

## 1: Russia in World War I

*The war also brought Nicholas political benefits; the establishment united behind him in the conduct of the war. Dissatisfied with the army's conduct of the war, Nicholas took personal command in September*

Alexandra was instrumental in convincing Nicholas to resist ever-growing calls for increased democracy within Russia. Alexandra was a firm believer in the autocratic principle. Nicholas required little persuasion: Alexandra was unpopular with the Russian elite, more so as evidence emerged of her increasing influence over her husband. Defeat in the war with Japan of seriously damaged Russian prestige - and with it the esteem of the monarchy. Japan had launched a surprise attack on the Russian fleet based at Port Arthur; throughout the war the Russian navy was found wanting, although the army fared better in repulsing Japanese troops in Manchuria. At the same time as Russia faced war with Japan, there was increasing industrial unrest at home. Workers who faced long hours and poor conditions increasingly formed protests. In 1905, workers in St Petersburg struck for four days in protest at the declining value of wages in real terms. Georgi Gapon, of the Assembly of Russian Workers, appealed to Nicholas for help in reducing working hours and improving pay and conditions. A consequent march on the Winter Palace was greeted by armed Cossacks: Leon Trotsky founded the St Petersburg Soviet in October, with 50 more being established over the next month in the rest of the country. In addition, no new law would become effective without the approval of the Duma, a consultative body. The October Manifesto did not satisfy Trotsky who with his supporters was subsequently arrested for his actions taken in protest but did take the sting out of the crisis that had formed. Although the Duma had been viewed as a toothless advisory body, at its first meeting in May it made demands for the release of political prisoners, for trade union rights and land reform. In rejecting these demands Nicholas promptly dissolved the Duma. Later that year Nicholas replaced the moderate chief minister Sergei Witte with the more conservative Peter Stolypin. Stolypin attempted to balance the demands of both liberal and conservative factions in the country. He was ultimately unsuccessful: Russian industrial unrest had continued into the first half of 1906. Up to half of the entire workforce are estimated to have struck that year. The war temporarily brought an effective end to industrial unrest however, although it later returned. The war also brought Nicholas political benefits; the establishment united behind him in the conduct of the war. The Russian army were fighting on the Eastern Front and its ongoing lack of success was causing dissension at home. By late 1917 royalists within the Duma warned the Tsar that revolution was imminent; even so, Nicholas refused to sanction further constitutional reform. In search of exile elsewhere, Lloyd George offered a haven in Britain, only for the offer to be withdrawn under the direction of King George V, who did not wish to be associated with his autocratic cousin at this point:

### 2: World War I - Wikipedia

*Nicholas II was the last tsar of Russia under Romanov rule. His poor handling of Bloody Sunday and Russia's role in World War I led to his abdication and execution.*

This section needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. He had five younger siblings: Alexander  , George  , Xenia  , Michael   and Olga  . He was also very close to his mother, as revealed in their published letters to each other. To distinguish between them the Grand Duke was often known within the imperial family as "Nikolasha" and "Nicholas the Tall", while the Tsar was "Nicholas the Short". In his childhood, Nicholas, his parents and siblings made annual visits to the Danish royal palaces of Fredensborg and Bernstorff to visit his grandparents, the king and queen. In  , Nicholas also accompanied his parents and younger brother, two-year-old George, on a two-month, semi-official visit to England. At the wedding in  St. Those feelings of admiration blossomed into love following her visit to  St. Petersburg five years later in  . Alix had feelings for him in turn. As a devout Lutheran, she was initially reluctant to convert to Russian Orthodoxy in order to marry Nicholas, but later relented. Nicholas visited Egypt, India, Singapore, and Bangkok, receiving honors as a distinguished guest in each country. The incident cut his trip short. Returning overland to  St. Petersburg, he was present at the ceremonies in Vladivostok commemorating the beginning of work on the Trans-Siberian Railway. In  , Nicholas traveled to London on behalf of his parents to be present at the wedding of his cousin, the Duke of York to Princess Mary of Teck. Queen Victoria was struck by the physical resemblance between the two cousins, and their appearances confused some at the wedding. During this time, Nicholas had an affair with  St. Petersburg ballerina Mathilde Kschessinska. He attended meetings of the State Council  ; however, as his father was only in his forties, it was expected that it would be many years before Nicholas succeeded to the throne. Once in Coburg Nicholas proposed to Alix, but she rejected his proposal, being reluctant to convert to Orthodoxy. But the Kaiser later told her she had a duty to marry Nicholas and to convert, as her sister Elizabeth had voluntarily done in  . Thus Nicholas and Alix became officially engaged on 20 April  . That summer, Nicholas travelled to England to visit both Alix and the Queen. Upon learning that he would live only a fortnight, the Tsar had Nicholas summon Alix to the imperial palace at Livadia. From his deathbed, he told his son to heed the advice of Witte, his most capable minister. Nicholas chose to maintain the conservative policies favoured by his father throughout his reign. While Alexander III had concentrated on the formulation of general policy, Nicholas devoted much more attention to the details of administration. After lying in state in the Kremlin, the body of the Tsar was taken to  St. Petersburg, where the funeral was held on 19 November. Staggering under the weight of his new office, he had no intention of allowing the one person who gave him confidence to leave his side. Nicholas and Alexandra, each holding a lit candle, faced the palace priest and were married a few minutes before one in the afternoon.

