

AOS 2 – CONSEQUENCES OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

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CIVIL WAR: 1917-22

- Describes the situation when competing groups within the same nation attempt to establish control by force
- Participants:
 - Reds – Bolsheviks
 - Greens – nationalist forces (often peasants) who wanted to be free of the Russian state
 - Whites – anti-Bolshevik forces: defined simply by their goal of overthrowing the Bolsheviks. Not a single group or united force which ultimately causes their defeat.
- Lenin believed that the revolution might not go on to cause international revolution unless it prompted a serious civil war
- Lenin's decision to create a single-party state inevitably caused the other socialists to oppose him

WHY WAS THERE OPPOSITION TOWARDS THE BOLSHEVIKS?

- Liberal Kadets objected patriotically to the Treaty of Brest Litovsk and wanted to continue war
- Czech legion wanted to leave Russia to continue fighting the Germans
- Members of the Russian Orthodox Church were convinced that the Bolsheviks would destroy religion
- All landowners had strong economic motives of wanting to reverse property seizures by defeating the Bolsheviks
- Hijack food supplies in the rising severity of the famine
- Many tsarist officers who had witnessed the Russian front collapse wanted to fight the Bolsheviks

WHY DID THE BOLSHEVIKS ACCEPT CIVIL WAR?

- Civil war was necessary to the development of a world revolution
- Bolsheviks would struggle to win over the rest of Russia after October 1917 – needed military victory to consolidate their hold on Russia
- Had no choice in facing insurmountable opposition
 - Whites included both counter revolutionaries (tsarist officials, generals and landowners), middle class liberals (Kadets) and revolutionary parties (Essars and the Mensheviks)
 - All of whom agreed on opposing the Bolsheviks as a single-party state
 - In conjunction with the foreign troops and funding from Britain, America and Japan
 - Created a broad spectrum of opposition which surrounded Bolshevik Russia and provided credible threat that might have crushed the revolution altogether

GROUP	DESCRIPTION
WHITES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Bolshevik generals and their supporters • 1919: Generals waged particularly dangerous campaigns with the goal of capturing Moscow and deposing Bolsheviks • General Denikin: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commanded White troops on the south ○ Controlled Volunteer Army ○ Lost support because they carried out many pogroms which killed 50,000 to 100,000 Jews ○ June 1919: Turned back while attacking towards Moscow • General Yudenich: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Army of 20,000 – Estonia ○ Would have conquered Petrograd if he had accepted Finland' independence as they would have provided him with over 100,000 Finnish troops ○ Quickly beaten back by Red reinforcements which arrived by train • General Kolchak: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Late 1918: Declared himself the "Supreme Ruler of Russia" ○ November 1919: Forces turned back by the Reds in the Urals
GREENS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consisted of peasant partisan groups who supported neither the Reds or the Whites • Very strong force – lots of peasants and united in their cause as opposed to Whites • Fighting for national independence
REDS (Red Army)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used methods to enlarge the army: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conscripted of peasants ○ Captured soldiers given the choice of either execution or serving in the Red Army

HOW DID THE BOLSHEVIKS SUCCEED IN CIVIL WAR?

- Able to create a large force (Red Army) through conscription of peasants and giving captured soldiers the ultimatum of either death via execution or conscription in the Red Army
- Trotsky led the Reds to victory through implementation of various strategies
 - Defended the railway lines to assure communication and supplies
 - Prevent gathering of large white forces in one place
 - Disrupted supply lines of the White Armies
- In control of the centre of Russia (Moscow and Petrograd) – centre of railway network to aid material and troop transportation
- Had the industry to produce munitions
- Utilised propaganda
- High morale – sustained a driving sense of purpose

WHY WERE THE WHITES DEFEATED?

