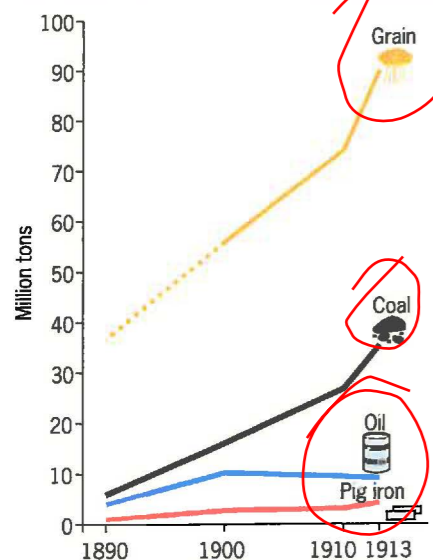


SOURCE 11



Agricultural and industrial production, 1890–1913

- What does Source 12 suggest about the attitude of the Tsar and the members of his court to the idea of the 'people' being more involved in running the country?
- What does Source 13 suggest about working people's attitudes to the Tsar's regime?

SOURCE 13

Year	Strikes	Strikers
1905	13,995	2,863,173
1906	6,114	1,108,406
1907	3,573	740,074
1908	892	176,101
1909	340	64,166
1910	222	46,623
1911	466	105,110
1912	2,032	725,491
1913	2,404	887,096
1914	3,534	1,337,458

These figures were compiled by the Tsar's Ministry of Trade and Industry.

SOURCE 14

Let those in power make no mistake about the mood of the people... never were the Russian people... so profoundly revolutionised by the actions of the government, for day by day, faith in the government is steadily waning...

Guchkov, a Russian conservative in the Duma, 1913. By 1913, even staunch supporters of the Tsar were beginning to want change.

How secure was the Tsar's government by 1914?

The Tsar survived the 1905 revolution, but some serious questions remained. The most serious was the possibility of another revolution. If he was to prevent this, Nicholas needed to reform Russia and satisfy at least some of the discontented groups that had joined the revolution in 1905. The Duma deputies who gathered for its first meeting in 1906 were hopeful that they could help to steer Russia on a new course. They were soon disappointed (see Source 12). The Tsar continued to rule without taking any serious notice of them. The first and second Dumas were very critical of the Tsar. They lasted less than a year before Nicholas sent them home. In 1907 Tsar Nicholas changed the voting rules so that his opponents were not elected to the Duma. This third Duma lasted until 1912, mainly because it was much less critical of the Tsar than the previous two. But by 1912 even this 'loyal' Duma was becoming critical of the Tsar's ministers and policies. However, it had no power to change the Tsar's policies and criticism alone was not a serious threat to the regime so the Tsar's rule continued.

SOURCE 12

The two hostile sides stood confronting each other. The old and grey court dignitaries, keepers of etiquette and tradition, looked across in a haughty manner, though not without fear and confusion, at 'the people of the street', whom the revolution had swept into the palace, and quietly whispered to one another. The other side looked across at them with no less disdain or contempt.

The court side of the hall resounded with orchestrated cheers as the Tsar approached the throne. But the Duma deputies remained completely silent. It was a natural expression of our feelings towards the monarch, who in the twelve years of his reign had managed to destroy all the prestige of his predecessors. The feeling was mutual: not once did the Tsar glance towards the Duma side of the hall. Sitting on the throne he delivered a short, perfunctory speech in which he promised to uphold the principles of autocracy 'with unwavering firmness' and, in a tone of obvious insincerity, greeted the Duma deputies as 'the best people' of his Empire. With that he got up to leave.

As the royal procession filed out of the hall, tears could be seen on the face of the Tsar's mother, the Dowager Empress. It had been a 'terrible ceremony' she later confided to the Minister of Finance. For several days she had been unable to calm herself from the shock of seeing so many commoners inside the palace.

From the memoirs of Duma deputy Obolensky, published in 1925. He is describing the first session of the Duma in April 1906.

Stolypin

In 1906 the Tsar appointed a tough new Prime Minister — Peter Stolypin. Stolypin used a 'carrot and stick' approach to the problems of Russia.

The stick: He came down hard on strikers, protesters and revolutionaries. Over 20,000 were exiled and over 1,000 hanged (the noose came to be known as 'Stolypin's necktie'). This brutal suppression effectively killed off opposition to the regime in the countryside until after 1914.

The carrot: Stolypin also tried to win over the peasants with the 'carrot' they had always wanted — land. He allowed wealthier peasants, the kulaks, to opt out of the mir communes and buy up land. These kulaks prospered and in the process created larger and more efficient farms. Production did increase significantly (see Source 11). On the other hand, 90 per cent of land in the fertile west of Russia was still run by inefficient communes in 1916. Farm sizes remained small even in Ukraine, Russia's best farmland. Most peasants still lived in the conditions you saw in the sources on page 138.

Stolypin also tried to boost Russia's industries. There was impressive economic growth between 1908 and 1911. But Russia was still far behind modern industrial powers such as Britain, Germany and the USA. Urban workers' wages stayed low and the cost of food and housing stayed high. Living and working conditions remained appalling (see page 139).

- Make two lists:
 - Stolypin's achievements
 - Stolypin's failings.
- If you were a senior adviser to the Tsar, which of Sources 11–15 would worry you most? Explain your answer.

Focus Task

How well was Russia governed in 1914?

- Here are five characteristics that you might expect of a good government:
 - trying to improve the lives of all its people
 - building up its agriculture and industry
 - listening to and responding to its population
 - running the country efficiently
 - defending the country from enemies.
 On a scale of 1–5, say how well you think the Tsarist government did on each one up to 1914. Explain your reason for giving that score. Your teacher can give you a worksheet to help you.
- Now make a list of the successes and failures of the Tsarist government up to 1914.
- Which of the following assessments do you most agree with? By 1913 the government was:
 - in crisis
 - strong but with some serious weaknesses
 - secure with only minor weaknesses.

SOURCE 16



A Russian cartoon. The caption reads: 'The Russian Tsars at home.'

- Look at Source 16. How does the cartoonist suggest that Rasputin is an evil influence on the Tsar and Tsarina?

The profits being made by industry were going to the capitalists, or they were being paid back to banks in France which had loaned the money to pay for much of Russia's industrial growth.

Stolypin was assassinated in 1911, but the Tsar was about to sack him anyway. He worried that Stolypin was trying to change Russia too much. Nicholas had already blocked some of Stolypin's plans for basic education for the people and regulations to protect factory workers. The Tsar was influenced by the landlords and members of the court. They saw Stolypin's reforms as a threat to the traditional Russian society in which everyone knew their place.

Relations between the Tsar and his people became steadily worse. The economy took a downturn in 1912, causing unemployment and hunger. The year 1913 saw huge celebrations for the three hundredth anniversary of the Romanovs' rule in Russia. The celebrations were meant to bring the country together, but enthusiasm was limited.

SOURCE 15



Tsar Nicholas at the 1913 celebrations of 300 years of Romanov rule. This was the first time since 1905 that the Tsar had appeared in public.

The government tried other measures to get the people behind them, such as discrimination and even violence against Jews, Muslims and other minorities. This had little effect, and discontent grew, especially among the growing industrial working class in the cities. Strikes were on the rise (see Source 13), including the highly publicised Lena gold field strike where troops opened fire on striking miners. However, the army and police dealt with these problems and so, to its opponents, the government must have seemed firmly in control.

Strangely, some of the government's supporters were less sure about the government (see Source 14). Industrialists were concerned by the way in which the Tsar preferred to appoint loyal but unimaginative ministers such as Goremykin.

Rasputin

Some of the Tsar's supporters were particularly alarmed about the influence of a strange and dangerous figure — Gregory Yefimovich, generally known as Rasputin. The Tsar's son Alexis was very ill with a blood disease called haemophilia. Through hypnosis, it appeared that Rasputin could control the disease. He was greeted as a miracle worker by the Tsarina (the Tsar's wife). Before long, Rasputin was also giving her and the Tsar advice on how to run the country. People in Russia were very suspicious of Rasputin. He was said to be a drinker and a womaniser. His name means 'disreputable'. The Tsar's opponents seized on Rasputin as a sign of the Tsar's weakness and unfitness to rule Russia. The fact that the Tsar either didn't notice their concern or, worse still, didn't care showed just how out of touch he was.

