

FOCUS ROUTE

- 1 Draw a spider diagram to show the sides in the Civil War and their different aims.
- 2 Can you identify any problems you think the Whites are going to have in the war?

The Greens

The Greens were peasant armies, often made up of deserters from other armies. Some of these armies fought for the Bolsheviks, some against. Most were more concerned with protecting their own area from the ravages of other marauding armies. Some were little more than groups of bandits who did well out of raiding and looting their neighbours. Probably the most famous of the Green armies was that of Nestor Makhno, an anarchist, in the Ukraine. He was a skilled guerrilla leader who at various times fought the Reds, the Whites and the Germans, but became an ally of the Bolsheviks. The Ukrainians, like many of the peasant armies, were fighting for their independence.

A Who was on each side?

The Civil War in Russia from 1918 to 1920 was very complex, as different groups emerged to challenge the Bolsheviks' claim to be the government of Russia. It involved many contestants spread out over an immense area. At one point, there were some eighteen anti-Bolshevik governments in Russia. We can divide the participants in the Civil War into three rather ill-defined sides:

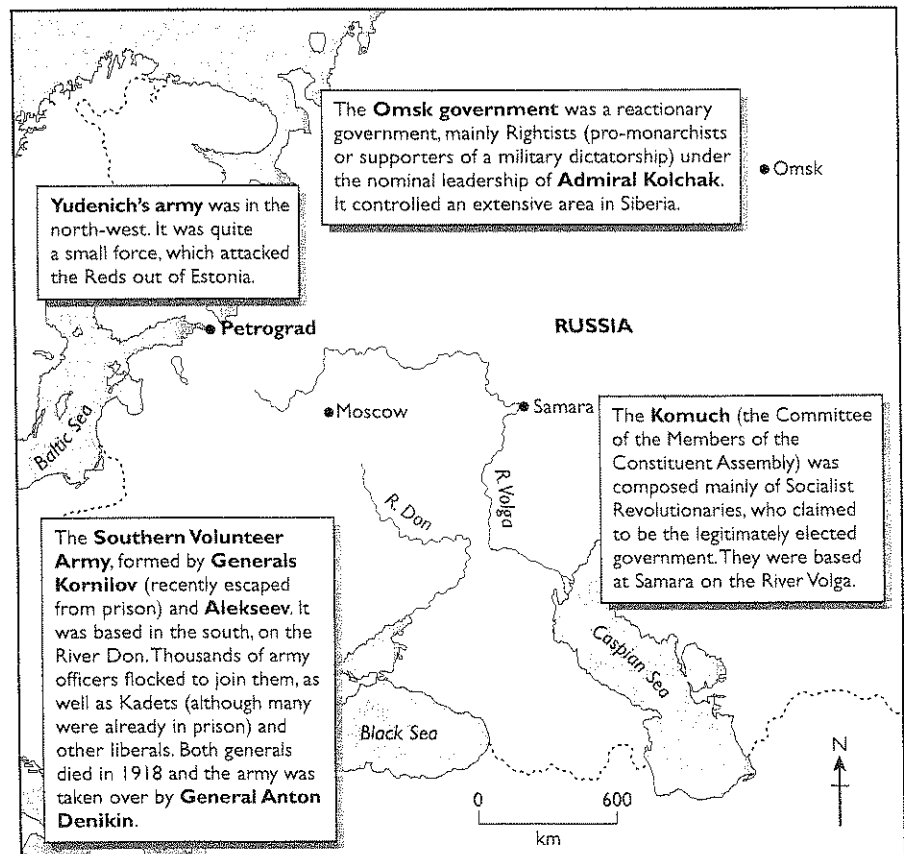
- the Reds – the Bolsheviks
- the Whites
- the Greens.

The Reds – the Bolsheviks

The great strength of the Reds was that they had one clear aim – to stay in power. The 'Workers' and Peasants' Red Army' was formed from Kronstadt sailors and Red Guards, plus workers who volunteered and soldiers from the disintegrating former imperial army.

The Whites

Under this broad banner, there were liberals, former tsarists, nationalists and separatists, Socialist Revolutionaries and other moderate socialists. Few Whites wanted to see the tsar back but many, including liberals, supported military dictatorship until the Bolsheviks were defeated and law and order re-established. Other groups, especially the Socialist Revolutionaries, were keen to see the Constituent Assembly running Russia. Probably the only thing that they all had in common was that they were anti-Bolshevik. The Whites were deeply divided and it was not uncommon for White armies to fight each other. It was very difficult, for instance, for Socialist Revolutionaries to fight alongside former tsarist officers and monarchists (called 'Rightists') who favoured military dictatorship and the return of the land to its former owners. Four White armies were particularly significant (see Chart 7A).

7A Main forces of the Whites**Learning trouble spot****The sides in the Civil War**

If you are confused by the different sides, particularly the Whites, then so were people at the time. When we talk about the White armies, we are mainly referring to Denikin's army in the south, Kolchak's army in the east and Yudenich's army in the north-west. These were largely made up of tsarists, army officers and liberals, with peasants forming a large proportion of the soldiers. The Socialist Revolutionaries and other socialists were involved with White armies at times, but usually operated independently.

