**Make sure that you incorporate your notes into this document as you revise.**

**A. CONSOLIDATION OF POWER AND CIVIL WAR**

**Key dates:**  
  
**1917**  
November 6 and 7, the Bolsheviks seize power  
December 15, Temporary armistice with Germany  
December, White armies begin to form in the Ukraine, beginning of the civil war  
**1918**  
January 18, Constituent Assembly convenes, and is forcibly broken up by the Bolsheviks  
March 3, Treaty of Brest-Litovsk signed with Germany, ending Russia’s involvement in the First World War March 13, Trotsky appointed People´s Commissar for War, takes charge of the Red Army  
**1920**  
April 26, Poland invades Russia  
June, Poles driven back to Warsaw by Red Army  
November, Evacuation of the last White forces across the Black Sea  
**1921**  
Famine in Russia, nearly 5,000 000 die  
March, Military uprising on Kronstadt Island  
March 8, Tenth Party Congress in Moscow, Lenin announces New Economic Policy

**What main problems were the Bolsheviks facing in October 1917?**  
  
1. Opposition – the Whites  
2. The problem of the land issue  
3. The vastness of the territory to be governed  
4. The complexity of the economic issues  
  
  
**How did Lenin deal with these problems to keep control of the state?**  
  
Opened talks for an armistice with the German government. Lenin withdrew Russia from the War by signing the humiliating yet critical Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, in order to consolidate power.   
  
At first, Lenin expressed support for the Constituent Assembly. The Bolsheviks won 168 out of 703 seats, yet Lenin had no interest of sharing power. In January of 1918, Bolsheviks sent armed sailors to break it up. Democratic rule was thus displaced in favour of "Party rule", *[NB. Marxist-Leninist conception of democracy]* which became official in March 1918 when the Bolsheviks renamed themselves the Communist Party, a title under which they would govern Russia for seventy years.  
  
In the dark years of civil war, Marxism's doctrine of "class warfare," heretofore purely theoretical, took on a terrible reality, as the revolutionary forces carried out atrocities exceeding even the worst of the Tsars' oppressions.  
Meanwhile, the economic policies pursued by Lenin, which sought to create a Communist economy immediately through massive seizures of food and supplies from the peasantry, exacerbated the suffering, and eventually led to the terrible famine of 1921, in which nearly five million people died. Only then did the government finally restore a limited market economy to the countryside, calling it the New Economic Policy (N.E.P.).  
  
**Which groups opposed Lenin in the civil war? What were the various aims of these 'Whites'?**  
  
Opposition from non-Marxists   
The Whites - Although they maintained various loyalties – some pledged devotion to Nicholas II (now a prisoner of the Communists), some to Kerensky's government, some to their own generals–the Whites were united in their opposition to the Bolsheviks White armies converged on Moscow and Petrograd, but the various White leaders failed to work together, and they were up against Leon Trotsky, whom Lenin appointed "People's Commissar for War" in March 1918, and who essentially created the Red Army out of the skeleton of the old imperial forces. Despite massive desertions, by 1919 Lenin had created a fighting force of 3 million men, an army larger than anything his enemies could put on the field.   
  
Opposition from the Marxists   
Menshevik opposition to Leninism and Bolshevism was essentially based on what they saw as his authoritarian nature and methods for achieving a Marxist state.   
  
Additionally, thousands were massacred for opposing the Bolsheviks, thousands more for simply belonging to the wrong class–for being "kulaks," or wealthy peasants, a group that Lenin repeatedly compared to vermin and "bloodsuckers".   
  
