**, p. 13, p. 219, p. 146 and p. 105]

Clearly, the prospect of a White invasion was slim. This leaves the question of capitalist governments. Avrich argues that *"[a]part from their own energetic fund-raising campaign, the emigres sought the assistance of the Entene powers... the United States government, loath to resume the interventionist policies of the Civil War, turned a deaf ear to all such appeals. The prospects of British aid were even dimmer ... The best hope of foreign support came from France ... the French refused to interfere either politically or militarily in the crisis."* The French government had also *"withdrew its recognition of Wrangel's defunct government"* in November 1920 *"but continued to feed his troops on 'humane grounds,' meanwhile urging him to disband."* [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 117–9 and p. 105]

Thus, the claim that foreign intervention was likely seems without basis. Lenin himself argued on March 16th that *"the enemies"* around the Bolshevik state were *"no longer able to wage their war of intervention."* [Lenin and Trotsky, **Op. Cit.**, p. 52]

A Peasant rebellion?

It is common for Leninists to assert that the rebellion was a peasant or kulak revolt and so dismiss it out of hand.

Yet even a superficial analysis of the events of the revolt and of the ***Petropavlovsk*** resolution can allow the reader Leninist assertions that it was a "kulak" document. According to the Trotskyist definition of *"kulak,"* the term refers to rich peasants who owned land and hired poor peasants to work it. Point 11 of the Kronstadt demands explicitly states opposition to rural wage labour. How could Kronstadt represent *"the kulak"* when it called for the abolition of hired labour on the land? Ironically, Lenin's NEP did allow wage labour and thus represented kulak interests.

So did the demands represent the interests of the (non-kulak) peasantry? To do so we must see whether the demands reflected those of industrial workers or not. If the demands do, in fact, match those of striking workers and other proletarian elements then we can easily dismiss this claim. The demands echoed those raised during the Moscow and Petrograd strikes that preceded the Kronstadt revolt. [Avrich, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 42–3] Thus claims that the Kron-