B The course of the Civil War

FOCUS ROUTE

- 1 Look at pages 128–129. Focus on the geographical position of the forces shown on the map in Chart 7C.
 - a) What advantages/disadvantages did the Reds have?
 - b) What advantages/disadvantages did the Whites have?
- 2 What key reasons do the map and text suggest for the defeat of the Whites?

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CZECH LEGION?

The Czech Legion fought for the Whites for a while, but after the declaration of Czech independence in October 1918 it was weakened by mutinies and desertion and largely withdrew from the fighting.

Although there were some minor clashes in late 1917, the war began in earnest in the spring of 1918. By this time it was clear that the Bolsheviks wanted to run Russia as a one-party state. They had alienated other socialist groups (Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks) as well as the liberals and more conservative right-wing elements in society. It was the Bolsheviks against the rest.

Hostilities were sparked off in the east by the rather bizarre events surrounding the Czech Legion. The Legion had been formed by Czech nationalists hoping to win recognition for an independent Czech state (previously it had been part of the Austrian empire). It had been significantly enlarged by Czech prisoners of war and deserters from the Austrian army. The idea was that it would fight with the Russian army against the Austrians and Germans. When the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk took Russia out of the war, the Legion decided to fight with the Allies on the Western Front. But they did not want to cross enemy lines and it was agreed with the Soviet authorities that they would be transported along the Trans-Siberian railway to Vladivostok, from where they would be taken by ship to Western Europe. The Czechs mistrusted the Bolsheviks and there were clashes with local Bolshevik soviets along the Trans-Siberian railway. When the Bolsheviks tried to disarm them, the Czechs resisted and took control of large sections of this important railway (the main route to the east) and large parts of western Siberia. Substantial White forces then grew up around them.

The full-scale Civil War was underway by the summer of 1918. We shall consider the course of the war by looking at the three White forces that posed the biggest threat to the Bolsheviks. These are shown on the map in Chart 7C on pages 128–129. The Civil War was fought mainly in the east and the south.

7B Key events of the Civil War

1918			
Jan	Red Army is established.		Loss of Kharkov and Tsaritsyn leads to criticism of Trotsky.
March	Treaty of Brest-Litovsk First British troops land at Murmansk.		He resigns but his resignation is refused.
May	Czech Legion rebels and captures a large section of the Trans-Siberian railway. Conscription into Red Army is introduced.	September	Allies evacuate Archangel.
June	Socialist Revolutionary government is established at Samara. Murder of the Tsar and his family.	October	Denikin takes Orei but is forced back later in the month. Yudenich reaches the outskirts of Petrograd.
August	Americans arrive in northern Russia and in the east. British land at Archangel and establish an anti-Bolshevik government.	November	Yudenich is defeated; Denikin is pushed back.
November	Kolchak assumes control in Omsk.	1920	
December	French land at Odessa.	February	Koichak (captured in January) is executed by the Bolsheviks. Red Army invades Georgia.
1919		April	Denikin, having been pursued to the Crimea, is succeeded by Wrangel.
February	Denikin assumes supreme command in the south-east. Red Army occupies Kiev.	May	Polish army invades Russia and occupies Kiev.
March	Kolchak's forces cross the Urals but are repulsed by the Red Army. Growing discontent in French and British forces.	July	Tukhachevsky mounts Red Army counter-offensive against Poles.
April	French evacuate Odessa.	August	Red Army defeated by Poles outside Warsaw.
June	Denikin and southern army take Kharkov.	November	Wrangel, last surviving White general, is defeated in the Crimea.
July	Denikin advances from the Caucasus and captures Tsaritsyn.	1921	
		March	Treaty of Riga: peace between Poland and Soviet Russia.

Yudenich in the west

General Yudenich's army was the smallest army, only some 15,000 men, but it reached the outskirts of Petrograd in October 1919 before being turned back by larger Bolshevik forces.

Denikin and Wrangel in the south

Denikin's southern army of 150,000 had a large contingent of Don Cossacks. His army made ground across the Don region, intending to join up with Kolchak. By the summer of 1918 it was besieging Tsaritsyn, a key city under the command of Joseph Stalin. The Bolsheviks had to hold this city at all costs to prevent the southern and eastern White armies from linking up, and to protect vital grain supplies that passed through Tsaritsyn en route to Bolshevik-held cities to the north and west. The successful defence of Tsaritsyn became a heroic story in Bolshevik mythology and the city was later renamed Stalingrad in Stalin's honour.

Denikin launched another offensive in the summer of 1919. Spectacularly successful, it came within 320 km of Moscow by October. But Trotsky organised a ferocious counter-attack, forcing a hasty and panic-stricken White retreat. The southern White army was pushed right back into the Crimean peninsula. Denikin was replaced by Wrangel. The Whites held out for much of 1920 but had to be evacuated by British and French ships in November of that year.

