

Why did the tsarist regime collapse in 1917

[Politics](#), [Communism](#)



Why did the Tsarist regime collapse in 1917? ' By the beginning of 1917, tsarism was rotting from within. '(1) Romanov's had ruled Russia since 1613 but people were unhappy and the Tsarist regime was due to collapse for and it was inevitable that it would happen soon, it finally did under Tsar Nicholas II in 1917. There were many factors as to why the Tsarist regime collapsed some of the most important were Tsar's personality, political opposition, peasants and workers and The World War I. One of the factors that lead the tsarist regime to collapse was Tsar's personality.

Nicholas II was coronated in 1894 but he wasn't ready to be a Tsar because just in 1881 he witnessed his granddads, Alexander II's assassination when his carriage was blown up. Nicholas was not a strong character and he didn't want to be a Tsar but he was religious and both he and his wife Alexandra believed they were chosen by God and couldn't challenge his decision. ' He had intelligence... faith and courage but he was... ignorant about governmental matters. Nicky had been trained as a soldier. He had not been taught statesmanship and... as not a statesman. ' (2) Also he was more of a familyman rather than a ruler and was a devoted husband and father who looked good in the eyes of his people but he didn't really bother about what happened to Russia and didn't really do what he was meant to do; rule the country, which weakened him significantly. Although he was a good father he was unhappy as his only son Alexis suffered from haemophilia and it was likely to die young which again out the Tsar away from ruling the country. He was ignorant and refused to share power. He mistrusted most of his ministers and yet was incapable of carrying out the task of ruling the vast Russian empire alone. ' (7) At first peasants were loyal to him and believed

he'd carry on what his granddad did, free servants, relax censorship of the press, improve conditions of the army, change education and bring in Zemstva; locally elected councils, however he made the government weaker, he was almost the 'invisible' Tsar as he never travelled so his people didn't know him and he couldn't see what was best for them.

People were poor, the communication and travel were awful as Russia was such a massive country, there were all sorts of nationalities and religions in the country so people couldn't communicate well, the society was 'backward' as there were too many workers and peasants (82% of population) and they were poor and had no laws, the nobles had everything. As the tsar didn't travel he couldn't stop any revolutions and so he weakened himself. People began to question him and his ability to rule Russia; they were unhappy and started to plot on how to overthrow him. The present ruler has lost absolutely the affection of Russian people, and whatever the future may have in store for the dynasty, the present Tsar will never again be safe in the midst of his people. ' (9) This showed people he was careless and weakened him. Another factor that led the tsarist regime to collapse was the political opposition. ' The key question is this-is the peaceful renovation of the country possible? Or is it possible only by internal revolution? '(6) There were many people who wanted the Tsar to collapse.

Some like Octobrists or Kadets were more peaceful. Kadets were middle-class liberals who wanted elected parliament. They had the support of well educated wealthy people in towns, but that wasn't enough people and they didn't attract peasants and workers which was bad as they were the majority. The Social Revolutionaries and Social Democrats wanted

revolution. 'Both groups were prepared to work with the liberals, providing the latter continued to push the tsarist regime towards greater democracy and parliamentary power. (5) Social Revolutionaries were supported by peasants and they wanted to give peasants land to make their life better and make them happy, however because of the size of the country and ignorance of the peasants, the revolution was impossible. They were divided in aims and methods as some wanted to share land and some wanted communism and eventually their revolution didn't happen. Lenin and Trotsky were in the Social Democrats; they were supported by factory workers and followed communist teachings.

They wanted to overthrow the government, however they were also divided; Mensheviks wanted to get a big group of people including the middle class but Bolsheviks wanted small amount of people who would organise strikes and demonstrations. ' We Bolsheviks will not shirk the task. '(1) This showed the people that if so many people wanted change then surely there is something wrong with the Tsar's ruling. The 1905 revolution was the perfect opportunity for opposition to show the Tsar how many people needed change and to show people the Tsar was not fit to rule.

The spark that started it off was the Bloody Sunday it was a peaceful petition from Father Gapon to ask for change but the Tsar got troops to attack the 200, 000 workers who marched to him to ask for help, but the Tsar didn't care he feared for his life, maybe he knew he was a bad Tsar and thought that people were coming to assassinate him like his grandfather. This got people to think whether the Tsar actually care about his people.

The economic problems also led to the revolution, the government borrowed money, the violence from troops continued, the taxes for poorest went up, the working and living conditions were terrible and people were angry. The Russo-Japanese war meant prices went up and shops lacked food and goods, industries closed leaving people unemployed and hungry and even though Tsar thought war was a good idea he became less popular as people thought he was incapable to rule and Russia got defeated and humiliated which was yet another one of Tsars mistakes. There were riots and disorders in the streets, and I think it's the best description of a revolution; people were smashing up shops, looting bread shops; women particularly. '(1) Everyone hated the Tsar which weakened the Tsarist regime as people knew the Tsar wasn't fit to rule them. The next factors that lead the Tsarist regime to collapse were the peasants and workers. At first the people saw Tsar as a father figure as that was what the Orthodox Church taught and people were very religious and they blamed landlords and factory owners.