- On the periphery of Russia so lacked soldiers, land, factories and transport network
- Scattered into many different forces with different aims and beliefs – weren't organised
- Failed to realise the peasant revolution
- Lacked leaders who were dedicated and has stereotypical Tsarist leaders who held onto power and believed in tradition and oppression

WAR AGAINST POLAND

- Failure of foreign interventions encouraged the Bolsheviks to undertake what proved to be a disastrous attempt to expand their authority outside Russia
- 1920: Red Army marched into Poland in hope that Polish workers would rise in rebellion against their own government
- However saw the invasion as a traditional Russian aggression and drove Red Army back across the border
- Soviet morale severely damaged, forcing Lenin and the Bolsheviks to rethink the whole idea of international revolution

TREATY OF RIGA

- 18th March 1921
- As a result of the armistice, the Communists had to negotiate a peace settlement with Poland
 - Had to agree to reparations of 39,000,000 roubles
 - Give up substantial territory in Belorussia
- Poland war suggested that attempts to cause revolution in Europe would just arouse similar patriotic self-defence
- Soviet Russia abandoned the key theoretical belief in world revolution and embarked on a policy peaceful co-existence with Europe

THE TERROR

- Was it a temporary response to a desperate situation of Civil war or was it an expression of Russian Communism's (Marxist/Leninism) true character?
- The Cheka:
 - Created 20 December 1917 – under direction of Felix Dzerzhinsky
 - Had a remorseless attitude
 - Expression of Bolshevik ruthlessness
 - Answerable only to Lenin
 - Granted unlimited powers of arrest, detention and torture
 - Terrorised the Russian people into subservience and conformity
 - Carried out almost 8500 summary executions in the first year of the Terror – ten times this were arrested, sent to prisons and labour camps
 - Murdered the Romanovs
 - July 1918
 - Lenin's personal order
 - All pretence of legality was abandoned and basic rules of proof of guilt no longer applied
 - Persecution because directed against whole classes, not just individuals
- The Red Army:
 - Allowed for the Reds triumph in the Civil war
 - Also became the means by which the Bolsheviks imposed their authority on the population at large
 - Death sentence was imposed for desertion or disloyalty within the army

- Trotsky enforced conscription in response to the Civil War's increasing demand for manpower
- Used the slogan "Everything for the Front" to justify the severity of the Red Army's measures

Historians Interpretations/Contemporary Views

Why the Whites were defeated:

- "reason for their ultimate defeat" – Figes (not recognising peasant revolution)
- "signaled a trying to restore the old regime" - Figes

Greens:

- "far more dangerous" than the generals put together – Lenin

Treaty of Riga:

- "Soviet leaders abandoned the cause of international revolution" – AJP Taylor
- "made the Bolsheviks give up their fantasies of a European revolution" - Figes

Justification of the Terror:

- "Coercion is necessary for the transition from capitalism to socialism" – Lenin

CHEKA:

- "demand the use of the revolutionary sword... put an end to all counter-revolutionaries" – Dzerzhinsky
- "exterminating the enemies of the working class" was the only way to save the proletarian revolution – Dzerzhinsky
- "organ of terror" - Fitzpatrick

Civil War:

- Wanted a Civil War and did everything in their power to promote it" – Pipes (Bolsheviks)
- "suffered at the hands of the revolution" – Figes (Whites)
- "needed a military force to defend themselves from the anticipated capitalist crusade" – Pipes (Red Army/Bolsheviks)
- "Communist reversed the slogans of the revolution" – Hosking (creation of the Red Army)

WAR COMMUNISM (May 1918-March 1921)

- Capitalism – making money, private ownership of land
- Socialism – money irrelevant
- Abandoned more cautious idea of state capitalism and adopted the idea of centralised economic control enforced by coercion
- Used as both an economic campaign as a result of the Civil War but also utilised to enforce Bolshevik authority and place Communist ideals firmly in the heart of Russia
- Policy was a disaster – Bolsheviks failed to recognise stubborn mindset of the 90 million peasants they barely knew

EFFECT OF CIVIL WAR

- Food shortages
 - By April 1918: 70 roubles for pork
 - Less than 50 grams of bread rations per day in Petrograd by February 1918



- Average worker consumed less than 2,000 calories per day
- Treaty of Brest-Litovsk had ceded the vast wheat-growing areas of the Ukraine to Germany, causing serious food shortages in Russia
- Drop in wages
 - Workers' wages in 1918 were 34% of that in 1913
 - Hyperinflation
 - Peasants didn't want to sell grain for paper money which was worthless
- Loss of population
 - Petrograd loses $\frac{3}{4}$ of its population between 1918-20 to places closer to food (ie. Countryside)
- Severe industrial disruption
 - War caused shortages of the raw materials needed for manufacturing
- Rapid decline in the economy