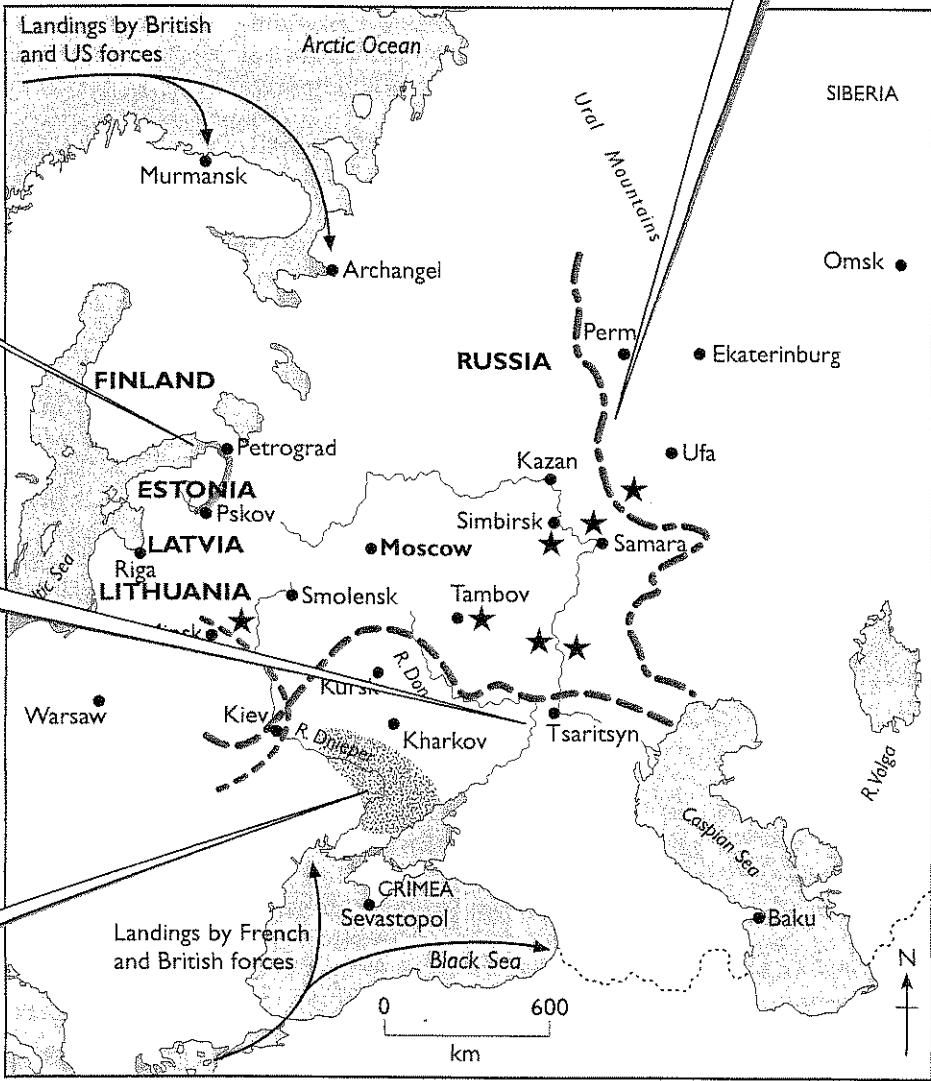
Makhno's Insurgent Army

The most dangerous of the Green armies was Makhno's Insurgent Army, which had successfully used guerrilla warfare against Whites and Reds and was strongly supported by the peasant population in the Ukraine. It had encouraged the growth of communes and soviets for peasants to run their own affairs without any central direction – a real challenge to the Bolshevik centralised state. Towards the end of the war, Makhno's army fought as an irregular division for the Reds. But as soon as the war was won, the Bolsheviks crushed his peasant-anarchist movement, although it proved no easy task. Makhno escaped to Romania.

Kolchak in the east
 Admiral Kolchak headed an army of some 140,000, which came in from the east, building on the successes of the Czech Legion and linking up with it. Initially very successful, they took Kazan and Samara by June 1918. But the advance fell apart for several reasons:

- determined counter-attacks by the Red Army
- internal quarrels and apathy among the Czechs
- power struggles with the Socialist Revolutionaries (see Case Study 1, page 134), who staged revolts that weakened Kolchak's army.

By the autumn of 1919, the Reds had turned Kolchak's advance into a long retreat, throughout which they harassed his army. Eventually, in 1920, Kolchak was captured and shot.



Key

- Yudenich offensive against Petrograd
- - - - - Furthest advance of Polish armies
- - - - - Furthest advance of Denikin and Wrangel's armies
- - - - - Furthest advance of Kolchak's armies
- ▨ Area of activity by Makhno's partisans
- ★ Major peasant uprisings



What was the role of other countries in the Civil War?

FOCUS ROUTE

- 1 Why did foreign countries become involved in the Russian Civil War?
- 2 Why did these countries have little impact on the outcome of the war?

Allied troops were sent to Russia to help to reopen the Eastern Front against Germany. But before they could go into action the war ended, in November 1918. The troops stayed on, ostensibly to guard munitions dumps in Archangel and Murmansk.

Western countries, however, had other objectives. The British, encouraged by Winston Churchill, the War Secretary, were amongst the most active forces. They sent £100-million-worth of supplies to the Whites. Churchill saw the Whites as crusaders against Bolshevism; he dreaded the spread of Bolshevism to other countries in Western Europe. However, within Britain there was substantial opposition to involvement in the Russian Civil War. Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, feared disaffection of war-weary troops, and the small but increasingly influential Labour Party believed Britain should not fight the Russian working class.

