



[These Bitesize notes are from 2015 and have been taken down.]

The civil war

The **Bolshevik** takeover was not welcomed by everyone. Those who had been loyal to the tsar and foreign powers were alarmed by the revolution so they joined together under the banner of the Whites to defeat the Bolsheviks.

Summary

The Bolshevik takeover **angered many Russians** who had been prepared to accept the Provisional Government. It alarmed the US, Britain and France because the Bolsheviks had declared that they wanted to cause revolutions all over the world. All these Whites now **united** to try to destroy the Bolsheviks.

The war lasted three years. Atrocities were committed on both sides and captured soldiers were usually executed.

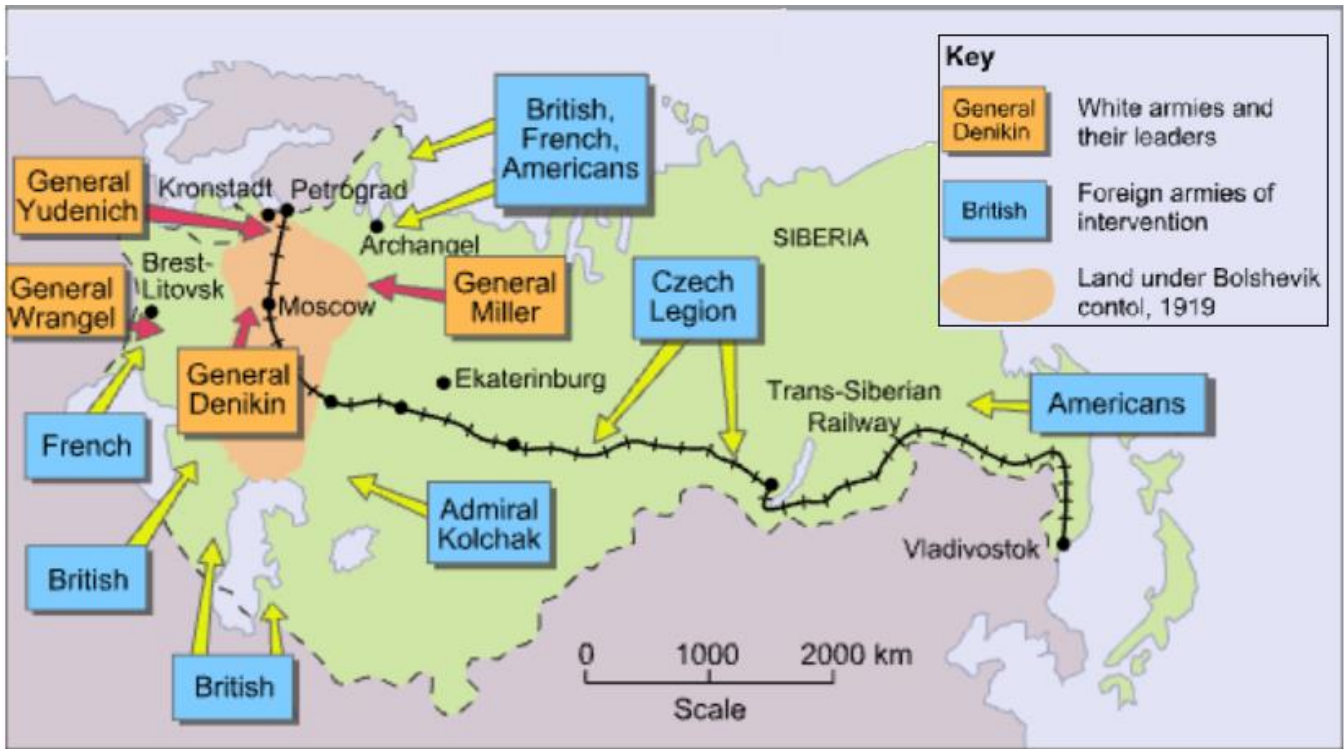
At first, it looked as though the Bolsheviks would lose - but they survived.

- Lenin dismissed the Constituent Assembly and ruled by decree.
- Trotsky organised and inspired the **Red Army**.
- The Bolsheviks brought in a very strict **War Communism**, which organised the whole population to provide supplies for the war effort.
- The Bolsheviks instituted a **Red Terror** that killed anyone who opposed them - strikers were shot, and Trotsky even arrested the families of Red generals to keep them loyal.

Meanwhile, the Whites were **disunited**, and could not agree on their aims or co-ordinate their attacks.

Who were the Whites?

- **The Czech Legion** were a group of Czech prisoners-of-war who escaped and travelled up and down the Trans-Siberian railway attacking the Bolsheviks.
- **Britain, France and America** sent some troops, and lots of money and supplies.
- **General Miller**, with help from the Americans and British, captured Archangel in late 1918 and set up a tsarist government there.
- **Admiral Kolchak** had 100,000 men, the entire treasury of Nicholas II, and military supplies from America, Britain and France. In early 1919, he advanced, but his officers were more interested in cocaine and vodka than battle, and his armies collapsed when the Bolsheviks counter-attacked. Kolchak was captured by the Czechs, and handed over to the Bolsheviks, who executed him.
- **General Yudenich** had 16,000 men, tanks and the offer of 100,000 Finnish troops. The Finns went home when Kolchak refused to promise Finland independence. Yudenich attacked in October 1918 he got so close to Petrograd that his men could see the trains pulling out of the station. But then Trotsky turned up and inspired the people - 100,000 Red Guards and ordinary workers armed themselves with rifles and fought off the tanks. Yudenich resigned and went into exile.
- **General Denikin**. In July 1919, White armies, numbering 150,000 soldiers and led by General Denikin and General Wrangel, attacked northwards from the Black Sea and got to within 250 miles of Moscow. But then they ran out of money. Denikin quarrelled with Wrangel. Ukrainians refused to fight with Russians. The White Terror was so terrible that the peasants flocked to join the Reds. In October 1919, the Reds counter-attacked and drove them back. The Whites defeated and penniless - became a poor mass of naked humanity fleeing for its life'. Denikin escaped to France.
- **General Wrangel** made a last stand in the Crimea, but was defeated in 1920.



Creation of the Soviet Union

You will also need to know about the creation of the Soviet Union.

- After winning the civil war, as the Bolsheviks captured the different areas of the former Russian Empire, they organised them into socialist republics governed by a soviet eg the Ukraine.
- In 1922, Lenin organised these into a united state - the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).
- In 1924, the USSR agreed a constitution - each Republic sent representatives to a Congress of Soviets in Moscow. The Central Executive Committee of the Congress became the supreme governing body of the state, and the members of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee ran the government in between meetings of the Congress.
- Only one party was allowed - the Communist Party.