FEATURES OF WAR COMMUNISM

- Requisitioning
 - Government used coercion to secure grain supplies from peasant to the towns
 - Condemned them as counter-revolutionaries
 - Satisfied the urgent need for food
 - Theoretically was meant to calculate the amount of grain the peasants needed and take anything beyond this amount
 - In practice, requisitioning yielded disappointing amounts of grain
 - Peasants resisted requisitioning – adjusted their production down to subsistence levels
 - Bolsheviks still had not understood the peasant mentality and blamed shortages on 'food hoarding'
- Elimination of money economy
 - Issued ration cards which entitled workers to collect a certain quantity of food and goods per weeks
 - Highest entitlement = workers
 - Lowest entitlement – bourgeoisie
 - Industrial workers received three times as much food as middle-class professionals
- Nationalisation
 - Government takes over private property and makes them the property of the state
- Factory discipline
 - Workers fined for being late
 - Workers had to have passports – make it difficult to go back to their villages
- All capitalism (private trading) was declared illegal

IMPACT OF WAR COMMUNISM

- Famine of 1921
 - Killed 50% of the 10 million people who died in the Civil War
 - Created by requisitioning, drought and general disruption of war
 - Had to accept foreign assistance
 - American Relief Agency probably fed 11 million people during the famine
 - Lenin resented having to accept this
- Damaged industrial and food production
 - Workers left the cities looking for food

- Workers starting to use factories to make items they could take to villages to barter for food instead of producing important goods
- Agricultural output fell to 60% of pre-revolution levels
- Industrial output fell to 14% of pre-revolution levels
- Attack on kulaks further disrupted agricultural production
- Workers only getting 10% of what people got in Britain during WW1
- Soldiers benefitted
 - Guaranteed food and shelter
 - Joining the army became attractive due to the famine of 1920
- Rise of the Black market
 - People illegally sold desired goods for imperial roubles – peasants sold grain
- Peasant uprisings
 - Tambov rebellion
 - Famine crisis
 - Grain requisitioning
 - Army numbered up to 70,000 in February 1921
 - June 1921, Bolsheviks sent 100,000 troops to quell the rebellions
 - Over 240,000 deaths from these events
- Widespread urban strikes and protests
- Showed clear benefits in sustaining the Reds in Civil War
 - Acquired enough food to keep the red army provisioned while it fought
- Left the Russian economy in a state of crisis by 1921

Historians Interpretations/Contemporary Views

- “necessitated by the exceptionally difficult conditions of national defence” – CPSU
- “economy in a state of near collapse” – Fitzpatrick
- “emergency measures to cope with the food crisis” – Fitzpatrick
- “wildly impractical and utopian streak” – Fitzpatrick
- “rapidly as possible to construct a Communist society” – Pipes
- “disastrous consequences” – Pipes
- “not very successful by most standards” – Service

Contention: War Communism was introduced in response to the needs of the Civil War, but used this as an opportunity to also build a socialist society and entrench Communist ideology in the heart of Russia. It was intended to work as both an economic campaign to produce goods for a military victory and a political campaign of terror to enforce Bolshevik authority in regions where it was being challenged.

- Supplied the towns and armies with just enough food and supplies to keep fighting
- Measure of desperate compromises in response to an emergency
- Destroyed Russia's economy
- Figs suggests that war communism was in place over a year after the emergency of the Civil War

- Fact that it was backed by violence illustrates the authoritarian ideology at the heart of Leninism Communism

NEW DECREES

- 116 decrees were issued in the first few months of the Bolsheviks consolidation of power
- Decree on Land
 - “private ownership of land shall be abolished forever”
 - Calculated to get the support of the peasants
- Decree of Workers’ Control
 - Authorising what had already occurred
 - Accepted the workers’ takeover of factories but instructed that the workers committees maintain “the strictest order and discipline”
- Old justice system scrapped
 - Replaced by a People’s Court where revolutionary justice was dispensed by elected judges with no formal training
- Gregorian calendar was adopted, replacing the Julian system (February 1st 1918)