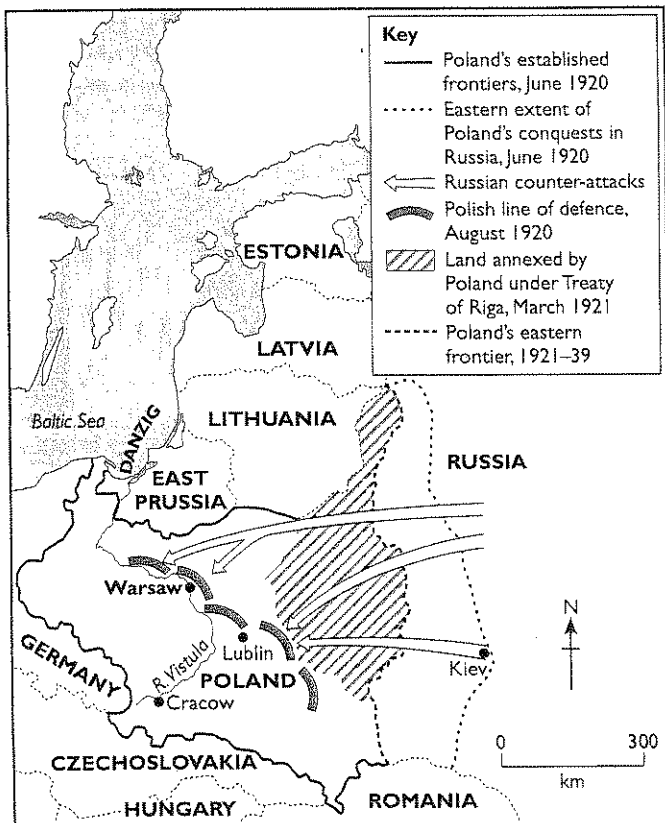
A number of other countries sent small forces, but they were there for different reasons. The French were probably the most anti-Bolshevik because French investors had put millions of francs into Russia and the Bolsheviks had nationalised foreign-owned businesses without compensation. But the soldiers were not keen to fight and there were mutinies in the French fleet in the Black Sea. The Japanese sent a sizeable force into Siberia, especially around Vladivostok. But they were more interested in trying to grab some valuable territory than in fighting the Bolsheviks. The USA sent troops to the same area, largely to stop the Japanese ANNEXING any land. Other countries which sent small detachments included Italy, Serbia, Romania, Greece and Canada.

The involvement of the Allies was unenthusiastic and ineffective. The troops had had enough of war and there was no real support from the public in their home countries. The Allies provided the Whites with valuable supplies but that was about all. Allied soldiers got involved in a few skirmishes but took no part in serious military action.

ANNEXATION

Taking over the territory of other countries and joining it to own country.

7D The Russo-Polish War, 1919–21



The Russo-Polish War 1919–21

In 1919, the Poles hoped to take advantage of the chaotic situation in Russia and to take territory which had once been part of the Polish empire. Their troops, under Pilsudski, were initially successful, capturing Kiev in May 1920. But by this time, the Bolsheviks had more or less defeated their Civil War enemies and the Polish invasion brought even non-Bolsheviks to the support of the Red banner – the Poles were an old enemy. In a daring campaign led by Tukhachevsky, the Poles were pushed right back to Warsaw.

Lenin hoped that the success of the Reds might encourage revolution in Germany. In fact this was the sort of revolutionary war – spreading the revolution by force – that left-wing Bolsheviks had wanted much earlier. Germany was unstable and some cities had set up 'red soviets'. However, the Reds had now overstretched their supply lines and, lacking support, were comprehensively defeated by the Poles. A settlement was reached in 1921. Under the Treaty of Riga, the Russians had to surrender large areas of White Russia and the Ukraine to the Poles.

D How important was the role of Trotsky in the Civil War?

FOCUS: SOURCE

Using Sources 7.1–7.7 and the main text, note down the main ways in which you think Trotsky contributed to the Red victory.

When Trotsky was made Commissar for War in 1918, the army was on the point of disintegration. He restored discipline and professionalism to what was now called the 'Worker's and Peasants' Red Army' and turned it into an effective fighting force. He reorganised the army along strict hierarchical lines and brought back thousands of former tsarist officers to train and command army units. Many of these officers, who were unemployed, hungry and poor, seized the opportunity to get back into the world they knew best. To ensure their loyalty, Trotsky had their families held hostage.

The return to a traditional army was resented by other leading Bolsheviks, especially Stalin and Zinoviev. They had a different concept of a revolutionary army – one which was more like a militia and certainly not one that had tsarist officers in charge. Trotsky only managed to get his way with the support of Lenin, who saw that it was the only solution, given the state of the army and the urgency of the situation. To placate the party, and ensure the loyalty of the officers, Trotsky attached a political commissar to each army unit. The job of the commissar (who was often a fanatical Bolshevik) was to watch and report on the actions of the officers and make sure they were politically correct. They also fed back useful information to the central headquarters.

Soldiers' committees (which dominated army units) and the election of officers by soldiers were ended. This did not go down well with the soldiers, who also resented the reintroduction of ranks, saluting and pay differentials. But Trotsky went further – he re-established harsh military discipline, bringing back the death penalty for a range of offences (see Source 7.1). He thought this was essential to make men fight. He also formed labour battalions to help at the Front, comprised of men who could not fight or were seen as unreliable; many of these came from the ranks of the bourgeoisie, or 'former people' as they were now known.