**What factors explain the Bolshevik victory in the Civil War? Focus especially on the role of Trotsky**  
  
  
**Factors for victory**  
One asset to Lenin and the Bolshevik victory was that the party had a secret police unit (called the Cheka, which was to change its title to the NKVD) which was ruthless in hunting out possible opponents to Lenin. In many areas of Russia, where the Bolsheviks had control, the NKVD was judge, jury and executioner.  
Yet a reason for their win was that the Whites were made up of many groups – groups that hated each other as much as they hated the Reds. With no cohesiveness to them, the Whites were on the whole a hopelessly uncoordinated group that fell out with each other. The fact that so many groups existed, meant that no one person could be appointed to act as their sole commander. With no unified leadership, the Whites were weakened.  
Finally, after success against forces in Russia, Trotsky faced a challenge from Poland. Granted her independence in 1918, Poland invaded the Ukraine in 1920. However, the Polish army was not able to defeat Trotsky’s Red Army and it broke through the Poles lines and advanced on Warsaw. Jozef Pilsudski, Poland’s commander-in-chief led a counter-attack against the Red Army, Lenin had decided to cut his losses and agreed to the Treaty of Riga on March 18th 1921. As a result of this treaty, about 10 million Ukrainians and White Russians were put under Polish rule. The Treaty of Riga brought to an end the Russian Civil War. Within Russia, the Communist government under Lenin was now secure.

**Trotsky**  
Much credit must go to Trotsky who, despite the criticism aimed at him over the Czech Legion issue, was a brilliant War Commissar. Untrained in military matters, Trotsky seemed to be a natural leader of men. His beliefs were simple. If a Red commander was successful in combat, they were promoted. If a commander failed and survived, he paid the price. Trotsky was willing to use ex-tsarist officers as he knew that they had the military experience the Red Army lacked. In other words, Trotsky kept the spirit of the army up with his presence; he was a motivation to the soldiers.  
Trotsky also knew that the first time the Red Army lost a major battle it would spell the end of the revolution and all that the Bolsheviks had fought for. He visited the Red Army at the front in his legendary armoured train to instil into them this very simple fact.  
  
**What were the main effects of the Bolshevik victory? What position was Lenin in by 1921?**  
The Communists continued to channel funds abroad to ferment rebellions in the capitalist countries, sending vast sums to Western Europe even as their own people starved, but German authorities had put down Marxist uprisings there, and for now, at least, it seemed that Russia would have to build utopia on its own. To this end, Lenin and his circle of advisers–his political bureau, or Politburo–began to organize their territory into what came to be called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or U.S.S.R. In theory, this was to be a federation of independent nationalities, to be joined by other "soviet republics" as revolution spread around the world. In practice, however, it was a reconstruction of the old Russian Empire–now simply under the auspices of the Communist Party.  
At the Eleventh Party Congress, held April 1922, Lenin expanded his Politburo to include seven members, most of whom would play key roles after Lenin's death. They included: Trotsky, the hero of the civil war, and Lenin's own favorite; Stalin, recently elected as General Secretary of the Party; two close friends of Lenin, Kamenev and Zinoviev; and three others, Nikolai Bukharin, Alexei Rykov, and Mikhail Tomsky. The rivalries among these men took on a sudden importance when, on May 25, 1922, Lenin suffered his first stroke. His health had been poor for some time, and throughout 1921 he had complained of tiredness, taking long holidays at his home near the town of Gorki, southwest of Moscow. With this stroke, however, he began a precipitous decline that would lead to his death within two years.

**B. LENIN’S POLICIES IN POWER**

**What were Lenin's aims and ideology? What did he hope to achieve?**

* Lenin wanted to seize power to establish a "dictatorship of the proletariat" to achieve Communism.
* Spread socialist consciousness among the workers.
* Destroy and crush all non-socialist idea, especially bourgeois ideas.
* Spread a Communist revolution around the world!

However, when first gaining power Lenin realised the importance of first securing his rule, before moving towards a socialist state, in order to give the communists the best chance of winning a civil war.

**What were his chief policies enacted to try and realise these aims?**

**Short term:**  
Lenin could not afford to deny the demands of the workers and soldiers that had led to the failure of Tsardom as well as the Provisional Government - he gave the people what they wanted in order to secure support for his new government:

* **Land Reform**- Gave the peasants the right to **take over the estates of the gentry**, without compensation to the landlords – this was against the Bolshevik ideology of collectivisation and spurred on the "kulak problem" that Stalin was later to be faced with.
* **Workers' control decree-** gave the workers the **right to control production and finance** and **supervise management**. This was neither in line with Bolshevik ideology and nationalisation of industry. Furthermore, the production sharply fell as the management could not be handled.
* **Rights of the people of Russia decree**- Gave the **right to self-determination to national minorities** in the former Russian empire. However, it is important to keep in mind that Lenin did not have control over these vast areas anyways!