Focus Task

How did the First World War weaken the Tsar's government?

The First World War had a massive impact on Russia. Your task is to use the material on pages 144–46 to present an overview of how the war affected four different groups of people in Russian society. The groups are:

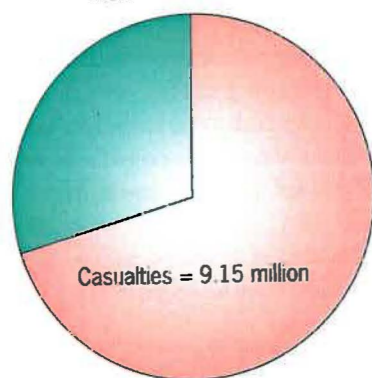
- the army
- the workers
- the middle classes
- the aristocracy.

- As you read through pages 144–46 you will find out about the impact of the war on each group. Write a paragraph or series of notes summarising the impact of war on each group.
- Organise your work as a presentation. You could use OHT acetates or computer presentation software. Do some research to locate pictures that support your presentation.

- Was the Tsar's decision to take command of the army evidence that he was out of touch with the situation? Explain your answer.
- Why were the Bolsheviks successful at gaining recruits in the army?

SOURCE 18

Total soldiers mobilised = 13 million



Russian casualties in the First World War.

War and revolution

In August 1914 Russia entered the First World War. Tensions in the country seemed to disappear. The Tsar seemed genuinely popular with his people and there was an instant display of patriotism. The Tsar's action was applauded. Workers, peasants and aristocrats all joined in the patriotic enthusiasm. Anti-government strikes and demonstrations were abandoned. The good feeling, however, was very short-lived. As the war continued, the Tsar began to lose the support of key sectors of Russian society.

The army

The Russian army was a huge army of conscripts. At first, the soldiers were enthusiastic, as was the rest of society. Even so, many peasants felt that they were fighting to defend their country against the Germans rather than showing any loyalty to the Tsar. Russian soldiers fought bravely, but they stood little chance against the German army. They were badly led and treated appallingly by their aristocrat officers. They were also poorly supported by the industries at home. They were short of rifles, ammunition, artillery and shells. Many did not even have boots.

The Tsar took personal command of the armed forces in September 1915. This made little difference to the war, since Nicholas was not a particularly able commander. However, it did mean that people held Nicholas personally responsible for the defeats and the blunders. The defeats and huge losses continued throughout 1916. It is not surprising that by 1917 there was deep discontent in the army and that many soldiers were supporters of the revolutionary Bolshevik Party.

SOURCE 17

The army had neither wagons nor horses nor first aid supplies . . . We visited the Warsaw station where there were about 17,000 men wounded in battle. At the station we found a terrible scene: on the platform in dirt, filth and cold, on the ground, even without straw, wounded men, who filled the air with heart-rending cries, dolefully asked: 'For God's sake order them to dress our wounds. For five days we have not been attended to.'

From a report by Michael Rodzianko, President of the Duma.

SOURCE 19

Again that cursed question of shortage of artillery and rifle ammunition stands in the way of an energetic advance. If we should have three days of serious fighting, we might run out of ammunition altogether. Without new rifles, it is impossible to fill up the gaps.

Tsar Nicholas to his wife Alexandra, July 1915.

Peasants, workers and the ethnic minorities

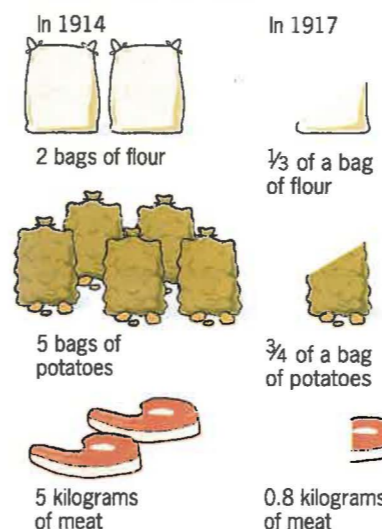
It did not take long for the strain of war to alienate the peasants and the workers. The huge casualty figures took their toll. In August 1916, the local governor of the village of Grushevka reported that the war had killed thirteen per cent of the population of the village. This left many widows and orphans needing state war pensions which they did not always receive.

Despite the losses, food production remained high until 1916. By then, the government could not always be relied on to pay for the food produced. The government planned to take food by force but abandoned the idea because it feared it might spark a widespread revolt. There actually was a revolt in central Asian Russia when the Tsar tried to conscript Muslims into the army. It was brutally suppressed by the army.

By 1916 there was much discontent in the cities. War contracts created an extra 3.5 million industrial jobs between 1914 and 1916. The workers got little in the way of extra wages. They also had to cope with even worse overcrowding than before the war. There were fuel shortages. There were also food shortages. What made it worse was that there was enough food and fuel, but it could not be transported to the cities. The rail network could not cope with the needs of the army, industry and the populations of the cities. As 1916 turned into 1917, many working men and women stood and shivered in bread queues and cursed the Tsar.

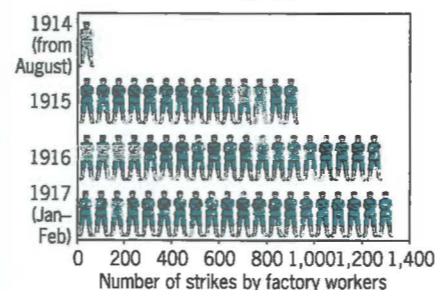
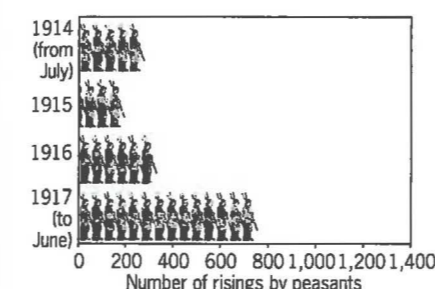
SOURCE 20

The average worker's wage in 1917 was 5 roubles a day. This would buy you:



Prices in Russia, 1914–17.

SOURCE 21



Peasant risings and strikes, 1914–17.

SOURCE 22

Everybody was fed up with the Tsar because they felt he was weak. When he abdicated, there was great rejoicing. Everybody thought things would be much better.

Margot Tracey, the daughter of wealthy Russian capitalists, describing feelings towards the Tsar in 1917.

- Imagine you are an adviser to the Tsar in 1916. Which of the sources on pages 144–45 would give you most concern? Explain your answer.

The middle classes

The middle classes did not suffer in the same way as the peasants and workers, but they too were unhappy with the Tsar by the end of 1916. Many middle-class activists in the zemstva were appalled by reports such as Source 17. They set up their own medical organisations along the lines of the modern Red Cross, or joined war committees to send other supplies to the troops. These organisations were generally far more effective than the government agencies. By 1916 many industrialists were complaining that they could not fulfil their war contracts because of a shortage of raw materials (especially metals) and fuel. In 1915 an alliance of Duma politicians, the Progressive Bloc, had urged the Tsar to work with them in a more representative style of government that would unite the people. The Tsar dismissed the Duma a month later.

The aristocracy

The situation was so bad by late 1916 that the Council of the United Nobility was calling for the Tsar to step down. The junior officers in the army had suffered devastating losses in the war. Many of these officers were the future of the aristocrat class. The conscription of 13 million peasants also threatened aristocrats' livelihoods, because they had no workers for their estates. Most of all, many of the leading aristocrats were appalled by the influence of Rasputin over the government of Russia. When the Tsar left Petrograd (the new Russian version of the Germanic name St Petersburg) to take charge of the army, he left his wife in control of the country. The fact that she was German started rumours flying in the capital. There were also rumours of an affair between her and Rasputin. Ministers were dismissed and then replaced. The concerns were so serious that a group of leading aristocrats murdered Rasputin in December 1916.

SOURCE 23

I asked for an audience and was received by him [the Tsar] on March 8th. 'I must tell Your Majesty that this cannot continue much longer. No one opens your eyes to the true role which this man is playing. His presence in Your Majesty's court undermines confidence in the Supreme Power and may have an evil effect on the fate of the dynasty and turn the hearts of the people from their Emperor' . . . My report did some good. On March 11th an order was issued sending Rasputin to Tobolsk; but a few days later, at the demand of the Empress, this order was cancelled.