Trotsky's strengths were his energy, passion and organisational abilities. According to Dmitri Volkogonov, a Soviet historian and ex-general, Trotsky was not much of a military strategist and the key military decisions were taken by others. But Trotsky never claimed to be an expert in military matters. His chief contribution was as the person in overall charge, holding things together and making the organisation work effectively; this was no small achievement in Russia between 1918 and 1920.

SOURCE 7.1 Orders to the Red Army from Trotsky, 1918

- *Every scoundrel who incites anyone to retreat, to desert, or not to fulfil a military order, will be shot.*
- *Every soldier who voluntarily deserts his post will be shot.*
- *Every soldier who throws away his rifle or sells part of his equipment will be shot.*

SOURCE 7.2 Trotsky used the special train to keep in constant contact with the Front and to take him and his special troops to the points where the fighting was fiercest. The arrival of the train was a great morale booster. It was his general headquarters and was fitted out as a munitions and uniform supply centre, a troop transporter and a radio-communications centre. It also had a garage and his own Rolls-Royce armoured car in which he drove to the Fronts.

There was not just one train and one set of carriages. In fact Trotsky had four locomotives and two whole sets of carriages at his disposal. Robert Service lists a staff of 369 by the end of 1918. 'This was no mere transport facility for the People's Commissar but a full military-political organisation.' R. Service, *Trotsky*, 2009, pp. 230–1.



SOURCE 7.3 Trotsky reviewing troops. He used special forces to back up conventional forces, often marching his special forces, with machine guns, behind the ordinary troops. His special troops were kitted out in black leather and were a macho élite force. Trotsky remarked: 'I issue this warning. If any detachment retreats without orders, the first to be shot will be the commissar, the second will be the commander'



However, this does not mean that Trotsky was just a backroom commander, far behind the front lines. Travelling in a specially equipped train (see Sources 7.2 and 7.5), he rushed to the points where the fighting was fiercest to provide support – although sometimes this involved his special troops making sure that Red forces did not retreat (see Source 7.3). His presence did seem to make a real difference and he genuinely seemed able to inspire men in a way that other leaders, especially White leaders, could not. It was Trotsky who decided to save Petrograd when it was under threat from Yudenich. The capital had been moved to Moscow and Lenin felt that they would have to give up Petrograd, the 'home of the revolution'. Trotsky disagreed, raced off with his train and, after fierce fighting, turned Yudenich's army away

SOURCE 7.4 R. Service, *A History of Twentieth-Century Russia*, 1997, pp. 105–6

His [Trotsky's] brilliance had been proved before 1918. What took everyone aback was his organisational capacity and ruthlessness as he transformed the Red Army into a fighting force. He ordered deserters to be shot, and he did not give a damn if some of them were communist party activists; and in this fashion he endeared himself to Imperial Army officers whom he encouraged to join the Reds. He sped from unit to unit, rousing the troops with his revolutionary zeal. . . . His flair too paid dividends. He organised a competition to design a Red Army cap and tunic; he had his own railway carriage equipped with his own map room and printing press. He also had an eye for young talent, bringing on his protégés without regard for length of time and service.

The Red Army

It is easy to overplay the organisation of the Red Army in comparison to the Whites. Once the supply of urban workers ran out, the Reds conscripted peasants. Although they were willing to fight for their lands when the White armies approached, the peasants were generally unwilling conscripts. At harvest time, they would often desert. In protest at the mass conscription by the Reds and the seizure of their best horses and food for the army, the peasants staged uprisings which engulfed whole provinces. Many joined the independent Green armies. Rates of desertion were just as high for the Reds as for the Whites. By the end of 1919, the Red Army had around three million troops; the figure reached around five million by the end of 1920. But it is estimated that one million deserted in 1918 and nearly four million by 1921. The trouble was that when they deserted they took their weapons and uniforms with them, so even in the later stages of the war the Red Army was often poorly equipped (few had good boots), had a ragtag appearance and was short of ammunition. This is why Trotsky's train, which carried uniforms and supplies, was so important.

The Red Army also had its fair share of indiscipline. At worst, this became full-scale mutinies in which *burzhui* officers were murdered and new officers elected. There was festering resentment about *burzhui* officers and a great deal of anti-Semitism. Many of the commissars were Jews, including, of course, Trotsky himself.

Victor Serge (1890–1947)

Victor Serge was born in Belgium to Russian parents. He was in turn an anarchist, Bolshevik, and Trotskyist. He was also a journalist, poet, historian, agitator and novelist. Arriving in Petrograd in January 1919, he threw himself into the revolution and became one of its most acute observers. He was not afraid to criticise the darker side of the Bolshevik dictatorship and its totalitarian leanings, although to some extent he believed this was unavoidable.

