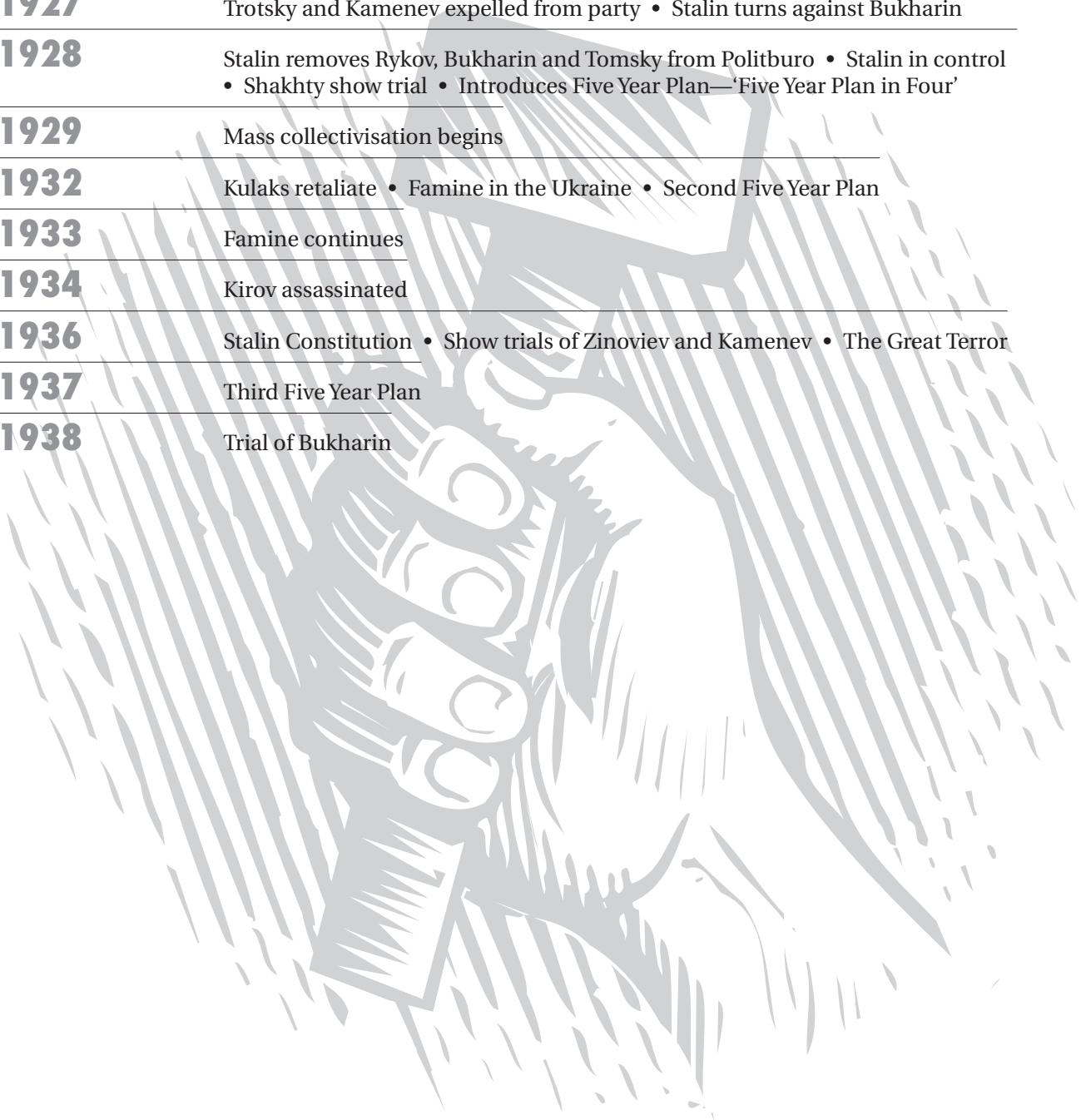


## TIMELINE D

<b>1921</b>	Kronstadt rebellion • Tenth Party Congress held • New Economic Policy (NEP) introduced
<b>1922</b>	Lenin's Testament written
<b>1923</b>	Stalin forms triumvirate with Zinoviev and Kamenev
<b>1924</b>	Lenin dies • Thirteenth Party Congress
<b>1925</b>	Trotsky dismissed as Commissar of War • Stalin and Bukharin form duumvirate
<b>1926</b>	Trotsky criticises bureaucracy of Party • Trotsky combines with Zinoviev and Kamenev, who are condemned as traitors by Stalin • Zinoviev expelled from party
<b>1927</b>	Trotsky and Kamenev expelled from party • Stalin turns against Bukharin
<b>1928</b>	Stalin removes Rykov, Bukharin and Tomsy from Politburo • Stalin in control • Shakhty show trial • Introduces Five Year Plan—'Five Year Plan in Four'
<b>1929</b>	Mass collectivisation begins
<b>1932</b>	Kulaks retaliate • Famine in the Ukraine • Second Five Year Plan
<b>1933</b>	Famine continues
<b>1934</b>	Kirov assassinated
<b>1936</b>	Stalin Constitution • Show trials of Zinoviev and Kamenev • The Great Terror
<b>1937</b>	Third Five Year Plan
<b>1938</b>	Trial of Bukharin





## CONTINUING THE REVOLUTION

*The revolution is merciless, not only to those who lag behind, but also to those who run ahead.*

Nikolai Ustrialov (a liberal emigre who returned to Russia in 1935 and perished three years later)

### INQUIRY 15



### Why was the New Economic Policy introduced by the Bolsheviks and how successful was it?

Use the documents to discover:

- the reasons for the introduction of New Economic Policy (NEP)
- what NEP entailed
- the extent of the NEP success.

