

The february revolution

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



The February Revolution 1917 The February Revolution in 1917 marked the end of the Tsardom and long-ruling Romanov dynasty. There are many long-term and short-term causes which led to the overthrow of monarchy in Russia. Long-term causes can include weaknesses of the Russian monarchy, failure of having strong armed forces, agricultural backwardness and late industrialization. First World War, Tsar Nicholas II mistakes, growing peasants unrest, bad harvest, food shortages, famine and growing political opposition can be regarded as short-term causes which determined the downfall of the Tsardom. The Revolution in February and abdication of Nicholas II led to the creation of the Provisional Government led by Prince Lvov.

LONG-TERM REASONS

1. Weaknesses of the Russian monarchy:
 - * A failure to match the military strength of European Great Powers
 - * A failure to solve the widespread peasant poverty
 - * A failure to achieve successful industrialization
 - * A failure to address any social, economic and political reforms (refusing up to 1905 to share any of its power with its subject)
2. Failure of having strong armed forces:
 - * Russia's backwardness exposed during the Crimean War 1854-56
 - * Armed forces humiliated by British and French
 - * Lack of industrialization influenced backwardness of Russia's military strength, could not compete with the Great Powers
 - * Defeat by Japan 1904-05
 - * People disappointed
3. Agricultural backwardness:
 - * Despite of personal freedom 1861 by Alexander II " Tsar- Liberator" rural poverty remained
 - * Chronic land shortage
 - * Rapidly growing peasant population
 - * Very low literacy rate
 - * The burden of redemption payments
4. Late industrialization:
 - * Industrial workers only 1% of Russia's population
 - * Fall further behind rapidly industrializing countries like USA, UK and Germany
 - * 1890s attempt to catch up with the

West and retain great military power status * Coal production increased by 50% 1880-1900, industry grew at 8% annually, by 1900 world's fifth industrial power * Industrial growth highly depended on foreign investments- 1900 world recession hit Russia hard * Rapidly growing urban population, crowded into rapidly growing cities of St Petersburg and Moscow * Social tensions, worsened the condition of the peasants- high taxes on them in order to fund industrialization

SHORT-TERM REASONS

1. First World War: * Military disaster in the war * Germans crushed the Russians * No plans for wartime munitions production * Incapable of competing with Germany's armed forces * Only 4.5 mln industrial workers out of 159 mln population, new workers were untrained, former peasants mainly * Army- colossal body of poorly trained conscripts, it expanded too quickly in order to achieve efficient trained troops * 1 mln Russians surrendered during 1915

2. Tsar Nicholas II * Appointed himself commander-in-chief in 1915- people blamed him for failures during the war * The Duma which was created after 1905 Revolution was undermined by the Tsar, ministers were responsible to him, not the Duma, refused to work with the Duma- by 1914 the Duma parties were allying themselves with the growing strike movement * Nicholas' political incompetence * Tsarina Alexandra- widely unpopular because of her arrogance and German background- was given greater authority in the Duma * Reliant on holy man Rasputin, his unsavoury reputation undermined respect for the Royal family

3. Growing peasant unrest, bad harvest, food shortages and famine * Demanded land reforms which were not given by the tsar * Inflation: government spending increased 1914-1916 by 800%, prices increased by 400% * Food shortages: 15 mln peasants were taken to the

army, horses were taken by the army, bad harvest, could not afford to buy scarce manufactured goods 4. Growing political opposition: * Nicholas II did not want to share his power with the Duma * Tsar's ministers advised him to make concessions to the Duma but Nicholas II did not * Duma politicians, the Octobrist and Kadet leaders and the generals began to plot to remove the tsar Tsar Nicholas II abdicated in March 1917 and so the Provisional Government under Prince Lvov was created.