M Rodzianko, President of the Duma, March 1916.

The March revolution

As 1917 dawned, few people had great hopes for the survival of the Tsar's regime. In January strikes broke out all over Russia. In February the strikes spread. They were supported and even joined by members of the army. The Tsar's best troops lay dead on the battlefields. These soldiers were recent conscripts and had more in common with the strikers than their officers. On 7 March workers at the Putilov steelworks in Petrograd went on strike. They joined with thousands of women – it was International Women's Day – and other discontented workers demanding that the government provide bread. From 7 to 10 March the number of striking workers rose to 250,000. Industry came to a standstill. The Duma set up a Provisional Committee to take over the government. The Tsar ordered them to disband. They refused. On 12 March the Tsar ordered his army to put down the revolt by force. They refused. This was the decisive moment. Some soldiers even shot their own officers and joined the demonstrators. They marched to the Duma demanding that they take over the government. Reluctantly, the Duma leaders accepted – they had always wanted reform rather than revolution, but now there seemed no choice.

On the same day, revolutionaries set up the Petrograd Soviet again, and began taking control of food supplies to the city. They set up soldiers' committees, undermining the authority of the officers. It was not clear who was in charge of Russia, but it was obvious that the Tsar was not! On 15 March he issued a statement that he was abdicating. There was an initial plan for his brother Michael to take over, but Michael refused: Russia had finished with Tsars.

Focus Task A

How important was the war in the collapse of the Tsarist regime?

Historians have furiously debated this question since the revolution took place. There are two main views:

View 1

The Tsar's regime was basically stable up to 1914, even if it had some important problems to deal with. It was making steady progress towards becoming a modern state, but this progress was destroyed by the coming of war. Don't forget that this war was so severe that it also brought Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey to their knees as well.



View 2

The regime in Russia was cursed with a weak Tsar, a backward economy and a class of aristocrats who were not prepared to share their power and privileges with the millions of ordinary Russians. Revolution was only a matter of time. The war did not cause it, although it may have speeded up the process.

Divide the class into two groups. One group has to find evidence and arguments to support View 1, the other to support View 2.

You could compare notes in a class discussion or organise a formal debate. You may even be able to compare your views with students in other schools using email conferencing.

SOURCE 24

One company of the Pavlovsky Regiment's reserve battalion had declared on 26 February that it would not fire on people . . . We have just received a telegram from the Minister of War stating that the rebels have seized the most important buildings in all parts of the city. Due to fatigue and propaganda the troops have laid down their arms, passed to the side of the rebels or become neutral . . .

General Alekseyev, February 1917.

Focus Task B

Why was the March 1917 revolution successful?

The Tsar faced a major revolution in 1905 but he survived. Why was 1917 different? Why was he not able to survive in 1917?



Failures in the war



The mutiny in the army



Duma setting up alternative parliament



Discontent in the countryside



Formation of soviets



Strikes



Food shortages



The Tsarina and Rasputin

Stage 1

- Copy the headings in this diagram. They show eight reasons why the Tsar was forced to abdicate in March 1917.
- For each of the factors, write one or two sentences explaining how it contributed to the fall of the Tsar.
- Draw lines between any of the factors that seem to be connected. Label your line explaining what the link is.

Stage 2

- In pairs or small groups, discuss the following points:
 - Which factors were present in 1905?
 - Were these same factors more or less serious than in 1905?
 - Which factors were not present in 1905?
 - Were the new factors decisive in making the March 1917 revolution successful?

The Provisional Government

Russia's problems were not solved by the abdication of the Tsar. The Duma's Provisional Committee took over government. It faced three overwhelmingly urgent decisions:

- to continue the war or make peace
- to distribute land to the peasants (who had already started taking it) or ask them to wait until elections had been held
- how best to get food to the starving workers in the cities.

The Provisional Government was a mixed group. While it included men such as the lawyer Alexander Kerensky – Justice Minister in the Provisional Government but also a respected member of the Petrograd Soviet – it also included angry revolutionaries who had no experience of government at all. The Provisional Government promised Russia's allies that it would continue the war, while trying to settle the situation in Russia. It also urged the peasants to be restrained and wait for elections before taking any land. The idea was that the Provisional Government could then stand down and allow free elections to take place to elect a new Constituent Assembly that would fairly and democratically represent the people of Russia. It was a very cautious message for a people who had just gone through a revolution.

SOURCE 25

- Read Source 25. How popular do you think the Provisional Government's policies on
 - the war
 - landwould be with the peasants and the soldiers?

The Provisional Government should do nothing now which would break our ties with the allies. The worst thing that could happen to us would be separate peace. It would be ruinous for the Russian revolution, ruinous for international democracy . . .

As to the land question, we regard it as our duty at the present to prepare the ground for a just solution of the problem by the Constituent Assembly.

A Provisional Government Minister explains why Russia should stay in the war, 1917.

However, the Provisional Government was not the only possible government. Most workers also paid close attention to the Petrograd Soviet. The Soviet had the support of workers in key industries such as coal mining and water, and the support of much of the army. During the crisis months of spring 1917, the Soviet and Provisional Government worked together.

One man was determined to push the revolution further. He was Lenin, leader of the Bolsheviks (see page 151). When he heard of the March revolution he immediately returned to Russia from exile in Europe. The Germans even provided him with a special train, hoping that he might cause more chaos in Russia!

When Lenin arrived at Petrograd station, he set out the Bolshevik programme in his April Theses. He urged the people to support the Bolsheviks in a second revolution. Lenin's slogans 'Peace, Land and Bread' and 'All power to the soviets' contrasted sharply with the cautious message of the Provisional Government. Support for the Bolsheviks increased quickly (see Sources 26 and 27), particularly in the soviets and in the army.

SOURCE 27

The Bolshevik speaker would ask the crowd 'Do you need more land?

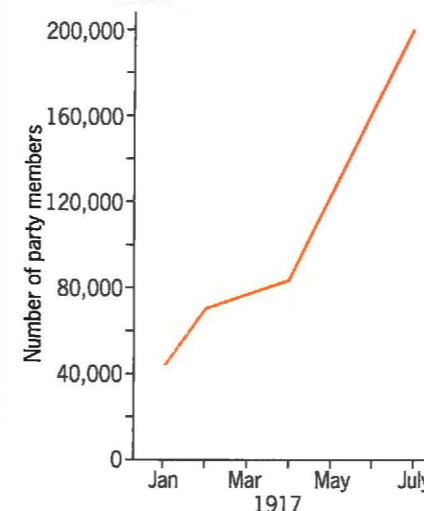
'Do you have as much land as the landlords do?

'But will the Kerensky government give you land? No, never. It protects the interests of the landlords. Only our party, the Bolsheviks, will immediately give you land . . .'

Several times I tried to take the floor and explain that the Bolsheviks make promises which they can never fulfil. I used figures from farming statistics to prove my point; but I saw that the crowded square was unsuitable for this kind of discussion.

A Menshevik writer, summer 1917.

SOURCE 26



Growth of Bolshevik support, 1917.

SOURCE 28

The German offensive, which began on 6 July, is turning into an immense catastrophe which may threaten revolutionary Russia with ruin. A sudden and disastrous change has occurred in the attitude of the troops . . . Authority and obedience no longer exist . . . for hundreds of miles one can see deserters, armed and unarmed, in good health and in high spirits, certain they will not be punished.

A Russian officer reporting back to the Provisional Government, 1917.

In the second half of 1917, the Provisional Government's authority steadily collapsed.

- The war effort was failing. Soldiers had been deserting in thousands from the army. Kerensky became Minister for War and rallied the army for a great offensive in June. It was a disaster. The army began to fall apart in the face of a German counter-attack (see Source 28). The deserters decided to come home.
- Desertions were made worse because another element of the Provisional Government's policy had failed. The peasants ignored the orders of the government to wait. They were simply taking control of the countryside. The soldiers, who were mostly peasants, did not want to miss their turn when the land was shared out.

The Provisional Government's problems got worse in the summer. In July (the 'July Days'), Bolshevik-led protests against the war turned into a rebellion. However, when Kerensky produced evidence that Lenin had been helped by the Germans, support for the rebellion fell. Lenin, in disguise, fled to Finland. Kerensky used troops to crush the rebellion and took over the government.