SOURCE 7.5 V. Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary 1901–1941*, translated and edited by P. Sedwick, 1967, p. 92

The news from the other fronts was so bad that Lenin was reluctant to sacrifice the last available forces in the defence of the doomed city [Petrograd]. Trotsky thought otherwise... He arrived at almost the last moment and his presence changed the atmosphere... Trotsky arrived with a train, that famous train which had been speeding to and fro along the different fronts... The train contained excellent motor cars... a printing shop for propaganda, sanitary squads, and specialists in engineering, provisioning, street fighting, all bound together by friendship and trust, all kept to a strict vigorous discipline by a leader they admired, all dressed in black leather, red stars on their peaked caps, all exhaling energy. It was the nucleus of resolute and efficiently serviced organisers, who hastened wherever danger demanded their presence.

SOURCE 7.6 E. Mawdsley, *The Russian Civil War*, 1987, pp. 277–78

The historian looking at Trotsky's Civil War career must beware of two myths. The first is the Soviet view dominant ever since his disgrace in the late 1920s that he played no beneficial role in the Civil War. ('History,' Comrade Stalin in fact pointed out, 'shows that... Kolchak and Denikin were beaten by our troops in spite of Trotsky's plans.') The second might be called the 'Trotskyist' myth that exaggerates his importance. The truth lies in between the two, but given the state of Western historiography it is perhaps the second myth that deserves the most attention. Trotsky was, of course, the second best-known Soviet leader. But his career in 1917–1920 was marked by spectacular failures. He made major mistakes in foreign policy in early 1918 and in economic policy in 1920. Even his career in the Red Army had the bitterness of the summer of 1919. Trotsky's vital step was to support the creation of a regular army against much party opposition.

SOURCE 7.7 Various contemporary images of Trotsky



He also played an important agitational role, his famous headquarters train covered 65,000 miles, and all this was something that Lenin, as their comrade Lunacharsky pointed out, could not have done. The fighting men needed a figurehead to rally around, and Trotsky played his part effectively. At the same time the other important leaders of the Civil War should not be lost sight of. Sverdlov, who died in early 1919, helped organize the state and the party, and Rykov, disgraced in the 1930s, was the man in charge of the war economy. Smilga, another future oppositionist, was the chief political organizer of the Red Army. Something should be said for Stalin, too, who had a most active career in the Civil War; if he had been killed in 1920 he would certainly be remembered as one of the great activists of the war. And outside the party probably no one was as important as two former Tsarist colonels, Vatsetis and Kamenev.

ACTIVITY

- 1 Why does E. Mawdsley in Source 7.6 think that Trotsky's importance has been overstated?
- 2 What do you consider was Trotsky's most important contribution to the Red victory?

FOCUS ROUTE

- 1 List the key weaknesses in the White forces.
- 2 Provide an example or supporting argument for each weakness identified.

E Why were the Whites divided and lacking in support?

We can use two case studies to illustrate the weaknesses in the White camp.

Case study 1: divisions

In 1918, most of the Socialist Revolutionaries had fled to Samara on the Volga to set up the Komuch (the Committee of the Members of the Constituent Assembly). Later, they were pushed back by the Reds and linked up with the Omsk government run by Rightists (former tsarist officers and monarchists) who favoured a military dictatorship. Initially, they reached agreement and set up a joint government. But there were squabbles between the socialists, liberals and monarchists. The officers organised a coup and arrested Socialist Revolutionary ministers. They awarded Admiral Kolchak the title of 'Supreme Ruler'. Kolchak then had hundreds of Socialist Revolutionary activists arrested and many executed, including ten Socialist Revolutionary members of the original Constituent Assembly. As a result, the Socialist Revolutionaries later staged revolts against him and undermined the rest of his campaign, contributing to his defeat.

Case study 2: why the Whites could not get support

The Southern Volunteer Army that assembled on the Don was largely an army of officers who had lost much to the Bolsheviks, including their livelihoods and family estates. These officers thought that the Don Cossacks, who lived in the region, would fight with them for the old order. But the Don Cossacks only wanted independence for their own region. They agreed to fight to counter the Bolshevik threat, but throughout the war kept their units separate and would not always obey orders from the central command. They were very reluctant to go further into central Russia once their homeland had been secured from the Bolsheviks and this was a real problem for the Whites in 1919. Denikin, the leader of the Southern Volunteer Army, might have enlisted their support if he had promised them autonomy, but he had no time for separatists.

It was not just Denikin who would not make concessions to national aspirations. The Kadets would countenance nothing other than 'A Russia Great, United and Indivisible'. This was particularly crass since the southern White armies were operating in areas where people were demanding more autonomy or independence, such as the Ukraine and the Caucasus. If they had been prepared to make concessions, then they might have gained much more support.

The brutality of White armies antagonised the peasants. The Cossacks in the southern army were especially guilty of this. As their nationalistic feelings were heightened, they practised a sort of 'ethnic cleansing', driving out thousands of non-Cossack peasants (mainly Russians and Ukrainians) from their lands and treating them brutally. Outside their own lands, they were worse – looting, raping, and pillaging villages for food supplies; and conducting fierce pogroms against Jewish settlements. This drove the peasants into the arms of the Reds.

The peasants were, of course, the main source of soldiers for the White army. In White-held areas they were conscripted in their thousands and whenever they got the chance they deserted in their thousands. The Volunteer Army in the main treated the peasants with contempt. Denikin helped landowners recover their estates. His followers and the other White leaders made it clear that the peasants would have to give back most of the land they had seized in 1917. As a result, the peasants were always going to oppose the Whites.

