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| Initial reforms | Historical perspectives |
| * Private ownership=promise of land (6/12/1917). * Marriage and divorce laws (18/12/1917). * Education (right of state) * Banks (27/12/1917) * Alphabet and calendar (31/1/1918) * Religion (9/2/1918). * Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (3/3/1918) * 1/3 of Russia to Germany * Lost 45 million people * 3 billion roubles * Russian army and navy demobilised. * Failed to solve food shortage * Dismissal of constituent assembly at gun point by Red Army on 18/1/1918 after Bolsheviks only received 23.6% of the vote and S.R received 42% | “[Lenin’s initial decrees] adversely affected the interests of the workers and peasants” (Pipes-Western)  “All we need to do is issue a few degrees then shut up shop and go home.” (Trotsky – Soviet)  “The decision to accept the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk showed Lenin to be a realist rather than driven by ideological considerations.” (Steve Phillips-Soviet) |

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| Civil War (1918-1920) | Historical Perspectives |
| * Started as a result of internal dissent after October revolution. * Threats from Kornilov and Kerensky as soon as Dec 1917. * Bolsheviks received threats from internal and external threats * General Miller (from North 9/1918) * General Denekin (South December 1917-1920) * Admiral Kolchak (East 1918-1920) * General Yudenich (NW 10/1919) * British, French, Japanese, American, Czech Legion and Poland. (1918-1920) * Green threats from Antonov and Mohkno (1919-1921) * Reds were united, had Cheka, unity of purpose and were defending a central location. * Whites were divided in purpose and had lack of propaganda. * Murder of the Royal family (17/7/1918) in Ekaterinburg after Reds thought whites may try to rescue them. * Significance: * Survivor mentality. * Loyalty and discipline * Organisation * Justified strict sanctions | “The single-party system became for the Bolsheviks an inescapable necessity. Their own survival, and no doubt the survival of the revolution depended on it.” (Deutscher – Soviet)  “Having defeated the Whites, who were backed up by no fewer than eight western powers, the Bolsheviks surrendered to the peasantry.” (Figes – Revisionist)  “The communists might have controlled the railways, the large industrial enterprises and the armed forces, but not the hearts and minds of the people.” (Thomas and McAndrew – Western)  “... The Bolshevism that emerged from the civil war viewed itself as a crusading brotherhood of comrades in arms, conquering Russia and the world with a red pencil I one hand and a gun in the other.” (Figes – Revisionist)  “…Peasants did not love the Bolsheviks, but they loved the whites even less, especially when the latter were suspected of aiming to restore land to the former owners." (Wolfson – Western)  “This bid for absolute authority made a civil war highly likely, given that the Bolsheviks had only a limited grip on Russia…” (Lynch – Western)  “Save for their hatred of Bolshevism, the Whites lacked a common cause.” (Lynch – Western) |

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| Economic policies | Historical perspectives |
| * War communism (1918-21) * Series of economic measures which controlled country. * Conscription to industry or army. * Centralising of army * End of private ownership. * Grain requisitioning. * Labour armies * Elimination of monetary economy * Peasants began to produce only enough for themselves, Kulaks thought to be hoarding grain and terror used. Agriculture dropped by 50%. * Extension of terror. * Famine where 9.5 million died. * Many Bolsheviks saw it as true communism. * NEP (March 1921) * Implemented due to famine and Kronstadt uprising. * Forced to implement elements of capitalism to save economy. * Resulted in NEPmen who benefited and were looked down upon by the Bolsheviks. * Improved industry and agriculture massively improving the economy. * Divided the Bolshevik party. | “War communism had been an attempt to take the fortress of the capitalist elements in town and countryside by assault…” (CPSU – Soviet)  “Lenin apparently never asked himself why, before 1921, the Bolsheviks were incapable of giving the people anything but chaos, civil war, hunger and terror…” (Volkogonov – Western)  “…The policies of war communism were seen by the Bolsheviks as an instrument of struggle against their social or “internal” enemies.” (Figes – Revisionist)  “Now Lenin proposed to retire a little… To change from an assault of the fortress to the slower method of a siege, so as to gain greater strength and resume the offensive.” (CPSU –Soviet)  “…while war communism tightened the Bolshevik grip on industry it did not lead to economic growth.” (Lynch – Western)  “…the first sign of the degeneration of Bolshevism.” (Trotsky – Soviet)  “The adoption of NEP showed that the Bolshevik government since 1917 had been unable to create a successful economy along purely ideological lines.” (Lynch – Western)  “Their irresponsibility was nowhere more evident than in their obstinate attempts to introduce a money-less economy.” (Pipes – Western) |