SOURCE 29

The Provisional Government possesses no real power and its orders are executed only in so far as this is permitted by the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which holds in its hands the most important elements of actual power, such as troops, railroads, postal and telegraph service . . .

A letter from Guchkov, Minister for War in the Provisional Government, to General Alekseyev, 22 March 1917.

SOURCE 30



Troops loyal to the Provisional Government fire on Bolshevik demonstrators during the July Days.

Kerensky was in a very difficult situation. The upper and middle classes expected him to restore order. By this time, however, real power lay with the soviets, especially the Petrograd Soviet. It had a Bolshevik majority and a Bolshevik chairman — Leon Trotsky. It also had the support of much of the army and all industrial workers.

Meanwhile, there was little reason for the ordinary people of Russia to be grateful to the Provisional Government (see Sources 31 and 32).

SOURCE 31

Cabs and horse-drawn carriages began to disappear. Street-car service was erratic. The railway stations filled with tramps and deserting soldiers, often drunk, sometimes threatening. The police force had vanished in the first days of the Revolution. Now 'revolutionary order' was over. Hold-ups and robberies became the order of the day. Politically, signs of chaos were everywhere.

HE Salisbury, Russia in Revolution.

SOURCE 32

Week by week food became scarcer . . . one had to queue for long hours in the chill rain . . . Think of the poorly clad people standing on the streets of Petrograd for whole days in the Russian winter! I have listened in the bread-lines, hearing the bitter discontent which from time to time burst through the miraculous good nature of the Russian crowd.

John Reed, an American writer who lived in Petrograd in 1917.

Others were also fed up with the Provisional Government. In September 1917, the army leader Kornilov marched his troops towards Moscow, intending to get rid of the Bolsheviks and the Provisional Government, and restore order. Kerensky was in an impossible situation. He had some troops who supported him but they were no match for Kornilov's. Kerensky turned to the only group which could save him: his Bolshevik opponents, who dominated the Petrograd Soviet. The Bolsheviks organised themselves into an army which they called the Red Guards. Kornilov's troops refused to fight members of the Soviet so Kornilov's plans collapsed.

But it was hardly a victory for Kerensky. In fact, by October Kerensky's government was doomed. It had tried to carry on the war and failed. It had therefore lost the army's support. It had tried to stop the peasants from taking over the land and so lost their support too. Without peasant support it had failed to bring food into the towns and food prices had spiralled upwards. This had lost the government any support it had from the urban workers.

In contrast, the Bolsheviks were promising what the people wanted most (bread, peace, land). It was the Bolsheviks who had removed the threat of Kornilov. By the end of September 1917, there were Bolshevik majorities in the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets, and in most of Russia's other major towns and cities.

What do you think happened next?

Focus Task

How effective was the Provisional Government?

- 1 Here is a list of some decisions that faced the Provisional Government when it took over in March 1917:
 - a) what to do about the war
 - b) what to do about land
 - c) what to do about food.
 For each one, say how the government dealt with it, and what the result of the action was.
- 2 Based on your answers to question 1, how effective do you think the Provisional Government was? Give it a mark out of ten.
- 3 Read through pages 147–49 again. Look for evidence of how the actions of these opponents harmed the Provisional Government:
 - ◆ members of the soviets
 - ◆ Bolsheviks
 - ◆ General Kornilov.
- 4 Based on your answers to question 3, would you revise the score you gave the government in question 2?
- 5 Now reach an overview score. Out of ten, how effective was the Provisional Government? Write a paragraph to explain your score.

The Bolshevik Revolution

SOURCE 33

The Provisional Government has been overthrown. The cause for which the people have fought has been made safe: the immediate proposal of a democratic peace, the end of land owners' rights, workers' control over production, the creation of a Soviet government. Long live the revolution of workers, soldiers and peasants.

Proclamation of the Petrograd Soviet,
8 November 1917.

You have seen how Bolshevik support increased throughout 1917. By the end of October 1917, Lenin was convinced that the time was right for the Bolsheviks to seize power. Lenin convinced the other Bolsheviks to act swiftly. It was not easy – leading Bolsheviks like Bukharin felt that Russia was not ready, but neither he nor any other Bolshevik could match Lenin in an argument.

During the night of 6 November, the Red Guards led by Leon Trotsky took control of post offices, bridges and the State Bank. On 7 November, Kerensky awoke to find the Bolsheviks were in control of most of Petrograd. Through the day, with almost no opposition, the Red Guards continued to take over railway stations and other important targets. On the evening of 7 November, they stormed the Winter Palace (again, without much opposition) and arrested the ministers of the Provisional Government. Kerensky managed to escape and tried to rally loyal troops. When this failed, he fled into exile. On 8 November an announcement was made to the Russian people (see Source 33).

SOURCE 34



The Bolsheviks storm the Winter Palace. A painting from 1937.

- 1 When the Bolsheviks stormed the Winter Palace, they actually faced very little resistance. Why do you think the artist who painted Source 34 suggests that they did?

An analysis of the Bolshevik Revolution

Despite what they claimed, the Bolsheviks did not have the support of the majority of the Russian people. So how were they able to carry out their takeover in November 1917? The unpopularity of the Provisional Government was a critical factor – there were no massive demonstrations demanding the return of Kerensky!

A second factor was that the Bolsheviks were a disciplined party dedicated to revolution, even though not all the Bolshevik leaders believed this was the right way to change Russia. The Bolsheviks had some 800,000 members, and their supporters were also in the right places. At least half of the army supported them, as did the sailors at the important naval base at Kronstadt near Petrograd. (The Bolsheviks were still the only party demanding that Russia should pull out of the war.) The major industrial centres, and the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets especially, were also pro-Bolshevik. The Bolsheviks also had some outstanding personalities in their ranks, particularly Trotsky and their leader Lenin.

Activity

Lenin and Trotsky

Work individually or in pairs, taking one personality each.

- 1 Using Sources 35–37, add extra details to the profile of Lenin:
 - why Lenin appealed to people
 - his personal qualities
 - his strengths as a leader.
- 2 Now do the same for Trotsky (see page 152).
- 3 Finally, write a short report on the contribution of each individual to the Bolsheviks' success in 1917.

Profile

Vladimir Illich Lenin



- ▶ Born 1870 into a respectable Russian family
- ▶ Brother hanged in 1887 for plotting against the Tsar
- ▶ Graduated from St Petersburg University after being thrown out of Kazan University for his political beliefs.
- ▶ One of the largest Okhrana files was about him!
- ▶ Exiled to Siberia 1897–1900
- ▶ 1900–1905 lived in various countries writing the revolutionary newspaper 'Iskra' ('The Spark').
- ▶ Took part in the 1905 revolution but was forced to flee.
- ▶ Returned to Russia after the first revolution in 1917.
- ▶ Led the Bolsheviks to power in November 1917.

SOURCE 35

This extraordinary figure was first and foremost a professional revolutionary. He had no other occupation. A man of iron will and inflexible ambition, he was absolutely ruthless and used human beings as mere material for his purpose. Short and sturdy with a bald head, small beard and deep set eyes, Lenin looked like a small tradesman. When he spoke at meetings his ill-fitting suit, his crooked tie, his ordinary appearance disposed the crowd in his favour. 'He is not one of the gentlemen, he is one of us,' they would say.

The Times, writing about Lenin after his death, 1924.

SOURCE 36

Lenin . . . was the overall planner of the revolution: he also dealt with internal divisions within the party and provided tight control, and a degree of discipline and unity which the other parties lacked.

SJ Lee, *The European Dictatorships*, 1987.

SOURCE 37

The struggle was headed by Lenin who guided the Party's Central Committee, the editorial board of Pravda, and who kept in touch with the Party organisations in the provinces . . . He frequently addressed mass rallies and meetings. Lenin's appearance on the platform inevitably triggered off the cheers of the audience. Lenin's brilliant speeches inspired the workers and soldiers to a determined struggle.

Soviet historian Y Kukulshin, *History of the USSR*, 1981.

Profile

Leon Trotsky



- Born 1879 into a respectable and prosperous Jewish farming family.
- Exceptionally bright at school and brilliant at university.
- Politically active – arrested in 1900 and deported to Siberia.
- Escaped to London in 1902 and met Lenin there.
- Joined the Social Democratic Party, but supported the Menshevik wing rather than the Bolsheviks.
- Played an important role in organising strikes in the 1905 revolution – imprisoned for his activities.
- Escaped in 1907 and became a Bolshevik activist in the years before the First World War.
- Published two Bolshevik newspapers, including 'Pravda'.
- In 1917 he returned to Russia and played a key role in the Bolshevik Revolution.
- In 1918 he became the Commissar for War and led the Bolsheviks to victory in the Civil War which broke out in 1918.

