Fundamental Laws- issued April 1906- 5 days before first Duma met.

- Reasserted his autocratic powers/rights to:
  - Dissolve Duma.
  - Veto legislation + overturn verdicts given in a court of law.
  - Command Russia’s army + navy.
  - Control Orthodox church.
  - Direct foreign relations/declare war.
  - Rule by decree in emergency/when no duma in session.

1st duma (May-July 1906) ‘Duma of Public Anger’

- Boycotted by Bs, SRs + extreme right.
- Mostly radical-liberal- 1/3 peasants.
- Requested radical reforms- when refused- passed ‘vote of no confidence’ in government.
- Dissolved July.
- Sent 200 delegates to Vyborg/ tried to organize protest- failed/leaders imprisoned.

2nd duma (Feb-June 1907)

- More Left-Wing Bs, Ms + SRs participated.
- Opposed government.
- Passed important land reform.
- Dissolved after refusing to support Stolypin’s agrarian reforms- some delegates arrested + exiled.
- Changed in composition- Stolypin illegally increased representations of gentry.

3rd duma (1907-1912)

- Agreed to majority of gov proposals but disputed some reforms.
- Election restricted to only richest 30% of male population
- Radical opposition called it ‘Duma of Lords + Lackeys’- due to pro-government views.
- Suspended twice 1911.

4th duma (1912-1917)

- Largely ignored by government.
- Very pro-Tsar + conservative.

Duma evaluation:

- 3rd/4th Duma not so radical- government more inclined to listen.
- Some reforms successful:
  - Improvements to army + navy.
  - Universal primary education
  - Land captains replaced by justices of peace in 3rd/4th Duma.
- Centre for political discussion- although extremely limited allowed people for 1st time to express thoughts.
  - Symbolically important- established representative government- precedent for further democratic reforms in future.
- Boost to rapidly growing civil society- parties + Trade Unions now legal, relaxation of censorship- new publications flourished- demonstrated Russia was a more pluralistic society.
- Important role in refining + improving legislation- delegates brought knowledge from different professions, classes + regions- used to improve new laws.
- Democratic smokescreen- claimed some form of democratic legitimacy when in fact very little.
- Couldn’t prevent unconstitutional actions of government that weakened Duma.
- Not allowed to vote to approve/repeal Tsar’s decrees.
- Didn’t provide adequate representation of people/adequate voice for concerns.
- Laws + rights couldn’t be passed.
Lenin’s return + growth of Bolshevik support

3rd April 1917 Lenin returned- Germans helped expecting L to seize power and make peace.

April Theses:
- ‘All power to the Soviets’.
- War should be ended immediately.
- ‘Peace, Land and Bread’.
- Land redistribution.
- Petrograd Soviet should refuse to cooperate with Provisional Government.
- Published in Pravda.
- L adapted Marxist theory- argued Russian middle class was too weak to carry through a full bourgeois revolution/allowing middle class to continue power was to hold inevitable proletarian revolution back.

Bolshevik responses:
- Some thought these radical proposals would do more harm than good- thought L had grown out of touch.
- Allegations L was in pay of Germans.
- Ms feared L would undermine what they’d been doing, stirring up discontent/provoke right-wing reaction.
- Some believed it was unrealistic to oppose Provisional Government as B’s were still a minority among socialists.
- Lenin convinced Central Committee of the B’s.
  ⇒ Gradually built support through speeches/sheer force of personality.
- July 1917- Trotsky joined B’s.
- June 1917- First All Russian Congress of Soviets- overwhelming vote of confidence in Provisional Government.
- Kerensky’s determination to continue war played into B’s hands but July days threatened to undermine their ‘good work’.

July Days- 3-5th
- Grain prices in Petrograd x2 between Feb and June/shortages fuel + raw materials forced 586 factories close-100,000 lost job.
- 20,000 armed Kronstadt armed sailors joined workers’ & soldiers on streets- demanding Soviet take power.
- Soviet newspaper Izvestia denounced role of B- suggested L working in pay of Germans/against Russia’s best interests.
- Lenin fled to Finland/Trotsky imprisoned.
- L’s reputation fell for fleeing not leading.
- B propaganda burned/office of Pravda closed.
- Showed B’s were not a dominant revolutionary party/in no position to takeover/Provisional Government still had strength to put down armed insurrection.