- All of the decrees above went against Lenin's longer-term aims of Bolshevik ideology however through this he did manage to achieve his short term aims of securing power and stabilising the regime in order to prepare for the coming Civil War. As historian **Edward Acton** states; "*No Russian government had ever been more responsive to pressure from below or less able to impose its will upon society*". 

* **Dealing with opposition**- One of the first measures enacted by Lenin was **closing down opposition press**. The Bolsheviks themselves who had pumped enormous amounts of money into their own newspaper in 1917 knew the harm that it could cause them. Closed down opposition parties, starting with the Kadets who had done fairly well in elections for the Constituent Assembly, and by **May 1918 all other parties had been banned.**

**Longer term:**

* **War Communism-** helped Lenin achieve his aims of **controlling Russia** and **move towards a more socialist state**. The industry was nationalised, grain requisitioning from the peasants to be able to fight the civil war, banning of private trade, labour discipline and the **Red Terror**. All helped Lenin and the Bolsheviks win the Civil War and so securing their power as well as carry out Bolshevik ideology.
* **CHEKA**- Secret police to **crush opposition** and also created concentration camps- machinery of terror! Particularly active on the countryside through grain requisitioning, thousands of peasants arrested and Cheka was "at war with the peasants". 1918-1920, **300,000 people killed by the Cheka**! This helped Lenin **centralise the power** and was also an aspect of war communism as grain requisitioning is in large parts what made the Bolsheviks able to win the Civil War.
* **Class Warfare**- Lenin encouraged class warfare as a way to **intimidate the middle class into submission**. The legal system was replaced with "**revolutionary justice";** random, class persecution. This was one of the most "authoritating" aspects of Lenin's reign however it was part of his plan to make the society more **egalitarian**- the wish to end privilege and introduce fairer society- i.e. scrapping of noble titles. In this sense class warfare was definitely a tool to carry out Bolshevik ideology.

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**What methods did he use to stay in power and maintain control of the country after 1917?** **Which of these was most effective and why?**

* **War Communism:** Made Lenin able to win the civil war and secure his power. It is therefore very possible to argue that Lenin's rise to power was not complete until after the civil war when he had full control over the country.
* **NEP**- The impact on the Russian people after war Communism left the peasants starving due to grain requisitioning and horrible working conditions for the workers. After the **Kronstadt Revolt** in March 1921; "*The flash that lit up reality better than anything else*", Lenin realised the society needed to be stabilized and introduced the New Economic Policy.

- Successes: Stabilized the Russian economy and by 1922 there was brisk trade in the markets and the industrial production made a rapid recovery- factory output rose by almost 200% from 1920-23. The peasants did well- great deal of trade between the villages and this greatly reduced opposition from the countryside. Many western countries also saw this as a step back from Communism and started to invest money in Russia- lifted the economy even further.  
- Failures: It was a huge step back from Bolshevik ideology and went back to capitalism instead of forward to socialism. The development of Nepmen- private traders- who handled as much as 3/4 of the retail trade.

Overall the NEP was a great step back from Lenin's ideologies and therefore prevented his long-term aims of a socialist society. But on the other hand it did fulfil his shorter term aims by securing the regime from the widespread opposition that arose during War Communism. Furthermore, no political changes were made, only economical, and therefore it can be seen as a big short-term success for Lenin and the party. As Bukharin stated; "economic concessions to avoid political concessions".

**Which of his aims did Lenin achieve in any degree? What were his key successes?**

* Lenin managed to achieve his aims in securing power over Russia and established a single-party state.
* He managed to crush opposition and through the Civil War secured his position as the leader of Russia and could therefore start to move towards a socialist society.
* Through class warfare, Lenin also achieved his aims in crushing all (most) socialist ideas!

**Which of these aims were not achieved, or only to a small degree? What were his key failures?**

* Lenin failed with his overriding aim of establishing a socialist society and by the time of his death, the government was in no way near possible to let the state wither away".
* Lenin also greatly failed by achieving a world-wide socialist revolution as this never happened, and by the time of Stalin's rule, the hope of this has greatly diminished.