DISSOLUTION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY (January 1918)

- The Provisional Government had already set the elections for 25 November 1917
- Lenin did not accept this
- Bolsheviks would not in government by increasing numerical support but simply by seizing power and holding onto it
- In the event, 370 deputies were SRs and only 175 were Bolsheviks – the Bolsheviks only had 25% of the seats
- Power by votes simply not an option – power by force was eminently possible
- Constituent Assembly met for just one day – Lenin ordered it to be dissolved at gunpoint by the Red Guards

Historians Interpretations/Contemporary Views

- “signaled that they were ready to wage war in defence of their regime” – Smith

CREATION OF THE SOVNARKOM

- Lenin was head of government and Trotsky was initially the Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Body was all Bolsheviks
- Social Revolutionaries stayed out of power

- Immediately faced opposition from old administration

LAND REDISTRIBUTION

- Peasants in rural areas began to seize land
- Bolshevik Decree on Land let them seize it all
 - “Private ownership of land is abolished forever”
- Decree left in place despite the Bolsheviks secretly not agreeing with it to give the peasants the impression that the Bolsheviks supported them

TREATY OF BREST-LITOVSK (signed 3 March 1918)

- One of the first problems of the creation of the new society was the expectation of worldwide revolution
 - This did not occur
 - Thought that it would spark off worker revolutions across the world creating friendly governments and effectively stopping the war
 - This did not happen – Russia still faced Germany's powerful army
- Lenin was keen to end the war immediately at any cost
- Lenin was strategically advised that Russia could not keep fighting in the war – it was better to make peace and hope that when Germany was defeated by the Western allies Russia could get back the territory occupied by Germany
- Trotsky tried a different policy – ‘no peace, no war’ wanting to drag on peace talks until German armies at the front collapsed and world revolution started to occur
- Lenin overrode Trotsky and agreed to a devastating peace treaty at the meeting between the Germans at the Polish town of Brest-Litovsk
- Russia lost
 - 1/3 of its surface area
 - 27% of its crop lands
 - Ukraine (main source of grain)
 - 26% of railways
- Lenin's final victory was good luck and good planning
 - It was a gamble – German war effort crumbled and German forces left most of Russia
 - Lenin used this as an opportunity to end collaboration with the Left Social Revolutionaries expelling them from government and declaring them outlawed
 - Reputation as a wise and eminent leader grew

Historians Interpretations/Contemporary Views

- “plunged the country deeper and deeper into Civil War” - Figes

STATE CAPITALISM

- Lenin announced there would be a period of state capitalism – it was a temporary and a compromise measure
- Would have to pay ‘bourgeois specialists’ to continue to use their skills to run the economy

- Recognition that the Bolsheviks had come to power much sooner than expected – did not have any plans in mind to run the economy

KRONSTADT REVOLT

- Uprising against the Bolshevik regime
- During winter of 1920-21, Russian economy was again in deep crisis
 - Shortages of food and fuel
 - Factories closing – further unemployment
 - Starving workers
 - Daily ration of bread in Moscow and Petrograd cut by another 30% in February 1921
 - Trotsky restoring tough discipline in factories – resented for this
 - Mass strikes – brutally suppressed under martial law
 - Peasant rebellions
 - Refusing to plant new crops and reducing food production by 30% from 1913 levels
- Workers' movement had strong links with the radical sailors
- Garrison numbered up to 20,000 sailors who could easily march on Petrograd
 - Whilst previously being the most loyal supporters of both revolutions, the sailors now decided to take up the cause of labour
 - Angry sailors adopted the slogan “All power to the Soviets and not to the parties”
 - 27-28 February 1921 sailors met illegally on a battleship and formed a Provisional Revolutionary Committee
 - They hoped their rebellion may inspire others to rise against Sovnarkom
 - Called a mass rally 1 March 1921, 8 March published document ‘What we are Fighting For’ outlining their criticism of the Bolshevik party
 - Demanded the following:
 - Return to a multi-party soviet government
 - Freedom of expression
 - Freedom to organise for trade unions
 - Release of prisoners
 - End of grain requisition
 - Right of peasants to hold land
 - End of a single-party state
 - Remove crushing restrictions imposed on labour
 - Mutineers worked feverishly to build their own democratic model of government
- Government's response:
 1. Diplomatic – sent political commissars to Kronstadt to talk with rebels (little success)
 2. Propagandistic – Trotsky used newspapers to spread rumour that the rebels were merely agent of the Whites
 3. Military – Trotsky ordered Red Army to crush the rebellion swiftly and brutally
 - Red Army was rounded up to 45000 extra Communist troops
 - 16-17 March they succeeded in taking the base
 - 2100 mutineers sentenced to death, Red Army actually executed about 700
 - Another 6400 sent to death in concentration camps
 4. Economic – Lenin realised War Communism had gone too far and presented a compromise known as the New Economic Policy

