

Part 3: How did Lenin and the Bolsheviks gain and hold on to power from November 1917?



Top Left: Trotsky
Middle/bottom: Lenin
Top right: Zinoviev
Under: Kamenev
Under: Bukharin
Under :Stalin



Included:
Events of 1917
How did the Bolsheviks gain power?
The Russian Civil War 1918-21
Lenin's NEP

7. Why were the Bolsheviks able to seize and maintain power in November 1917?

Summary of events:

In Kerensky's last days he ordered the Petrograd garrison to go and fight at the front in WWI. They had no desire to die so declared themselves loyal to the Bolsheviks on 3rd November. On the night of 6th/7th November the Bolsheviks seized key government buildings and the remaining Prov Gov ministers barricaded themselves in the Winter Palace. The remaining soldiers and Women's battalion surrendered and the Bolsheviks arrested the remaining government ministers

Reasons for success:

Strong and determined leadership (Lenin & Trotsky): They knew what they wanted and they took it with careful planning

Appeal of their policies to the masses: **Peace** (everybody wanted it and they got it, but Russia lost a LOT of land to Germany by signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk), **Bread** (Most of those who were not wealthy were hungry and unfortunately this continued immediately after the Bolsheviks took power, but was later solved by the NEP), **Land** (Peasants wanted land and the Bolsheviks seized it from the wealthy and divided it amongst the peasants). These changes were started on 8th November.

Weak government control: The Provisional Government had failed to deal with the problems they faced in Russia.

Kornilov: After being imprisoned after the July days, many Bolsheviks were released by Kerensky to help defend the city against Kornilov

Immediate censorship: After the free press enjoyed under the Prov Gov, the Bolsheviks banned all other political newspapers

Cheka: They used the new secret police to hunt down their political opposition, torture them for information and kill them

Ignored elections: After they seized power the Bolsheviks had an election (which they thought they would win!) and lost to the Social Revolutionaries, 38% to 24%. They used the Red Guard (Bolshevik private army) to disperse everyone and ignored the election

8. Why did the Bolsheviks win the Civil War?

Summary of events:

After the elections failed to show support for the Bolsheviks, the Bolsheviks (The Reds) had a crackdown on their opposition. The opposition (and others) regrouped to form the Whites and a very bloody Civil War began!

Reasons for victory:

Weak whites:

The white armies were geographically split

They were made up of many different groups. The old Tsarist supporters and generals (Kornilov, Denekin, Yudenich), the Czech Legion and France, Britain and the USA! Every group had different aims and tactics.

Trotsky's Red Army:

He was a ruthless and talented leader who had organised the Bolshevik Revolution and was well known and respected for this.

Feared because he executed deserters and would hold effective generals' families hostage unless they fought for him. If they betrayed him, the family died.

Also loved and adored because he would travel the country visiting different regiments and boosting morale.

War Communism:

The Bolsheviks took over (This is called nationalised) all key industries (coal, iron, steel etc), factories and manufacturing so they could produce weapons and equipment for the Red Army.

They also sent the Cheka and Red Guard out to the countryside to seize grain from the peasants to give to the army. This meant a lot of peasants and city folk went hungry again, but it kept the army fed, motivated and willing to fight!

Red Terror:

After someone attempted to kill Lenin he sent the Cheka (the Bolshevik secret police) to murder all opposition or those suspected. Approximately 750,000 were killed over 3 years!

Killed the Tsar and family:

The Tsar and his family were shot in a cellar because the Red's didn't want the whites to be able to use him as a symbol of their unity. In addition to this, killing the Tsar sent the message that there was no going back now and it could demoralise the white armies.

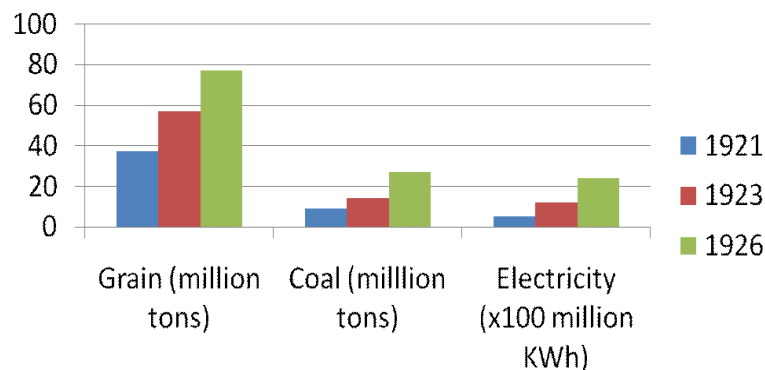
9. How far was the NEP (New Economic Policy) a success?

Largely, see below

Key events / people:

The NEP was newly introduced in **1921** to replace War Communism made a number of people unhappy because of food shortages and major industries had failed massively. Lenin believed that to get to get communism Russia might have to be a little bit capitalist for a while. Big changes included:

- Big business (over 20 people) is nationalised (taken over by government)
- Small business (under 20) is privately owned and can make profit (capitalist belief)
- Peasants had to grow an amount to give to government, could keep and sell the rest for profit (capitalist belief)
- Electrification brought electricity to Russian cities and some countryside
- The government made a new state bank which gave loans to people in Russia.
- The government made a new currency (Rouble) to start again and end the inflation of the old currency, which had become worthless!



People who liked it

Peasants did well because grain production went up, meaning many fulfilled the government quotas and still had some to sell

Workers, employed and unemployed did well because there was more work around and conditions in the factories began to improve

Small business owners did well because they were allowed to make profits in a country which was beginning to thrive

Some communists who believed in the NEP were pleased because the country was improving

Anyone who had access to electricity could now begin to experience the benefits of electric lights etc.

People who didn't like it

Some communists thought that the Peasants, NEPmen and private business owners were making Russia more capitalist and didn't like it

People who were previously big business owners lost them to the government

PART 3: TOP 10 QUIZ

1. What was Lenin's promise in his April Theses of 1917?
2. Why didn't the Bolsheviks overthrow the Provisional Government during the July Days riots in 1917?
3. Why were Bolsheviks released from prison during the Kornilov affair in the September of 1917?
4. Give 3 things that happened between the 3rd and 7th of November 1917 which showed the Bolsheviks were taking control of the government.
5. Give 3 things the Bolsheviks did as soon as they gained power to make sure they stayed in power
6. Who were the 2 sides in the Russian Civil war?
7. What was War Communism
8. Give 3 reasons why Trotsky was such a good army leader.
9. What were Lenin's secret police called? Give one way they helped Lenin during the Civil War
10. Why did Lenin introduce the NEP? Give 3 reasons for success and 3 reasons for failure.

EXAM QUESTIONS: BOLSHEVIK RUSSIA

DESCRIBE:

- What were the main features of Russian agriculture under the New Economic Policy? **(4 Marks)**
- Describe the main features of the NEP **(4 Marks)**

EXPLAIN:

- Explain why the Bolsheviks were able to seize power in October/ November 1917 **(6 Marks)**
- Explain why some Russians viewed the NEP as a success **(6 Marks)**

EVALUATE:

- 'War Communism was the most important reason why the Bolsheviks won the Civil War'
How far do you agree with this statement **(10 Marks)**
- How far was the New Economic Policy a success? **(10 Marks)**
- 'Lenin was the main reason why the Bolsheviks were able to seize power in 1917'
How far do you agree? **(10 Marks)**