SOURCE 38

The Bolshevik party was greatly strengthened by Trotsky's entry into the party. No one else in the leadership came anywhere near him as a public speaker, and for much of the revolutionary period it was this that made Trotsky, perhaps even more so than Lenin, the best known Bolshevik leader in the country. Whereas Lenin remained the master strategist of the party, working mainly behind the scenes, Trotsky became its principal source of public inspiration. During the weeks leading up to the seizure of power he spoke almost every night before a packed house . . .

He was careful always to use examples and comparisons from the real life of the audience. This gave his speeches a familiarity and earned Trotsky the popular reputation of being 'one of us'. It was this that gave him the power to master the crowd, even sometimes when it was extremely hostile.

Historian Orlando Figes, a leading international expert on the Russian Revolution, writing in 1996.

SOURCE 39

Now that the great revolution has come, one feels that however intelligent Lenin may be he begins to fade beside the genius of Trotsky.

Mikhail Uritsky, 1917. Uritsky was a Bolshevik activist and went on to play an important role in Bolshevik governments after 1917.

SOURCE 40

Under the influence of his tremendous activity and blinding success, certain people close to Trotsky were even inclined to see in him the real leader of the Russian revolution . . . It is true that during that period, after the thunderous success of his arrival in Russia and before the July days, Lenin did keep rather in the background, not speaking often, not writing much, but largely engaged in directing organisational work in the Bolshevik camp, whilst Trotsky thundered forth at meetings in Petrograd. Trotsky's most obvious gifts were his talents as an orator and as a writer. I regard Trotsky as probably the greatest orator of our age. In my time I have heard all the greatest parliamentarians and popular tribunes of socialism and very many famous orators of the bourgeois world and I would find it difficult to name any of them whom I could put in the same class as Trotsky.

From Revolutionary Silhouettes, by Anatoly Lunacharsky, published in 1918. The book was a series of portraits of leading revolutionaries. The author was a Bolshevik activist and knew Lenin and Trotsky well.

Focus Task

Why were the Bolsheviks successful?

- 1 Read Source 41.

SOURCE 41

The [November] Revolution has often and widely been held to have been mainly Lenin's revolution. But was it? Certainly Lenin had a heavier impact on the course [of events] than anyone else. The point is, however, that great historical changes are brought about not only by individuals. There were other mighty factors at work as well in Russia in 1917 . . . Lenin simply could not have done or even co-ordinated everything.

Historian Robert Service, writing in 1990.

- 2 What do you think the writer had in mind when he said there were 'other mighty factors at work'? Make your own list of these factors.
- 3 Write two or more paragraphs to explain the importance of these factors.

Factfile

Bolshevik decrees, 1917

8 November

- Land belonging to Tsar, Church and nobles handed over to peasants
- Russia asked for peace with Germany

12 November

- Working day limited to eight hours, 48-hour week, rules made about overtime and holidays.

14 November

- Workers to be insured against illness or accident.

1 December

- All non-Bolshevik newspapers banned

11 December

- The opposition Constitutional Democratic Party (Cadets) banned; its leaders arrested

20 December

- Cheka (secret police) set up to deal with 'spies and counter-revolutionaries'.

27 December

- Factories put under control of workers' committees
- Banks put under Bolshevik government control

31 December

- Marriages could take place without a priest if desired
- Divorce made easier.

- 1 Study the Factfile. Which of the Bolshevik decrees would you say aimed to
 - a) keep the peasants happy
 - b) keep the workers happy
 - c) increase Bolshevik control
 - d) improve personal freedom in Russia?

Lenin in power

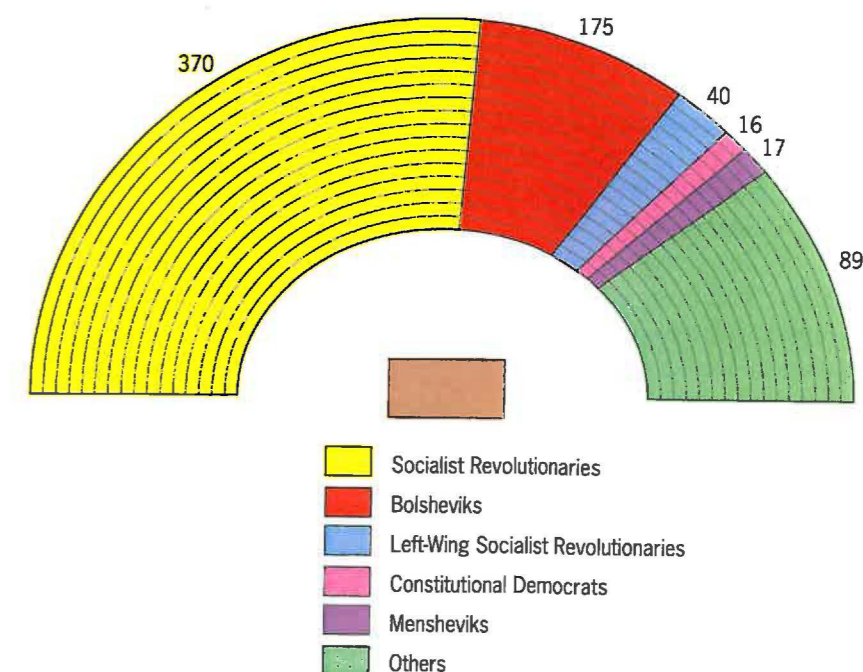
Lenin and the Bolsheviks had promised the people bread, peace and land. Lenin knew that if he failed to deliver, he and the Bolsheviks would suffer the same fate as Kerensky and the Provisional Government.

Lenin immediately set up the Council of People's Commissars (the Sovnarkom). It issued its first decree on 8 November, announcing that Russia was asking for peace with Germany. There followed an enormous number of decrees from the new government that aimed to strengthen the Bolsheviks' hold on power (see Factfile). The peasants were given the Tsar's and the Church's lands. The factories and industries were put into the hands of the workers. The Bolsheviks were given power to deal ruthlessly with their opponents – and they did (see page 155).

The Bolshevik dictatorship

Lenin had also promised free elections to the new Constituent Assembly. Elections were held in late 1917. As Lenin had feared, the Bolsheviks did not gain a majority in the elections. Their rivals, the peasant-based Socialist Revolutionaries, were the biggest party when the Assembly opened on 18 January 1918.

SOURCE 42



The results of the Constituent Assembly elections, 1917.

Lenin solved this problem in his typically direct style. He sent the Red Guards to close down the Assembly. After brief protests (again put down by the Red Guards) the Assembly was forgotten. Lenin instead used the Congress of Soviets to pass his laws as it did contain a Bolshevik majority.

Russia's democratic experiment therefore lasted less than 24 hours, but this did not trouble Lenin's conscience. He believed he was establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat which in time would give way to true Communism.

SOURCE 43



The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, 1918.

SOURCE 44

The bourgeoisie, landholders, and all wealthy classes are making desperate efforts to undermine the revolution which is aiming to safeguard the interests of the toiling and exploited masses... The partisans of the bourgeoisie, especially the higher officials, bank clerks, etc., are sabotaging and organising strikes in order to block the government's efforts to reconstruct the state on a socialistic basis. Sabotage has spread even to the food-supply organisations and millions of people are threatened with famine. Special measures must be taken to fight counter-revolution and sabotage.

From a letter written by Lenin in December 1917.

Factfile

The Whites

'Whites' was a very broad term and was applied to any anti-Bolshevik group(s). Whites were made up of:

- Socialist Revolutionaries
- Mensheviks
- supporters of the Tsar
- landlords and capitalists who had lost land or money in the revolution
- the Czech Legion (former prisoners of war)

The Whites were also supported for part of the Civil War by foreign troops from the USA, Japan, France and Britain. They were sent by their governments to force Russia back into war against Germany.

