3) The state should produce everything in its own undertakings. The state tried to control the activities of millions of peasants.

4) Extreme centralisation was introduced. The economic life of the area controlled by the Bolsheviks was put into the hands of just a few organisations. The most important one was the Supreme Economic Council. This had the right to confiscate and requisition.

The speciality of the SEC was the management of industry. Over 40 head departments (known as glavki) were set up to accomplish this. One glavki could be responsible for thousands of factories. This frequently resulted in chronic inefficiency. The Commissariat of Transport controlled the railways. The Commissariat of Agriculture controlled what the peasants did.

5) The state attempted to become the soul distributor as well as the sole producer. The Commissariats took what they needed to meet demands. The people were divided into four categories — manual workers in harmful trades, workers who performed hard physical labour, workers in light tasks/housewives and professional people. Food was distributed on a 4:3:2:1 ratio. Though the manual class was the favoured class, it still received little food. Many in the professional class simply starved. It is believed that about 0% of all food consumed came from an illegal source.

On July 20th 1918, the Bolsheviks decided that all surplus food had to be surrendered to the state. This led to an increase in the supply of grain to the state. From 1917 to 1928, about ¾ million ton was collected by the state. From 1920 to 1921, this had risen to about 6 million tons. However, the policy of forcing to hand over surplus food caused huge resentment in the countryside, especially as Lenin had promised “all land to the people” pre-November 1917. While the peasants had the land, they had not been made aware that they would have to hand over any extra food they produced from their land. Even the extra could not meet demand. In 1933, 25 million tons of grain was collected and this only just met demand.

6) War Communism attempted to abolish money as a means of exchange. The Bolsheviks wanted to go over to a system of a natural economy in which all transactions were carried out in kind. Effectively, bartering would be introduced. By 1921, the value of the rouble had dropped massively and inflation had markedly increased. The government’s revenue raising ability was chronically poor, as it had abolished most taxes. The only tax allowed was the ‘Extraordinary Revolutionary Tax’; which was targeted at the rich and not the workers.

War Communism was a disaster. In all areas, the economic strength of Russia fell below the 1914 level. Peasant farmers only grew for themselves, as they knew that any extra would be taken by the state. Therefore, the industrial cities were starved of food despite the
introduction of the 4:3:2:1 ratio. A bad harvest could be disastrous for the countryside – and even worse for cities. Malnutrition was common, as was disease. Those in the cities believed that their only hope was to move out to the countryside and grow food for themselves.

Between 1916 and 1920, the cities of northern and central Russia lost 33% of their population to the countryside. Under War Communism, the number of those working in the factories and mines dropped by 50%.

THE CIVIL WAR FURTHERED

TROTSKY’S REFORM OF THE RED ARMY

LOYALTY- He ensured that the loyalty of former trust officers by holding their family hostage. Many of these officers were unemployed, hungry and poor anyways. Trotsky attached a political commissar to each army unit to report on officers’ actions and information

ORGANISATION- Soldiers’ committees and the election of officers by soldiers were ended. Trotsky established harsh military discipline, bringing back the death penalty. Former labour battalions.

PERSONALITY- Energy, passion, organisational abilities. Not a military strategist and chief contribution was overall charge, holding things together.

IMPACT ON CIVIL WAR – Brought greater centralisation and the Party control. Party structure based on annual congress, elected by mass membership.

The peasants were afraid that a White victory would reverse the land taken from the gentry during the revolution. The whites had made it clear that they would not go beyond the Kadet programme, under the gentry’s surplus land would be sold to peasants at a future date. But under this the peasants would have to give back ¾ of the land they took.

WHAT WERE THE REASONS FOR THE WHITES FAILURE?