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| Red Terror | Historical perspectives |
| * Cheka formed Dec 1917 and led by Felix Dzerzhinsky. * Committed atrocities in order to suppress opposition to the Reds. * Started with 23 and no power of arrest, by 1921 100,000. * Soon given power of arrest and immediate execution. * Torture included: * Seriously wounding then burying alive. * Tying hot tin cans full of rats to victim’s stomachs. * During 3 years killed around 280,000 while Okhrana only killed 14,000 over 50 years. * Red Army also became instruments of terror by eliminating opposition and enforcing compliance with the new regime. | “Like the sound of a bolt being shot, the two syllables, Che-ka, would stop any conversation.” (Volkogonov – Western)  “The attempt to overthrow the Bolsheviks after the revolution produced cruelties indeed; but the revolutionary process abolished a regime of despair and created a new world of hope.” (Hill – Soviet)  “…He regarded it as normal to build this “happiness” on blood, coercion and the denial of freedom.” (Volkogonov – Western)  “…The Bolsheviks were forced to turn increasingly to terror to silence their political critics and subjugate a society they could not control by any other means.” (Figes – Revisionist)  “Threatened by danger, the Bolsheviks resorted to the most repugnant means of saving their state, mass terror against their own people. (Volkogonov – Western)  “Terror may have saved communism but it totally corroded its soul.” (Pipes – Western)  “The belief that the end justified the means served them well, blinding them to the way in which means corrupt ends.” (Smith – Revisionist) |

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| Kronstadt rebellion (1921) | Historical perspectives |
| * Sailors in Kronstadt wrote petition asking for more freedoms, new elections and improved economy. * This was followed by military attack where Soviet forces overthrew Kronstadt and 2000 men were executed. * Lenin unleashed both Cheka and Red Army upon Kronstadt. * Resulted in Lenin being forced to implement the NEP. | “[The Bolshevik’s] ideals were challenged as well as their power.”(Christian – Western)  “The suppression of the Kronstadt rebellion had a shattering effect on the socialists of the world. There could not be a more conclusive proof that the Bolsheviks had turned into tyrants.” (Figes – Revisionist)  "Denounced the men of Kronstadt as counter-revolutionary mutineers, led by a White general. The denunciation appears to have been groundless." (Deutscher – Soviet)  The state has no soul, no principles. It has but one aim -- to secure power and hold it, at any cost. That is the political lesson of Kronstadt." (Berkman – Western)  "Right from the first moment, at a time when it was easy to mitigate the conflict, the Bolshevik leaders had no intention of using anything but forcible methods." (Serge – Soviet) |

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| Lenin and the Bolshevik Party | Historical perspectives |
| * Their aims were: * To create a classless utopia. * Socialist economic system * End to violent suppression * Give power to proletariat * Achieve communism * However, in their attempts to achieve their goals they were willing to use terror and cause horrible conditions for the Russian people. * Caused famine, internal dissent and ultimately did not achieve any of the goals that they set out to obtain. | “As the Bolsheviks metamorphosed from a party of insurrection into a party of government, their perspective on reality changed”. (Smith – Revisionist)  “Judged in terms of its own aspirations: the communist regime was a monumental failure.” (Pipes – Western)  “…He was determined that the Bolsheviks should initiate the achievement of a world without exploitation and oppression.” (Service – Revisionist)  **“To impose such immense sacrifices in the name of so naïve and flawed a vision makes Lenin one of the greatest criminals of the 20th century.” (Lieven – Western)**  “The leadership given by Lenin and the Bolshevik party, the valiant struggle and heroism of the workers of the red guard, the soldiers and sailors, ensured the success of one of the greatest events in world history – the overthrow of the power of the landowners and capitalists.” (Obichkin – Soviet)  “…there was something essentially totalitarian about Lenin himself. He did not know how to act in any other way. He had always accepted the necessity of terror as an instrument of political control…” (Lynch – Western)  "Dogma deprived the Bolsheviks of common sense" (Volkogonov – Western)  "Lenin is the father of modern terrorism" (Pipes – Western)  “…The Leninist promise of great progress turned into great backwardness”. (Volkogonov – Western)  “Most Bolshevik leaders had never liked the NEP…”(Service – Revisionist) |

Lenin’s theoretical considerations went hand in hand with sharpshooters (Trotsky)

The machine gun became for them the principle instrument of political persuasion (Pipes- Western)

Most people were preoccupied with securing food and fuel, and that the Assembly was a ‘distant thing in the city. (Figes – Revisionist)