The identification of the Whites with the old tsarist order remained a problem for them throughout the war. Many Rightists paid lip-service to free elections and democratic ideals but really wanted to turn the clock back to life as it had been before the revolution. The Kadets and the Rightists in the south wanted the old empire back, without any concessions to national minorities and little acknowledgement of the peasant revolution. But the urban workers and peasants had made too many gains from the revolution to go back.

Why do you think that in times of crisis and the collapse of centralised authority there is a growth in nationalist aspirations and 'ethnic cleansing'?

Improving your own performance

This activity has two aims. The first is to help you to record information about the Bolshevik victory in the Civil War. The second is to help you to develop your note-taking skills, keeping your notes as brief as possible and setting them out so they are easy to understand and/or learn for examinations. Two methods are suggested here. You can choose the one that suits your style of learning.

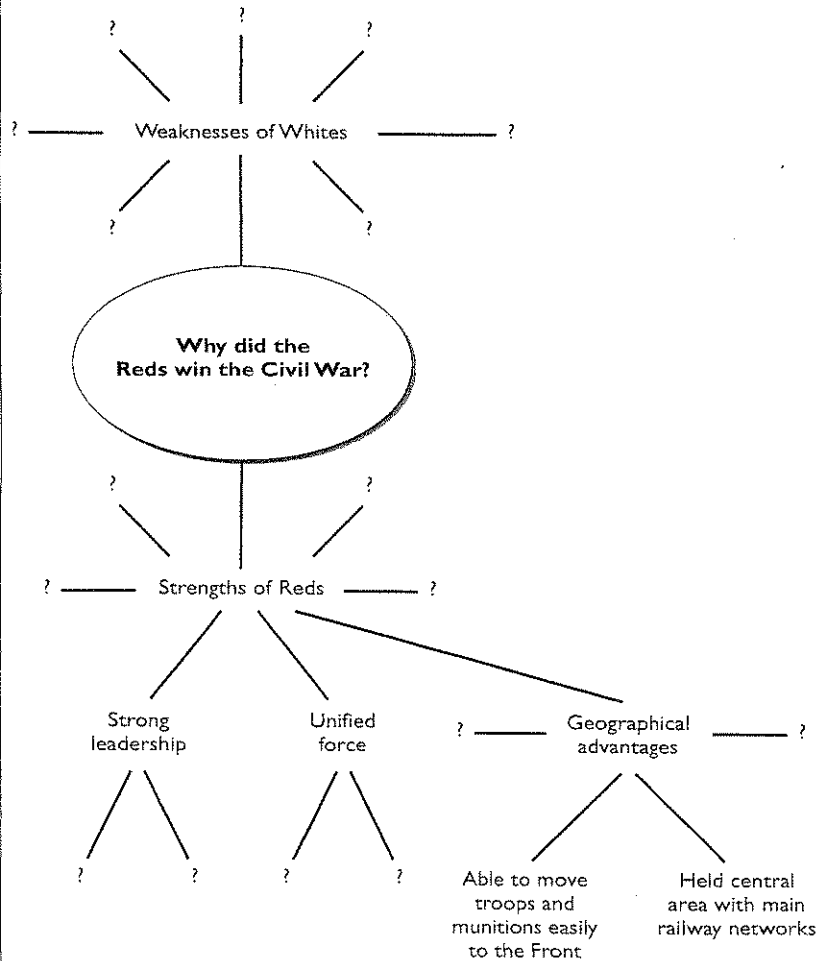
Method 1: Linear method

Draw up a table with Reds on one side and Whites on the other, as below. Then list the key points (using bullet points or numbers) under the appropriate heading. It is useful to treat the weaknesses of the Whites separately since some questions in exams focus specifically on this.

Factors favouring the Reds	Weaknesses of the Whites

Method 2: Spider or pattern diagrams

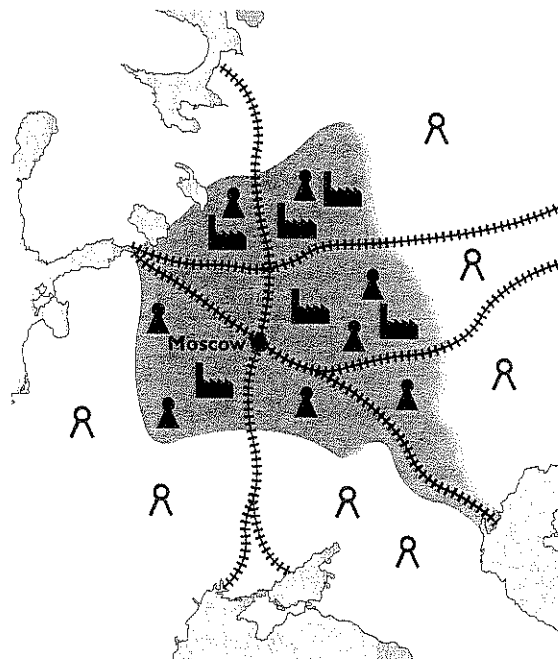
This method is particularly useful for seeing topics at a glance. The diagram below shows you how you might set out this one but it is best to follow your own logic as long as you split up the topic into coherent categories.