Making peace

The next promise that Lenin had to make good was for peace. He put Trotsky in charge of negotiating a peace treaty. He told Trotsky to try to spin out the peace negotiations as long as possible. He hoped that very soon a socialist revolution would break out in Germany as it had in Russia. By February of 1918, however, there was no revolution and the Germans began to advance again. Lenin had to accept their terms in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918.

The Treaty was a severe blow to Russia. You can see how much land was lost in Source 43, but this was not the whole story. Russia's losses included 34 per cent of its population, 32 per cent of its agricultural land, 54 per cent of its industry, 26 per cent of its railways and 89 per cent of its coalmines. A final blow was the imposition of a fine of 300 million gold roubles. It was another example of Lenin's single-minded leadership. If this much had to be sacrificed to safeguard his revolution, then so be it. He may also have had the foresight to know that he would get it back when Germany lost.

Opposition and Civil War

Lenin's activities in 1917–18 were bound to make him enemies. In fact, in August 1918 he was shot three times by a Socialist Revolutionary agent but had a miraculous escape. In December he set up a secret police force called the Cheka to crush his opponents.

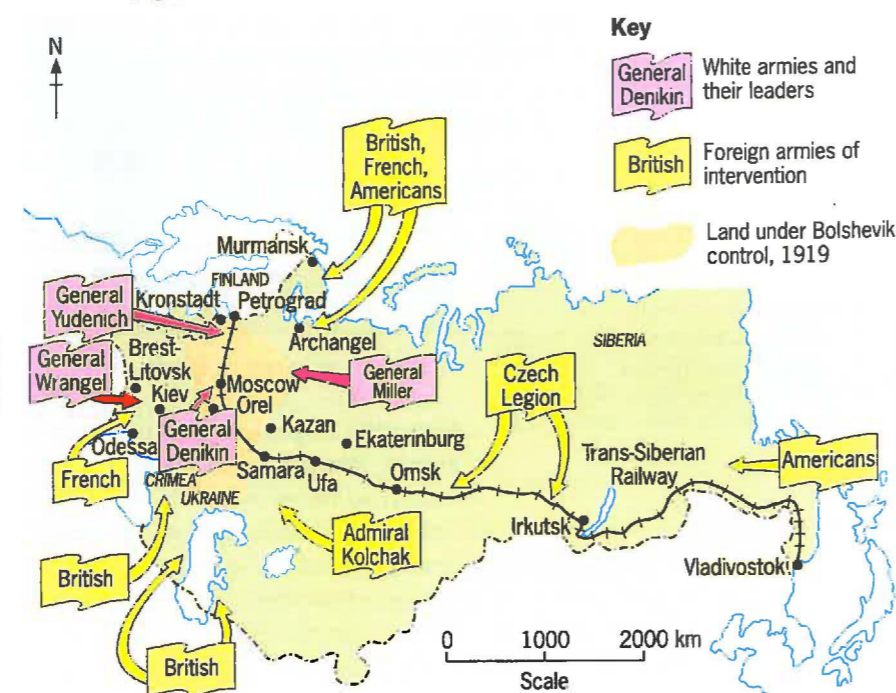
By the end of 1918 an unlikely collection of anti-Bolshevik elements had united in an attempt to crush the Bolsheviks. They became known as the Whites (in contrast to the Bolshevik Reds) and consisted of enemies of the Bolsheviks from inside and outside Russia (see Factfile).

The Bolsheviks' stronghold was in western Russia. Much of the rest of the country was more sympathetic to the Socialist Revolutionary Party.

In March 1918 the Czech Legion seized control of a large section of the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Soon three separate White armies were marching on Bolshevik-controlled western Russia. Generals Yudenich and Denikin marched towards Petrograd and Moscow, while Admiral Kolchak marched on Moscow from central southern Russia.

SOURCE 45



The main developments of the Civil War.

1 Read Source 44. What evidence does it provide of Lenin's

- a) political skill
- b) ruthlessness?

The reaction of the Bolsheviks was ruthless and determined. In an amazingly short time, Leon Trotsky created a new Red Army of over 300,000 men. They were led by former Tsarist officers. Trotsky made sure of their loyalty by holding their families hostage and by appointing political commissars to watch over them. The Cheka (secret police) made sure that nobody in Bolshevik territories co-operated with the Whites. There were many beatings, hangings and shootings of opponents or even suspects in what became known as the Red Terror.

Not even the Tsar escaped. In July 1918, White forces were approaching Ekaterinburg where the Tsar was being held. The Bolshevik commander ordered the execution of the Tsar and his family. Lenin could not risk the Tsar's being rescued and returned as leader of the Whites.

The fighting was savage with both sides committing terrible acts of cruelty. The people who suffered most were the ordinary workers and above all the peasants in the areas where the fighting took place.

SOURCE 46

In the villages the peasant will not give grain to the Bolsheviks because he hates them. Armed companies are sent to take grain from the peasant and every day, all over Russia, fights for grain are fought to a finish.

In the Red Army, for any military offence, there is only one punishment, death. If a regiment retreats against orders, machine guns are turned on them. The position of the bourgeoisie [middle class] defies all description. Payments by the banks have been stopped. It is forbidden to sell furniture. All owners and managers of works, offices and shops have been called up for compulsory labour. In Petrograd hundreds of people are dying from hunger. People are arrested daily and kept in prison for months without trial.

The Red Terror, observed by a British businessman in Russia in 1918.

SOURCE 47



Members of the Red Guard requisition grain from peasants during the Civil War.

SOURCE 48

Having surrounded the village [the Whites] fired a couple of volleys in the direction of the village and everyone took cover. Then the mounted soldiers entered the village, met the Bolshevik committee and put the members to death... After the execution the houses of the culprits were burned and the male population under forty-five whipped... Then the population was ordered to deliver without pay the best cattle, pigs, fowl, forage and bread for the soldiers as well as the best horses.

Diary of Colonel Drozdovsky, from his memoirs written in 1923. He was a White commander during the Civil War.

- 2 Use Sources 46 and 47 to describe how the Civil War affected ordinary people.
- 3 Do you think Source 47 was painted by opponents or supporters of the Bolsheviks?

Through harsh discipline and brilliant leadership, Trotsky's Red Army began to turn back the White forces. Admiral Kolchak's forces were destroyed towards the end of 1919 and at the same time the foreign 'armies of intervention' withdrew. The Whites were not really a strong alliance, and their armies were unable to work together. Trotsky defeated them one by one. The last major White army was defeated in the Crimea in November 1920. Although scattered outbreaks of fighting continued, by 1921 the Bolsheviks were securely in control of Russia.

Why did the Bolsheviks win the Civil War?

The advantages of the Reds

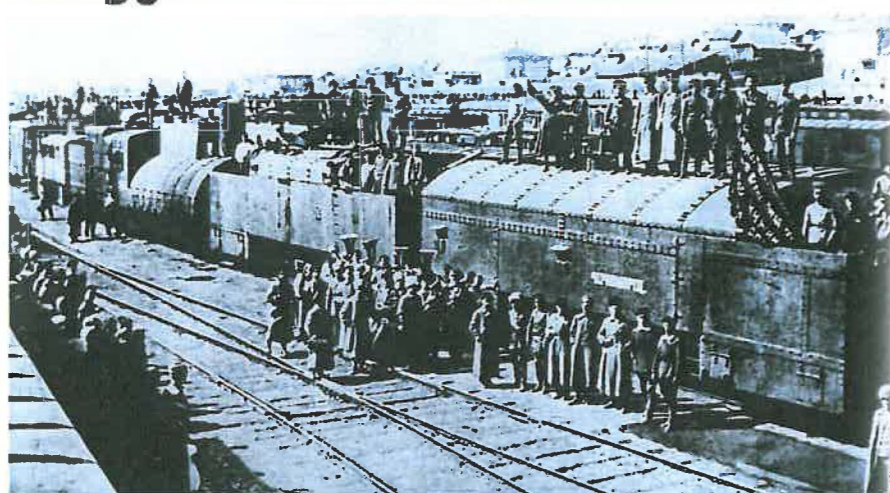
The Red Army was no match for the armies that were still fighting on the Western Front in 1918. However, compared to the Whites, the Red Army was united and disciplined. It was also brilliantly led by Trotsky.

SOURCE 49



Trotsky's war train. For most of the campaign he travelled on an enormous train, giving orders, rallying the troops or transporting essential supplies.

