• Lenin wanted a short, brutal conflict to destroy all opposition to the Bolsheviks.
• As early as December 1917, General Kornilov was gathering a volunteer army to fight against the government
• British war cabinet decided to support any group of Russians prepared to continue fighting Germans
• These groups were ‘anti-Bolshevik’ or ‘White Russians’. They received British ammunition, guns, tanks, planes and advisers to help destroy Lenin’s government. Led by officers from the former army and supported by peasants, landowners, businessmen and SRs. Attacked from every direction for more than 3 years
  ◦ General Denikin – 150,000 soldiers from south
  ◦ Admiral Kolchak – 100,000 soldiers from east
  ◦ General Miller – British forces from north
  ◦ General Yudenich – 14,400 from west
  ◦ ‘Green Armies’ – peasants and Cossacks demanding national independence
On the 23rd February 1918, Trotsky founded the Red Army and became its leader when he was named Commissar of War in March 1918. Workers and peasants were conscripted

16th March 1918 – British marines landed at Murmansk, ostensibly to protect allied stores in case of German submarines. They supported Admiral Kolchak

Japanese landed at Vladivostok April 1918, hoping to gain territory. Americans followed to “restrain” the Japanese

French landed with British at Archangel (and Australians – 200, 2 awarded VC’s)

7th May 1918 – 30,000 man Czech Legion attempted to travel via Trans-Siberian and ship from Vladivostok to the battlefields. Bolshevik groups became hostile to this invasion so they aligned with the white forces and fought them out of Russia

April-October 1920 – Poles attempted to seize territory and forced Reds back to Riga

The Bolsheviks thought that the Polish workers would rise up in rebellion against their own government; however, the Polish saw it as a typical example of Russian aggression and drove the Red Army back over the border. This affected Soviet morale and forced them to rethink the idea of international revolution.

DID THE RED ARMY WIN THE CIVIL WAR OR DID THE WHITES LOSE?

Red Army conscripted workers and peasants, Trotsky enforced strict military discipline (Oath of the Red Warrior was compulsory). In 1920, they had 5 million soldiers and also appointed 50,000 former Tsarist military officers to lead, and loyal Bolsheviks to make sure they stayed loyal to the Reds

Cheka committed atrocities to enforce compliance with the Communist government. Bukharin – ‘One cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs’

Reds had greater commitment – united in purpose, propaganda represented Whites as combined evil forces of Tsarism, bourgeoisie, superstition and capitalism

Reds focused their efforts on Petrograd and Moscow – key industry controlled by them and a large part of the population

White armies were divided ideologically and geographically

Whites did not use effective propaganda – many peasants deserted to the Reds, seeing them as the lesser of two evils

1. Consider the above six reasons. Rank them in order of importance in explaining why the Bolsheviks won the Civil War.

2. Justify why you believe the reason you’ve ranked number 1 is the most significant.

3. Are there other reasons that you consider more vital to the six listed? Why?