The Russian Revolution and Civil War

Causes of The March Revolution & the fall of the tsar
- In the early 1900s Russia had political, economic, & social problems
- The Tsarist government was corrupt
- The tsar used secret police to impose his will
- Russian defeats during World War I
- Huge numbers of casualties during the war
- Shortages of food, goods & fuel on the home front during the war
- Poor decisions by the tsar & government leaders
- In March 1917 tsar Nicholas II abdicated the throne & a provisional government took control of Russia

Lenin and the Bolsheviks
- Lenin set up a revolutionary party in Russia called the Bolsheviks which spread Marxist ideas
- Lenin was exiled & moved to Germany prior to World War I
- In March 1917, Germany saw a chance to weaken Russia by helping Lenin return home to stir up trouble in Russia

The November Revolution brought the Bolsheviks to power
- Soldiers, workers & peasants did not support the provisional government because the provisional government continued the war & did not address land reform
- In November 1917, Lenin & the Bolsheviks seized power from the provisional government

Russia Plunges Into Civil War
- Lenin sought peace with Germany & signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918, which gave Germany a huge chunk of Russian territory
- A civil war erupted between the Reds (Bolsheviks) & the counterrevolutionary “Whites”

Lenin Built A Communist Soviet Union
- Britain & the U.S. sent forces to help the Whites, but the Reds appealed to nationalism & urged Russians to drive out the foreigners
- The Bolsheviks (the Communists) organized the Cheka, a secret police force, which used terror to control the Russian people
- After three bitter years of fighting, the Communist eventually won the civil war
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  - In November 1917, Lenin & the Bolsheviks seized power from the provisional government
  - The Bolsheviks ended private ownership of land & distributed land to peasants & workers were given control of factories & mines
  - Lenin & the Bolsheviks gain support because they end the war with Germany by signing the Treaty of Brest

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- The Bolsheviks formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)
- The Communist party used the army & secret police to rule the USSR
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