- Reds had superiority of numbers
- Controlled vast terrain of central Russia with its prestigious capitals, most of the country’s industry
- Core of the railway network
- Support of peasants

Whites were divided by several fronts and had to rely on Allies for many supplies.
Marxist doctrine had talked of the state ‘withering away’; Stalin not only upheld it but also extended one-party domination and redefined centralisation. Stalin’s new constitution of 1936 included democratic structures such as universal suffrage; it was made clear that the Communist party and their institutions were the only bodies that could put candidates up for election.

Bolsheviks keen to control new communist countries by the COMINTERN and keeping them from the Social Democrats of the Second International. At the second congress, the countries of the Comintern were made to sign the ‘21 conditions’ which meant breaking off relations with the socialists in their countries and accepting the conditions of the Russian-dominated Executive Committee.

Structure of government still allowed for parallel appointments in both government and Party hierarchy, but the NOMENKLATURA system of privileges that was used to reward local officials had the effect of concentrating decision-making into a much smaller number of hands.

The ultimate source of all authority was increasingly concentrated into the hands of Stalin, rather than the Party. The ultimate source of authority was increasingly into the hands of Stalin. From the mid 1930s he no longer depended on the party and could avoid meetings.

Centralisation meant that all power emanated from Stalin himself, working with individuals or small groups. Stalin left Moscow and disliked mass meetings. Added to his own mystique by restricting those who had access to him.

Said the commissars at these meetings of Sovnarkom trembled at him in meetings. Within the Stalinist state, no independent institutions were permitted to emerge, no rival powers centres were countenanced; and, where possible, younger officials were placed in positions of authority.

Sometimes been suggested that the Soviet Union changed from a ‘one party state with a powerful leader’ to a ‘personal dictatorship’ in the 1930s. However it must be remembered that Stalin relied on the workings of a highly bureaucratic structure and the policies he made sometimes did weaken his authority.

**RUSSIA AT WAR: POLITICAL AUTHORITY**

**WARTIME LEADERSHIP**

Stalin met his Politburo immediately after and his wartime order was to demand that the German air force be destroyed and the invading forces annihilated. He left public announcement to Molotov possibly because he could not bring himself to do so.
Stalin’s leadership was undisputed, as a war hero who presided over a
world superpower, he could rule more or less as he chose to whilst those
around him competed for the privilege of fulfilling his will.

**POLITICAL HIGH STALINISM**

Stalin’s approach to government was ‘back
to the future’ as Wartime developments
worried Stalin. Increased Party
membership under lax wartime rules had
made the Party unwieldy and potentially
unreliable, while the reputation of the
Soviet military was left too high for his
liking.

Wartime institutions were dismantled and the GKO was dissolved on 4
SEPTEMBER 1945. The military hierarchy was downgraded and Stalin
took the role of Minister of Defence and high-ranking officers were moved
to inferior posts.

**Marshal Zhukov** who was seen as a potential rival for popular adulation,
was demoted and sent to the military command in Odessa. Removal of
Malenkov and Zhdanov became Stalin’s closest adviser - launching the
Zhdanovshchina.

A further disagreement occurred over foreign policy with Zhdanov and
Malenkov with the Berlin blockade of 1948 while Malenkov argued for a
more moderate path. Zhukov and his followers were demoted and
Malenkov was re-appointed to the Party Secretariat.

Although the Central Committee met in **March 1946** and elected a new
Politburo, Secretariat and Ogburo, which met regularly, Stalin continued to
hold the reins of power in his position as Head of Government and Head of
the Party.

Party no longer had any real supervisory role over the Government and
the regular institutions were undermined in this period.

Party congresses, which should have met every three years, were not held
between **1939 and 1952**, and only six full meetings of the Central
Committee were convened during this time. The Politburo was reduced to
an advisory body, which awaited instruction on the ‘official’ line from
Stalin or his spokesman, and much of the decision-making took place in
small ad hoc gatherings, between Stalin and those privileged to be in his
inner circle.

Recruitment to the Party fell back from the war years. Still, by **1952**, it
had nearly **7 million** members while KOMOSOL had around **16 million**.
These new members were once again recruited from ‘administrative’