People believed Russia will change under Nicholas, when he was crowned 'The crowds have been building up for two days. '(1) However this quickly began to change and peasants and workers realised that the Tsar didn't care about them but they had hope. The workers, worked over 12 hours, they were poor, and they had hard work and had no privacy. Factories were open 24/7 and 30 people had to be cramped into a one little room and worked for minimal wages.

Whole families including children were working just so they could buy something to eat and improve their lives. Both workers and peasants ate

cheap, awful food and their life expectancy was less than 40 years. The peasants didn't have enough land; some of them were taken to work in factories as 4/5 people at that time were peasants. This angered them and they started to blame the Tsar directly. ' They receive terrible wages and generally live in overcrowded conditions... but manufactures have received permission to use overtime. (3) People were so fed up they ' increasingly formed protests. ' (4) Which was really bad for the Tsar, as peasants and workers formed protests everyone would soon find out and join them. There were so many of the workers that when Father Gapon made a petition ' Do not refuse to help your people. Destroy the wall between yourself and your people. '(12), it wasn't hard to get 200, 000 people to march to Tsar with him but the Tsar was already threatened and killed most of them, ' The soldiers fired all day long. (8) However peasants didn't give up on wanting their bit of land and so when after 1905 revolution they were promised it as the Tsar promised it to them, they stopped all protests and were overwhelmed but a year later the Tsar took it away from them, which was a massive mistake as he proved that he didn't care about his people at all and was another reason to get rid of him. Russian people were angry and wanted to get rid of the Tsar. Instead of ' destroying the wall' Nicholas II made it bigger and this weakened his regime.

The last factor that lead the Tsarist regime to collapse was the World War I. Russia suffered from shortage of food due to bad harvests, poor transport and loosing rich farmland to Germans, people were starving and were unhappy ' The combination of a population explosion, backward farming techniques and poor policy making had made for a grave crisis'(5) but the

Tsar decided to leave Russia went to be the commander-in-chief of the war. ' His decisions showed him to be hopelessly out of touch. (1) Russia had no good rifles and soldiers had to wait for someone in front of them to die so they could take their rifle and participate in the war. ' If we should have three days of serious fighting, we might run out of ammunition altogether. '(10) The support of the army ebbed away and the Tsar could no longer blame the defeats on his subordinated and had to take the responsibility himself, the soldiers now blamed him directly for their misery.

The peasants who made up most of the army and had the image of the wise and caring Tsar further shattered. As the Tsar left, he left Tsarina in charge of Russia, Alexandra refused to take any advice from loyal middle-class ' Alexandra was the dominant personality in the relationship' (7) and she refused to share power like the Tsar, and so she was blamed for everything that went wrong. The patriotic people became frustrated at Tsarina's incompetence; they were convinced someone else would be better.

People hated everything German, they even changed the name St. Petersburg to Petrograd as it sounded too German, but Tsarina was German, which made her more unpopular. There were rumours that she was sabotaging Russia and was a German spy so that Germany could win the war. Rasputin was believed to be a holy man as he healed Alexis and so he had a lot of influence over Tsarina, there were a lot of scandals surrounding them which made Tsarina even more unpopular. People believed they had an affair and there were rumours that they were German agents. Alexandra made decisions based on whims or messages from God, mediated by

Rasputin. '(1) People believed he was leading the country to its doom. Russian's were angry as Rasputin was just a peasant and he helped to rule the country and they didn't understand why such person should be allowed to do that. Some were also wondering why the Tsar allowed Rasputin to be so close with the royal family ' I did realise that the man possessed great hypnotic power. '(11) Finally in December 1916, Rasputin got murdered by a group of jealous nobles ' Rasputin was dead... ur hearts filled with hope' (1) but it was too late to restore the reputation of the royal family in the eyes of Russian people and so this weakened and lead to the destruction of Tsarist regime. In conclusion I think that the most important weakness was Tsar's personality as, he didn't want to be a Tsar in the first place, he was ignorant and if he tried to listen to his ministers he wouldn't have made as many mistakes as the Russo-Japanese war or the Bloody Sunday; so in effect the 1905 revolution.

The peasants and workers didn't want much so only if he improved their wages and gave them some land and continue what his granddad Alexander II had done, he would've had their support and avoid weakening himself. If he was travelling around and was liked by his people, political opposition wouldn't form and so there would be peace in Russia and he would've been a strong Tsar. If he didn't care only about himself and his family, the Tsarist regime would have been strong and Russian people would have been satisfied and the Tsarist regime would continue.