SOURCE 50



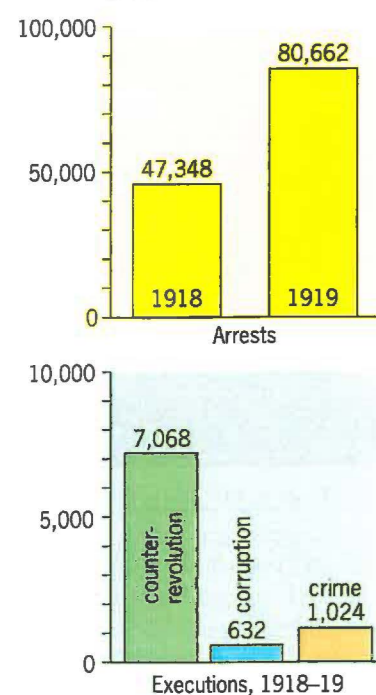
An armoured train in the Civil War. The ability to move troops and supplies securely gave the Bolsheviks a huge advantage.

SOURCE 52

We were constructing an army all over again and under fire at that . . . What was needed for this? It needed good commanders — a few dozen experienced fighters, a dozen or so Communists ready to make any sacrifice; boots for the bare-footed, a bath house, propaganda, food, underwear, tobacco, matches.

Trotsky writing about the making of the Red Army.

SOURCE 51



The Red Terror.

SOURCE 54

For the first time in history the working people have got control of their country. The workers of all countries are striving to achieve this objective. We in Russia have succeeded. We have thrown off the rule of the Tsar, of landlords and of capitalists. But we still have tremendous difficulties to overcome. We cannot build a new society in a day. We ask you, are you going to crush us? To help give Russia back to the landlords, the capitalists and the Tsar?

Red propaganda leaflet, *Why Have You Come to Murmansk?*

SOURCE 53

- 1 Every food requisition detachment is to consist of not less than 75 men and two or three machine guns.
- 2 The food requisition troop detachments shall be deployed in such a manner as to allow two or three detachments to link up quickly.

Instructions to Red Army units for requisitioning grain from the peasants.

The Bolsheviks also kept strict control over their heartlands in western Russia.

- They made sure that the towns and armies were fed, by forcing peasants to hand over food and by rationing supplies.
- They took over the factories of Moscow and Petrograd so that they were able to supply their armies with equipment and ammunition.
- The Red Terror made sure that the population was kept under strict control (see Source 51).
- The Bolsheviks raised fears about the intentions of the foreign armies in league with the Whites (Source 55). Effective propaganda also made good use of atrocities committed by the Whites and raised fears about the possible return of the Tsar and landlords (see Sources 54-57).

SOURCE 55



Bolshevik propaganda cartoon, 1919. The dogs represent the White generals Denikin, Kolchak and Yudenich.

- 1 Look at Source 55. Who is controlling the White forces?
- 2 Who do you think Source 54 is talking to?

Finally, the Reds had important territorial advantages. Their enemies were spread around the edge of Russia while they had internal lines of communication. This enabled them to move troops quickly and effectively by rail, while their enemies used less efficient methods.



A Red Army propaganda train in the early 1920s. This is the cinema carriage. The Red Army spread Communist ideas across Russia.

The disadvantages of the Whites

The Whites, in contrast with the Bolsheviks, were not united. They were made up of many different groups, all with different aims. They were also widely spread so they were unable to co-ordinate their campaigns against the Reds. Trotsky was able to defeat them one by one.

They had limited support from the Russian population. Russian peasants did not especially like the Bolsheviks, but they preferred them to the Whites. If the Whites won, the peasants knew the landlords would return.

Both sides were guilty of atrocities, but the Whites in general caused more suffering to the peasants than the Reds.

SOURCE 57

The Civil War, 1918–1920, was a time of great chaos and estimates of Cheka executions vary from twelve to fifty thousands. But even the highest figure does not compare to the ferocity of the White Terror... for instance, in Finland alone, the number of workers executed by the Whites approaches 100,000.

R Appignanesi, *Lenin for Beginners*, 1977.

Focus Task

Why did the Bolsheviks win the Civil War?

Imagine it is the end of the war and you have been asked to make a poster for the Bolsheviks celebrating the victory and showing the main reasons for success.

Design your poster using the information in the text, then write an explanation of your poster to send to Lenin.

SOURCE 58

The nature of the Bolsheviks' radical economic policies is a matter of controversy. The name usually given them, 'War Communism', is wrong on several counts... the term 'War Communism' was first used – in Lenin's notes – only in 1921. It suggests that the policy was a wartime stopgap... My view is that while the civil war deepened an existing crisis, the economic policies later called War Communism – food detachments, nationalisation of industry, restrictions of trade – had been developing... since the early winter of 1917–1918. There was no 'normal' period followed by a crisis.

Historian Evan Mawdsley's views on War Communism.

SOURCE 59



Bolshevik poster, 1920. The sailor is welcoming the dawn of the revolution. The Kronstadt sailors played a key role in the Bolsheviks' original success in 1917–20.

- 2 Read Source 61. What aspects of War Communism are the sailors most angry about?
- 3 Would you expect peasants in Russia to feel the same?
- 4 Why do you think Lenin was more worried about the revolt of the sailors than about starvation among the peasants?

The New Economic Policy

War Communism

War Communism was the name given to the harsh economic measures the Bolsheviks adopted during the Civil War, although the name is misleading in some ways (see Source 58). It had two main aims. The first aim was to put Communist theories into practice by redistributing (sharing out) wealth among the Russian people. The second aim was to help with the Civil War by keeping the towns and the Red Army supplied with food and weapons.

- All large factories were taken over by the government.
- Production was planned and organised by the government.
- Discipline for workers was strict and strikers could be shot.
- Peasants had to hand over surplus food to the government. If they didn't, they could be shot.
- Food was rationed.
- Free enterprise became illegal – all production and trade was controlled by the state.

War Communism achieved its aim of winning the war, but in doing so it caused terrible hardship. (Some historians believe that Lenin's ruthless determination to create a Communist society actually caused the war in the first place.) Peasants refused to co-operate in producing more food because the government simply took it away. This led to food shortages which, along with the bad weather in 1920 and 1921, caused a terrible famine. Some estimates suggest that 7 million Russian people died in this famine. There were even reports of cannibalism.

SOURCE 60



Children starving during the Russian famine of 1921.

In February 1921 Bolshevik policies sparked a mutiny at Kronstadt naval base.

SOURCE 61

After carrying out the October Revolution, the working classes hoped for freedom. But the result has been greater slavery. The bayonets, bullets and harsh commands of the Cheka – these are what the working man of Soviet Russia has won. The glorious emblem of the workers' state – the hammer and sickle – has been replaced by the Communist authorities with the bayonet and the barred window. Here in Kronstadt we are making a third revolution which will free the workers and the Soviets from the Communists.

Official statement from the Kronstadt sailors.