Use this diagram as the framework for your notes, but bring in any useful extra information from the Focus Route activities you have done in this chapter.

F Why did the Reds win?

■ 7E Why did the Reds win?

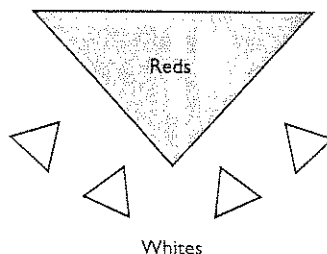


Geographical factors

- The Bolsheviks held the central area, which included Petrograd and Moscow. They moved their capital to Moscow, at the hub of the railway network. This made it easier to transport men and munitions to the battle fronts.
- This area also contained the main armament factories in Russia, so the Bolsheviks could carry on producing war materials. Much of the artillery, rifles and other military equipment of the old Russian army fell into Bolshevik hands.
- The central area was heavily populated (much more so than White-held areas), so the Bolsheviks were able to conscript large numbers to fight. Red armies often vastly outnumbered their White opponents.
- Whites were scattered around the edges of this central area, separated by large distances. This made communications difficult, especially moving men and weapons and co-ordinating the attacks of different White armies. They had no telephone links; they had to use officers on horseback to convey messages.

Unity and organisation

- The Bolsheviks had a single, unified command structure.
- Trotsky organised the Red Army into an effective fighting force. He turned it from a 'flabby, panicky mass' into a better organised army than the Whites.
- The Whites were made up of different groups who had entirely different aims and beliefs – they could not agree on whether they were fighting for monarchism, republicanism or for the Constituent Assembly. This made it hard for them to co-operate and impossible to develop a political strategy. They were also split by their views on national minorities.
- They had little chance of developing a co-ordinated military strategy. Often the White generals would not work together because they did not like or trust each other. For example, other generals were suspicious of Kolchak's motives and intentions.



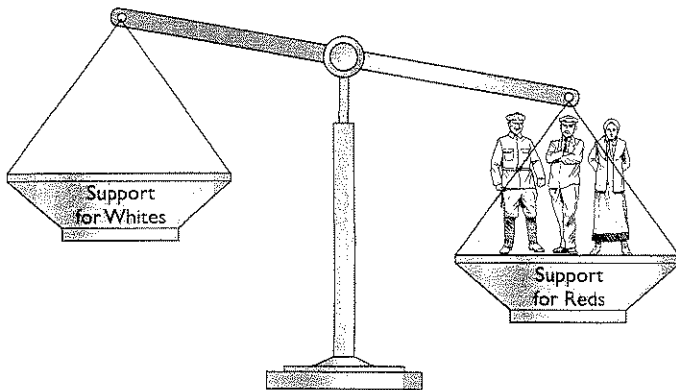
Leadership

- Trotsky proved himself to be a superb leader. Personally brave, he took his special forces to the parts of the Front where the fighting was fiercest. He was able to inspire and rally men.
- Discipline was very tough in the Red Army; the death penalty was used frequently. Unwilling peasant conscripts knew that certain death lay before them if they retreated in a battle – they would be machine-gunned by their own side.
- White leaders were, on the whole, second rate. Several were cruel and treated their men with contempt. They reminded the soldiers of the worst aspects of the Russian army and tsarist rule. Therefore, there was little natural warmth or support for the White leaders. Many soldiers deserted.
- The level of indiscipline and corruption in the White armies was extraordinary. Denikin said: 'I can do nothing with my army. I am glad when it carries out my combat orders.' In Omsk (Kolchak's base), uniforms and munitions supplied by foreign interventionist governments were sold on the black market, and officers lived in brothels in a haze of cocaine and vodka. Units of the Red Army sometimes ended up in English army uniforms and prostitutes in English nurses' uniforms.



Support

- The support of the peasants was crucial since they supplied the main body of soldiers for both sides. They had little love for either side and were just as inclined to desert from Red as from White armies into which they had been conscripted. But Lenin had legitimised their right to the land while the Whites made it clear that land would be restored to its former owners. Kolchak even gave estates to landlords who had not owned them before the revolution. So peasants were inclined to support the Reds.
- Whites lost the support of nationalist groups. White leaders wanted to restore the Russian empire with its pre-1917 borders. This antagonised national groups (separatists) such as the Ukrainians and Georgians who were looking for more autonomy in their affairs or complete independence. Therefore separatists would not support the Whites when White forces were based in their territory.
- The Bolsheviks had a core support group of some workers and soldiers but did not enjoy widespread popular support. War Communism and the way they managed the cities and food supply saw to that. But urban workers and peasants wanted to protect the gains of 1917 and the Reds seemed to offer them their best chance of doing this. The Whites were associated with the old system of government.



Other factors

- Foreign intervention should have worked in the Whites' favour and it certainly did bring them supplies and weapons. But it was half-hearted and largely ineffective. It also gave the Bolsheviks a propaganda coup because they could present themselves as the defenders of Russian soil against foreign forces.
- Both sides used propaganda but the Whites, particularly Denikin, did not see how valuable it was. The Reds used extremely imaginative and powerful images, including:
 - the Whites would take away land from the peasants
 - foreign invaders were supporting the Whites
 - the Reds offered a wonderful new society for workers and peasants.

