

Causes of the february revolution

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



The February Revolution of 1917 was first of the two revolutions in Russia in 1917, the revolution which began the transformation of the country. As an immediate result of this revolution, Tsar Nicholas II decided to abdicate, which led to the end of the Romanov dynasty. The Tsar was immediately replaced by the provisional government and at the same time the Petrograd Soviet, which ruled alongside the Provisional Government. The revolution broke out very swiftly, but it did change Russia from its autocratic regime.

The revolution is considered to be very spontaneous in terms of planning; however we cannot consider it completely spontaneous since there were significant causes for it, causes in the rule of country and causes related to the WW1. The revolution and the fall of Tsar were expected due to the long term situation in Russia. The economic factors were one of the main factors which led to the Revolution. In the period of 19th to 20th century Russia was a very backward agricultural country. The royal family, the noble part of the society and clergy owned most of the land fit for agriculture.

Peasants had to pay high prices for the rent of the land to their landlords and in addition the lack of proper tools for agriculture worsened the situation. The situation was also worsened by implements and methods of cultivation, which were not too productive. All this stacked up created great dissatisfaction in the peasantry - millions of Russian people could not carry on this way, since many of them were starving. The poverty was spread further than the rural areas of the empire - the urban industrial sphere was also very backward and depended only on capital of foreign countries.

The workers and labourers had to endure the most miserable working conditions in the factories of the cities. They worked 12 to 14 hours a day,
<https://assignbuster.com/causes-of-the-february-revolution/>

received very low wages and no medical assistance in case of an accident while working. Trade unions were restricted and considered as a crime. The previous government did not do anything about the devastating situation in the factories and let millions of people live in terrible poverty, dirt and disease even in cities caused by the unbearably high taxes.

Great intimidation also grew in workers of the city factories. Another very significant why Russia had been led to the miserable stage before the revolution it was the way how Tsar Nicholas II ruled his empire. Tsar Nicholas II, a man who came to the Russian throne before he was ready or willing, showed little expertise at handling affairs of state. In fact, it may be said that he made poor judgments from the beginning of his reign until the end.

Not only did he refuse to relax his grip on tsarist autonomy, which he felt was his divine right to bear as ruler of Russia, but he refused to recognise progress in government, was hopeless as a leader (either while behind a desk or on the war front), and was stubborn when it came to listening to advice from his aides. This is seen in the example of Duma. Before the first Duma met, the government promised the constitution, the Fundamental Laws. He retained huge executive and legislative powers, including the control of the army and foreign policy, the right to dissolve the Duma and to dismiss his ministers.

Instead of hearing out a suggestion from the Duma, Tsar would always give his own personal advice to the Duma instead. Through the incompetent actions, Tsar had lost the trust of his people, he made wrong decisions for Russia's sake when they stepped into the war with Japan. Tsar's shortest straw for his people was when he decided to open fire to the demonstration

on the Bloody Sunday. The society was not content with the work of their leader and therefore, more and more people adapted to alternative reasoning rather which was not in favour of that time's monarchy.

It is clear that a lot of people did not want to put up with the constant down spiralling because of the autocracy, many people decided to rise against the situation. These people were split between the reformers and a smaller group of revolutionaries. The reformers, or Liberals, wanted to modernise Russia gradually. They wanted free elections, more education for the people and no censorship. The revolutionaries, on the other hand, wanted to throw out the whole tsarist system and build a different one.

Revolutionaries were the ones waiting for the perfect moment to strike the match since the autocratic regime had caused a long term fatigue in the society - the long term situation let them was highly in favour of this group in terms of revolution, only a slight push to the angered people was needed to proceed. There were also direct causes for the revolution to break out - the main event which heated up the situation in Russia was the war that Russians fought - WWI. Russia was industrialised very weakly and men were ill-equipped for battles and many generals were conservative and ignorant in terms of war strategies.

When the German armies took over Poland, heavy casualties were endured and morals of the army strongly reduced. Tsar decided to take initiative and personally become the commander-in-chief of the Russian army, but this decision made the Tsar even worse since he was far from a strong battle strategist. This caused mass desertion from the frontline - a large part of Russian army was not loyal to its leader anymore. Tsar's attempts to lead

<https://assignbuster.com/causes-of-the-february-revolution/>

the Russian army also lead to another myriad of problems - the leader was basically stripped of loyal forces, there was no one to ensure the order anymore.

In 1915, when the Tsar left the capital to do his duty as the commander-in-chief, the home administration was left to Alexandra (the Tsarina) who kept receiving a great influence from Rasputin. He filled the ministries by his own favourites. Rasputin's administration was detested by all Russians and by the end of 1916. The liberals in Duma were determined to extract more political concessions from the Tsar. Even though they did not like a revolution, it was clear they would be in sympathy with a revolution, if it came, as there was no sympathy for the Tsar and his family at all.

Finally, the last factor, why Russia was embraced by a revolution was the rise in price for goods - food became very scarce because of the war, and people were literally starving. After the final moves of Tsar as commander, the economic crisis was at its peak. This economic catastrophe developed due to several particular following factors - Russia's cut off from outer aid because of Central Powers blockade, the inadequate transport system and mainly the need of factories to manufacture equipment for the unnaturally enormous army. As simple as that - hunger could not keep people waiting and that made workers break out with strikes and riots.

With Tsar's final moves as a commander in the war, he had lost everything he could lost and his people could not wait anymore - they were physically forced to strike against. Russia had truly experienced dark times before the revolution - especially during the WWI, when people were starving, when soldiers did not completely understand what they were fighting for and when

the heir to throne acted completely against interests of the majority. People had finally come to the point, when they were ready to replace their frustration for something new, the society was highly motivated by the ideas of the Bolsheviks.

All the observed factors which lead to the revolution clearly lead to the impression that revolution was truly something that which was expected and could be foreseen, people of Russia struggled for a very long time and it was only a temporary question. WWI was the perfect moment for the revolution.