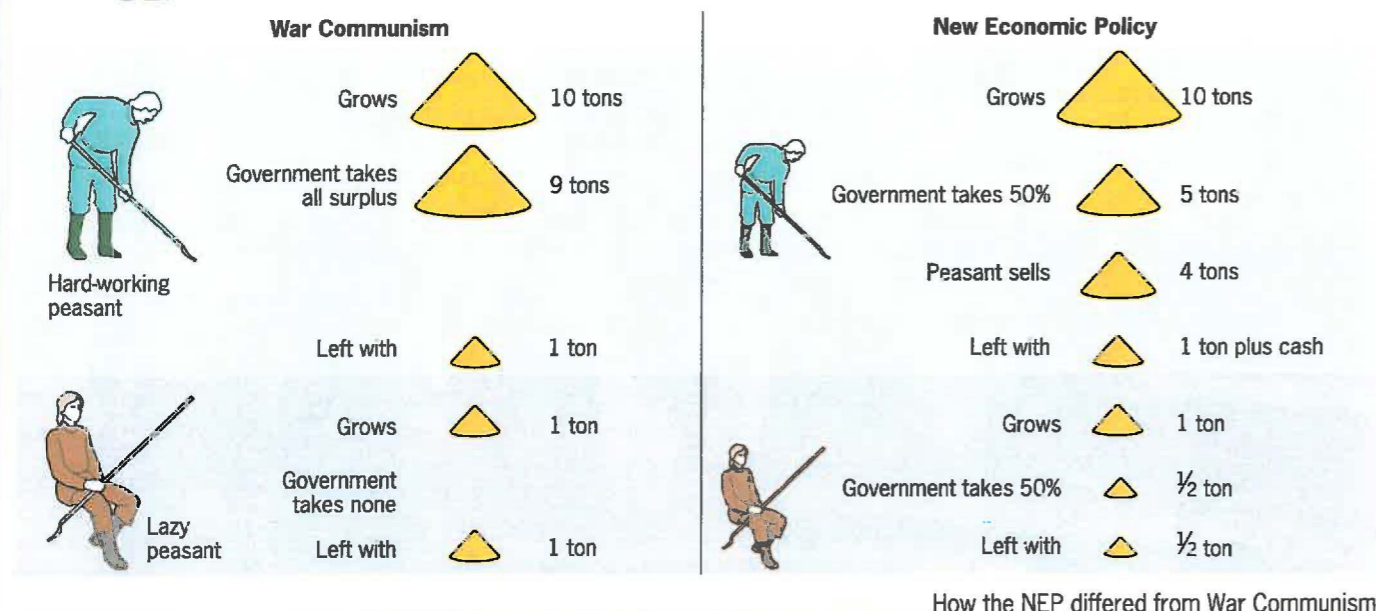
Trotsky's troops put down the uprising, but soon afterwards Lenin abandoned the emergency policies of War Communism. Considering the chaos of the Civil War years, it may seem strange that this particular revolt had such a startling effect on Lenin. It did so because the Kronstadt sailors had been among the strongest supporters of Lenin and Bolshevism.

1 'Most Russians saw the Bolsheviks as the lesser of two evils.' With reference to Sources 46, 48, 54 and 57 explain whether you agree with this statement or not.

The New Economic Policy

Many thousands of the Kronstadt sailors were killed. The mutiny was crushed. But Lenin recognised that changes were necessary. In March 1921, at the Party Congress, Lenin announced some startling new policies which he called the New Economic Policy (NEP). The NEP effectively brought back capitalism for some sections of Russian society. Peasants were allowed to sell surplus grain for profit and would pay tax on what they produced rather than giving some of it up to the government.

SOURCE 62



SOURCE 63

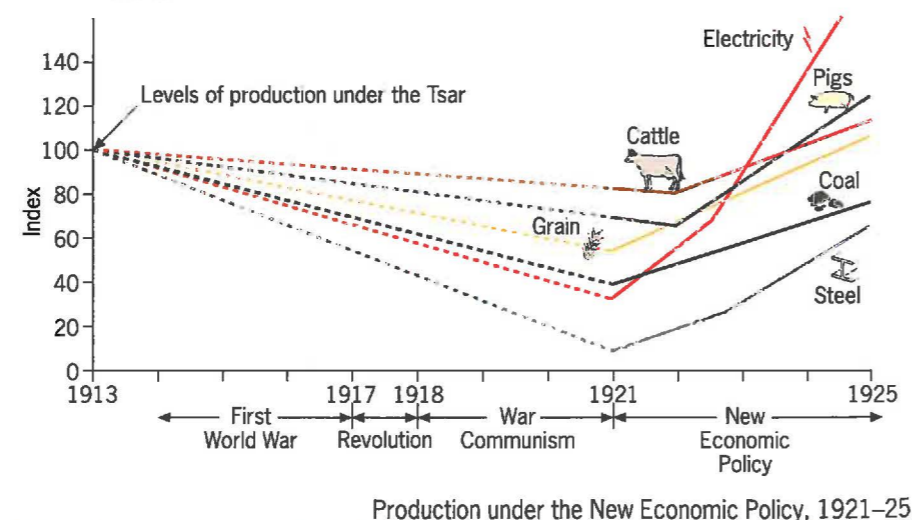
Our poverty and ruin are so great that we cannot at one stroke restore large-scale socialist production... we must try to satisfy the demands of the peasants who are dissatisfied, discontented and cannot be otherwise... there must be a certain amount of freedom to trade, freedom for the small private owner. We are now retreating, but we are doing this so as to then run and leap forward more vigorously.

Lenin, introducing the NEP at the Party Congress, 1921.

In the towns, small factories were handed back into private ownership and private trading of small goods was allowed.

Lenin made it clear that the NEP was temporary and that the vital heavy industries (coal, oil, iron and steel) would remain in state hands. Nevertheless, many Bolsheviks were horrified when the NEP was announced, seeing it as a betrayal of Communism. As always, Lenin won the argument and the NEP went into operation from 1921 onwards. By 1925 there seemed to be strong evidence that it was working, as food production in particular rose steeply. However, as Source 66 suggests, increases in production did not necessarily improve the situation of industrial workers.

SOURCE 64



- 1 Does the evidence of Source 64 prove that the NEP was a success? Explain your answer with reference to Sources 63, 65 and 66.
- 2 From all you have found out about Lenin, do you agree with Source 68? (Don't forget to look at Source 67.)

SOURCE 65

Poor, starving old Russia, Russia of primitive lighting and the meal of a crust of black bread, is going to be covered by a network of electric power stations. The NEP will transform the Russian economy and rebuild a broken nation. The future is endless and beautiful.

Bukharin, speaking in 1922. He was a leading Bolshevik and a strong supporter of the NEP.

SOURCE 66

In 1925 the Soviet Commissar for Finance admitted that the pay of miners, metal workers and engine drivers was still lower than it had been before 1914. This in turn meant that workers' housing and food were poor. The factory committee of a cement works in Smolensk reported, for example, in 1929: 'Every day there are many complaints about apartments: many workers have families of six and seven people, and live in one room.'

Some problems identified by Soviet observers in the 1920s.

The death of Lenin and the creation of the USSR

Lenin did not live to see the recovery of the Russian economy. He suffered several strokes in 1922 and 1923 which left him paralysed and which led to his death in January 1924. He was a remarkable man by any standards. He led Russia through revolution and civil war and even in 1923 he supervised the drawing up of a new constitution that turned the Russian Empire into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Source 68 gives the opinion of a British historian.

SOURCE 68

Lenin did more than any other political leader to change the face of the twentieth-century world. The creation of Soviet Russia and its survival were due to him. He was a very great man and even, despite his faults, a very good man.

The British historian AJP Taylor writing in the 1960s.

We will never know what policies Lenin would have pursued if he had lived longer — he certainly left no clear plans about how long he wanted the NEP to last. He also left another big unanswered question behind him: who was to be the next leader of the USSR?

Focus Task

How did the Bolsheviks consolidate their rule?

It is January 1924. Lenin is dead. Your task is to look back at the measures he used to consolidate Bolshevik rule.

- 1 Draw a timeline from 1917 to 1924, and mark on it the events of that period mentioned in the text.
- 2 Mark on the timeline
 - a) one moment at which you think Bolshevik rule was most threatened
 - b) one moment at which you think it was most secure.
- 3 Write an explanation of how the Bolsheviks made their rule more secure. Mention the following:
 - ♦ the power of the Red Army
 - ♦ treatment of opposition
 - ♦ War Communism
 - ♦ the New Economic Policy
 - ♦ the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk
 - ♦ the victory in the Civil War
 - ♦ the promise of a new society
 - ♦ propaganda.
- 4 Is any one of these factors more important than any of the others? Explain your answer.

SOURCE 67

Lenin had a strong streak of ruthlessness and cruelty. In the late 1980s and 1990s, Soviet archives were opened up as the Communist regime came to an end. These revealed a much harder, more ruthless Lenin than the 'softer' image he had enjoyed amongst left-wing historians and groups. For instance, a memorandum, first published in 1990, reveals his ordering the extermination of the clergy in a place called Shuya after people there fought off officials who had come to raid the church. The Politburo voted to stop further raids on churches but Lenin countermanded them. Similarly, he was vitriolic about the peasants, ordering the hanging of hundreds of kulaks as a lesson to others.

Lenin believed that revolutionaries had to be hard to carry out their role, which would inevitably involve spilling the blood of their opponents. Although hard and tough on others, it seems that Lenin was not personally brave. He was not a revolutionary who rushed to the barricades. He left the fighting to others. According to Valentinov, a revolutionary who knew him well, Lenin's rule was to 'get away while the going was good'.

An extract from *Communist Russia under Lenin and Stalin*. This was an A level History textbook published in 2002.