Kornilov coup involvement- reputation rose/support grew massively.
- Kerensky supplied B’s with arms- seized opp to organise bands of workers commanded by their Red Guards.
- Reputation of being the group to have opposed Kornilov consistently.
- L sent orders from Finland urging followers to keep up pressure/‘Committees to save Revolution’ set up all over Russia.
- B’s increasingly elected to soviets/Duma elections in Moscow- B support increased by 164% between June + Dec.
- October- membership 200,000, had 41 newspapers and a force of 10,000 Red Guards.
- September- won majority in Petrograd Soviet/Trotsky became chairmen- placed B’s in a powerful position.
- However- B’s not tightly organised group- tended to go along with events than initiate change.
Bolshevik strengths

- Tactics- L’s April Theses- opportunist- stole SRs land policy to win peasant support.
  ⇒ Radicalised workers favoured soviet power.
- Targeted soldiers- trench bolshevism- version of Pravda.
- Temporarily became mass party- October-240,000.
- Fewer divisions then other parties due to democratic centralism/L’s leadership.
- Popular in key cities.
- Determined leadership of L- strong sense of purpose.
- Focus of opposition- Provisional Government- used their failures- boost support.
- Trotsky’s organisation- Military Revolutionary Committee/using All Russian Congress of Soviets/planning actual takeover.
- Military collapse Sep/Oct- army not in position to stop B. Petrograd garrison actively supported B’s/majority soldiers refused to oppose them.
- Economic crisis acute by Oct- people hungry.

Provisional Government weaknesses

- Temporary in nature- couldn’t make binding decisions for long-term future of Russia.
- Shared power with Soviet- limited scope for action.
- Division between liberals + socialists-lack of clear policies.
- Lacked popular support- policies antagonized peasants/radicalized workers.
  ⇒ Continued war.
  ⇒ Wouldn’t legitimise peasant takeover of land.
  ⇒ Failed to ensure food supplies to cities as mishandled peasant relationship.
  ⇒ Refused autonomy to national minorities.
  ⇒ Did little about economic deterioration/social reform.
- Couldn’t command support of Petrograd garrison.

Bolshevik seizure of power October 1917

- L demanded Central Committee of B party to stage a revolution/seize power.
  ⇒ Central Committee feared Russia wasn’t economically ready for revolution- no action till Provisional Government promised elections.
- Trotsky wanted to work through Petrograd Soviet/wait for Congress of Soviets- scheduled 26th.
- 7-9 October- Lenin secretly returns to try persuade Central Committee.
- Kerensky responded- more radical army units sent out of capital.
  ⇒ Provided B with excuse to set up ‘Military Revolutionary Committee’ to defend city.
  ⇒ Claimed Kerensky abandoned the capital to allow German to take it.
- 10 October- Lenin persuaded Central Committee to vote for armed risings- L- Zinoviev + Kamenev opposed.
- 24 Oct- Kerensky tried to close 2 B newspapers/raised funds for loyal working class areas to centre of Petrograd- B used this as an excuse to act.
  ⇒ B propagandists suggested Kerensky not a leader of Soviet/abandonment of principles of Feb revolution.
- 5000 Kronstadt sailors/soldiers move into city/B Red Guards seized key positions around the capital.
- 25 Oct- Kerensky left Petrograd for the front hoping to gain support from loyal troops.
  ⇒ Remaining Provisional Government met at the winter palace.
  ⇒ Armed B’s entered palace/arrested them.

Was the October revolution a popular revolution?

- Supported by the workers or take-over by small group of revolutionaries?
- Soviet historians- workers provided power base through which revolution was accomplished/B party guided working class to success.
  ⇒ Idealised L’s role- presented as central directing force who won over the masses with his April Theses/built up B membership/persuaded Central Committee to take action in October.
- In reality- relatively small-scale affair but suited B’s to claim larger their legitimacy based upon ‘popular revolution’.
  ⇒ It was Trotsky who organised Red Guard/took command in Petrograd Soviet/dominated Military Revolutionary Committee/organised actual seize of power.
  ⇒ L absent for most of 1917- simply reacted to events- not driver of the revolution.
  ⇒ When L was in Russia he stayed in Petrograd rather than trying to create a truly Russian revolution.
- Robert Service argues Russia was heading for a socialist takeover anyway/L merely ensured this was a B takeover.
- Provisional Government’s failures more important than L’s leadership in bring B’s into power.
- More liberal view- some radicalism/spontaneous rebellion B’s able to exploit.