## REASONS FOR THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY (NEP)

By 1921 the brutal Civil War had ended in a Bolshevik (called Communist since 1918) victory. Years of war, revolution and Civil War had taken their toll. Russia had lost former provinces of Poland, Finland and the Baltic states of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania. Although foreign troops withdrew, and the revolution was secure, the Bolshevik policies remained inflexible and controls on the economy through the deliberate policy of War Communism were tightened. The result was economic chaos. Lenin and his followers were faced with the enormous task of rebuilding the Russian economy.

The economic pressures at the end of the Civil War brought about a counter-revolution from within the ranks of the proletariat and the peasantry. Peasant uprisings in February 1921 exceeded one hundred and occurred throughout the Russian territories. Russia had known nothing like it, because in the past peasants had traditionally taken up arms against landowners, not against the government. Just as the tsarist authorities had labelled peasant disorders *Kramola* or sedition, the new authorities called them 'banditry'. The workers in Petrograd were involved in a series of strikes sparked by an order to reduce the bread rations in some major cities including Moscow and Petrograd by one-third for a ten day period. Their strike action was directed against the arbitrary rule of the commissars, and their call for a more representative Soviet of workers and peasants was supported by the Kronstadt sailors aboard the battleship *Petropavlovsk*.

The resolution which follows contains the demands of the Kronstadt sailors, who had been considered to be the most loyal among the Bolsheviks, that is, the 'reddest of the red'.

## ★ 15.1

### DEMANDS OF THE KRONSTADT SAILORS, MARCH 1921

Having heard the report of the representatives of the crews sent by the general meeting of ships' crews to Petrograd to investigate the state of affairs there, we demand:

- (1) that in view of the fact that the present Soviets do not express the will of the workers and peasants, new elections by secret ballot be held immediately, with free preliminary propaganda for all workers and peasants before the elections;
- (2) freedom of speech and press for workers and peasants, anarchists and left socialist parties;
- (3) freedom of assembly for trade unions and peasant associations;
- (4) that a non-party conference of workers, Red Army soldiers and sailors of Petrograd, Kronstadt and Petrograd Province be convened not later than 10th March 1921;
- (5) the liberation of all political prisoners of socialist parties, as well as all workers and peasants, Red Army soldiers and sailors imprisoned in connection with the working class and peasant movements;
- (6) the election of a commission to review the cases of those who are held in jails and concentration camps;
- (7) the abolition of all political departments because no single party should have special privileges in the propaganda of its ideas and receive funds from the state for this purpose; instead of these departments, locally elected cultural-educational commissions should be established, to be financed by the state;
- (8) that all roadblock detachments (to prevent food smuggling) be removed immediately;
- (9) the equalisation of the rations of all toilers, with the exception of those working in trades injurious to health;
- (10) the abolition of the Communist fighting detachments in all military units, as well as various Communist guards kept on duty in factories and plants; should such guards or detachments be needed, they could be chosen from the companies in military units, and at the discretion of the workers in factories and plants;
- (11) that the peasants be given the right and freedom of action to do as they please with all the land and also the right to have cattle which they themselves must maintain and manage, that is without the use of hired labour;
- (12) we request all military units, as well as the comrades 'kursanty' (military cadets) to endorse our resolution;
- (13) we demand that all resolutions be widely published in the press;
- (14) we demand the appointment of a travelling bureau for control;
- (15) we demand that free handicraft production by one's own labour be permitted.

Source: *Pravda o Kronshtadte*, cited in J. Daborn, *Russia: Revolution and Counter-Revolution 1917–1924*, pp. 122–3

### QUESTIONS

- 1 Which of the above demands could be considered to be political?
- 2 What general impressions do you gain of the sailors' feelings towards the Bolshevik regime?
- 3 What were their major grievances?
- 4 What is the purpose of the sailors' demands?
- 5 How would you expect the Bolsheviks to respond to these demands?



The response of the Bolsheviks to the Kronstadt revolt, which occurred during the Tenth Party Congress in Moscow, was swift. Troops of the Red Army and the CHEKA totalling 60 000 men under the command of Trotsky, led an assault on Kronstadt. The rebellion was brutally put down. Victor Serge, an ex-anarchist who joined the Bolsheviks, recollects the events.