TENTH PARTY CONGRESS (INTRO OF NEP AND LENIN'S 'ON PARTY UNITY')

- Tenth Party Congress
 - Involved 1100 delegates – first congress since end of the civil war
 - Lenin played a key role in introducing significant economic policies and trying to put an end to the criticism, condemning all other opinions as “factionalism”, caused by abandoning War Communism
 - Lenin issued a Decree ‘On Party Unity’
 - All dissent and factionalism were strictly forbidden
 - Party was now a dictatorship
 - Lenin exerted total control over the Communist Party
- New Economic Policy
 - The crisis of 1921 – in particular the Kronstadt rebellion and peasant revolts – triggered Lenin to reconsider the nature of the Russian economy
 - Began to understand that peasants would never produce a food surplus unless they could sell items legally on market in order to earn money
 - Was a massive compromise of all the most basic Communist principles and also arguably the reason why the regime survived
 - Reveals the severity of the economic disaster
 - Reveals Lenin's pragmatism if revolution was in danger
 - Reveals Lenin's great authority
 - War communism causing massive resentment and resistance to the new Communist regime
 - NEP involved the following:
 - Partial return to capitalist economy – split-level system
 - Large scale industries, transport, trade etc. be owned and run by the state along Communist lines
 - Small-scale enterprises would be allowed to continue to trade privately
 - Offered peasants an attractive deal (Tax in kind)
 - Peasants could surrender a certain amount of produce equivalent to a fixed sum of money
 - Abandoned forced requisitioning of grain
 - New form of the Russian rouble – based on gold
- Effects of the New Economic Policy
 - Increased agricultural and industrial production
 - Grain harvest doubled between 1921-25
 - Up to 74.4 million tonnes
 - Increased wages
 - Average monthly wage of factory workers increased by 150%
 - Helped the famine of 1921
 - Did have negatives:
 - Scissors Crisis
 - As food production increased, food prices began to fall so peasants had less money with which to buy manufactured goods which still continued to increase in price
 - Meant massive surplus of grain but caused significant long term economic problems
 - NEPmen
 - Created a whole new class of wealthy people

- Created fierce resentment among workers and calling into question the most basic Communist deal of socio economic equality for all citizens
- Political consequences
 - Bolsheviks found NEP a dilemma
 - Thought peasants were being given in to and capitalist ways were being tolerated
- Death of Lenin
 - Lenin's health had been bad since the assassination attempt by Fanya Kaplan
 - Also under enormous stress and a range of medical conditions
 - Deeply upset by death of Inessa Armand
 - 26 May 1922 – suffered firsts stroke – paralysed down right side
 - Lenin recovered and returned to work
 - December had 2 more strokes
 - By this time control of the party was shared by three leading communists: Kamenev, Zinoviev and Stalin
 - April 1922 Stalin ad been general secretary of Communist Party
 - Lenin very suspicious of Stalin who had come to have a lot of power and influence
 - Suffered final stroke after argument with Stalin, died on 21st January 1924
 - Stalin delivered eulogy – Trotsky absent from the funeral

Historians Interpretations/Contemporary Views

- “time to soften the severity of War Communism” – Lenin
- “force alone was not enough to quell the peasants” – Service
- “essential for the regime to survive” – Service
- “dismantling a large part of what the new regime has managed to build since the October Revolution” – Fitzpatrick
- “marked a severe setback for the prospects of Communism” – Pipes
- “improvised response to desperate economic circumstance” – Fitzpatrick
- “Bolsheviks surrendered to the peasantry” - Figes