### 15.2.1

#### THE DEFEAT AT KRONSTADT

At the beginning of March, the Red Army began its attack, over the ice, against Kronstadt and the fleet. The artillery from the ships and forts opened fire on the attackers. In several places the ice cracked open under the feet of the infantry as it advanced, wave after wave, clad in white sheets. Huge ices-floes rolled over, bearing their human cargo down into the black torrent. It was the beginning of a ghastly **fratricide**.

...

... The business had to be got over before the thaw began. The final assault was unleashed by Tukhachev-

sky on 17 March, and culminated in a daring victory over the impediment of the ice.

Lacking any qualified officers, the Kronstadt sailors did not know how to employ their artillery ... Some of the rebels managed to reach Finland. Others put up a furious resistance, fort to fort and street to street; they stood and were shot crying 'Long live the Communist International!'. Hundreds of prisoners were taken away to Petrograd and handed to the Cheka; months later they were still being shot in small batches, a senseless and criminal agony.

**fratricide:** killing one's brother

Source: V. Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary 1901–1941*

Justification of Bolshevik action at Kronstadt was presented by Victor Serge. This account differs significantly from the first in which he had been unimpressed with the Communist action at Kronstadt.



### 15.2.2

#### CHOOSING SIDES IN MARCH 1921

After many hesitations, and with unutterable anguish, my Communist friends and I finally declared ourselves on the side of the Party. This is why. Kronstadt had right on its side. Kronstadt was the beginning of a fresh, liberating revolution for popular democracy; 'The Third Revolution!' it was called by certain anarchists whose heads were stuffed with infantile illusions. However the country was absolutely exhausted, and production practically at a standstill; there were no reserves of any kind, not even reserves of stamina in the hearts of the masses. The working class élite 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. Of the other parties only minute nuclei existed, whose character was highly questionable ...

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 sheer force of events, another dictatorship, this time anti-proletarian.

Source: V. Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary 1901–1941*



## QUESTIONS

- 1 How do you account for the differing reactions from Serge in these documents?
- 2 On what basis does Serge justify support of the Bolshevik action?
- 3 What changes to the party does he identify?
- 4 What were the choices that Serge faced in coming to this decision?

★  
15.3**LENIN REFLECTS ON THE LESSON OF KRONSTADT, 15 MARCH 1921**

It is essential that we make a thorough appraisal of the political and economic lessons of this event. What does it mean? It was an attempt to seize power from the Bolsheviks by a motley crowd or alliance of ill-assorted elements ... It is quite clear that it is the work of Socialist-Revolutionaries and white guard emigres ... there is evidence here of the activity of petty-bourgeois anarchist elements with their slogans of unrestricted trade ...

The Kronstadt sailors and workers wanted to correct the Bolsheviks in regard to restrictions in trade ... Unrestricted trade ... is still only the thin end of the wedge for the whiteguard element, a victory for capital and its complete restoration ...

In face of this danger we must understand that we must do more than put an end to Party disputes. With the peasant economy in the grip of a crisis, we can survive only by appealing to the peasants to help town and countryside. We must bear in mind that the bour-

geoisie is trying to pit the peasants against the workers ... behind a facade of workers slogans it is trying to incite anarchist elements against the workers. This, if successful, will lead directly to the overthrow of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and consequently to the restoration of capitalism and of the old land owner and capitalist regime.

I believe there are only two kinds of government possible in Russia—a government by the Soviets or a government headed by a tsar. Some fools or traitors in Kronstadt talked of a constituent assembly, but does any man in his senses believe for a moment that a constituent assembly at this critical abnormal stage would be anything but a bear garden? This Kronstadt affair in itself is a petty incident ...

If people abroad exaggerate the importance of the rising in Kronstadt and give it support, it is because the world has broken up into two camps: capitalism abroad and Communist Russia.

Source: V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 36

**QUESTIONS**

- 1 Explain Lenin's view of the situation that led to the uprising.
- 2 Who does Lenin blame for the incident?
- 3 How does he justify Bolshevik action?

**NEW ECONOMIC POLICY (NEP)**

Famine had become extremely severe by 1921. Lenin recognised that drastic action was needed to restore the economy in order to assist the Bolsheviks in regaining public confidence. As mentioned in the introduction this often happens in a revolution—the ideology is modified to suit the changing circumstances.

Lenin, in responding to the famine and the economic problems, beat a strategic retreat from War Communism with the introduction of his NEP in 1921. As the majority of Russia's population comprised peasants, Lenin's NEP recognised the importance of their contribution to help improve the Russian economic situation.

The following decree of the All Russian Soviet Executive Committee was published in *Pravda* on 23 March 1921.

★  
15.4.1**NEP OUTLINED**

In order to assure an efficient and untroubled economic life on the basis of a freer use by the farmer of the products of his labour and of his economic resources, in order to strengthen the peasant economy and raise its productivity and also in order to calculate precisely the obligation to the state which falls on the peasants,

requisitioning, as a means of state collection of food supplies, raw material and fodder, is to be replaced by a tax in kind ...

2. This tax must be less than what the peasant has given up to this time through requisitions. The sum of the tax must be reckoned so as to cover the most