### 3: World War I postcard Tsar Nicholas II Russia George V UK Albert I Belgium Unused | eBay

*Nicholas II's reign of Russia had been one where the nation had weakened, and as Nicholas II believed, was falling behind in the quest for world power in colonization. Nicholas II had expansionist.*

Nicholas II ruled from until his abdication on 15 March. His reign saw Imperial Russia go from being one of the foremost great powers of the world to an economic and military disaster. Critics nicknamed him Nicholas the Bloody because of the Khodynka Tragedy, Bloody Sunday, and the anti-Semitic pogroms that occurred during his reign. As head of state, he approved the Russian mobilization of August which marked the first fatal step into World War I and thus into the demise of the Romanov dynasty less than four years later. This led to the canonization of Nicholas II, his wife the Empress and their children as martyrs by various groups tied to the Russian Orthodox Church within Russia and, prominently, by the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia. He was also very close to his mother, revealed in their published letters to and from one another. Nicholas had three younger brothers Alexander [], George [], and Michael [] and two younger sisters Xenia [] and Olga []. Nicholas and other family members witnessed this event while staying at the Winter Palace in Saint Petersburg, [3] but for security reasons, the new Czar and his family relocated their primary residence to the Gatchina Palace outside the city. A long trip for educational purposes became an important part of training for the state activity of the members of the Russian Imperial house. In Emperor Alexander III of Russia decided to establish the Trans-Siberian Railway and his heir Tsarevich Nicholas took part in the opening ceremony, and from there he was obliged to make a journey around the world, which became known as the Eastern Journey. Although Nicholas attended meetings of the Imperial Council, his obligations were limited until he acceded to the throne, which was not expected for many years, since his father was only forty-five.

Engagement, accession, and marriage Nicholas became engaged to Alix of Hesse in April. Alix was hesitant to accept the engagement due to the requirement that she convert from Lutheranism to Russian Orthodoxy and renounce her former faith. An exception was made for Alix where she could convert without renouncing her Lutheran faith and convert with a clear conscience. Nicholas and Alix became formally engaged on 8 April. Alix converted to Orthodoxy in November, and took the name Alexandra Fedorovna. Nicholas and Alexandra were related to each other along multiple ancestral lines. Because Alexander had expected to live and rule for another twenty or thirty years, Nicholas did not have as much political training or imperial experience as perhaps necessary. It is said that Nicholas felt unprepared for the duties of the crown asking his cousin, "What is going to happen to me and all of Russia? Throughout his reign, Nicholas chose to maintain the conservative policies favored by his father. While Alexander had concentrated on the formulation of general policy, Nicholas devoted much more attention to the details of administration. Staggering under the weight of his new office, he had no intention of allowing the one person who gave him confidence to leave his side. Each holding a lighted candle Nicholas and Alexandra faced the Palace priest; a few minutes before one in the afternoon, they were married. I want everyone to know that I will devote all my strength to maintain, for the good of the whole nation, the principle of absolute autocracy, as firmly and as strongly as did my late lamented father. When food and drink were handed out, the crowd rushed to get their share and individuals were tripped and trampled. The first years of his reign saw little more than continuation and development of the policy pursued by Alexander III. Nicholas allotted money for the All-Russia exhibition of In restoration of gold standard by Sergei Witte, Minister of Finance, completed the series of financial reforms, initiated fifteen years earlier. By, the Great Siberian railway was nearly completed; this helped the Russian trade in the Far East but the railway still required huge amounts of work. In foreign relations, Nicholas followed policies of his father, strengthening the Franco-Russian Alliance and pursuing a policy of general European pacification, which culminated in the famous Hague peace conference. This conference, suggested and promoted by Nicholas II, was convened with the view of terminating the arms race, and setting up machinery for the peaceful settlement of international disputes. The results of the conference were less than expected, because of the mutual distrust existing between great powers. Still, the Hague conventions were among the first formal statements of the laws of war. Russo-Japanese War A clash between Russia and Japan was almost inevitable

by the turn of the 20th century. War began in with a surprise Japanese attack on the Russian fleet in Port Arthur, without formal declaration of war. The Russian Baltic fleet traversed the world to balance power in the East, but after many misadventures on the way, was almost annihilated by the Japanese in the Battle of the Tsushima Strait. On land the Russian army experienced logistical problems. While commands and supplies came from St. Petersburg, combat took place in east Asian ports with only the Trans-Siberian Railway for transport of supplies as well as troops both ways. The 6,000 mile track between St. Petersburg and Port Arthur was one-way, with no track around Lake Baikal, allowing only gradual build-up of the forces on the front. Besieged Port Arthur fell to the Japanese, after nine months of resistance. In mid-1905, Nicholas II accepted American mediation, appointing Sergei Witte chief plenipotentiary for the peace talks. War was ended by the Treaty of Portsmouth. Nicholas approached the war with confidence and saw it as an opportunity to raise Russian morale and patriotism, paying little attention to the finances of a long-distance war. Despite the onset of the war and the many defeats Russia suffered, Nicholas still believed in, and expected, a final victory. As Russia continued to face defeat by the Japanese, the call for peace grew. Despite the efforts for peace, Nicholas remained evasive. It was not until 27 March and the annihilation of the Russian fleet by the Japanese, that Nicholas finally decided to pursue peace. Anti-Semitic pogroms of The administration of Nicholas II published anti-Semitic propaganda that encouraged people to riot in various parts of the Pale of Settlement, resulting in the pogroms of The Kishinev newspaper Bessarabets, which published anti-Semitic materials, received funds from Viacheslav Plehve, Minister of the Interior. In hope to frighten any further contradiction many demonstrators were shot in front of the Winter Palace in St. The Black Sea Fleet mutinied, and a railway strike developed into a general strike which paralyzed the country. Tsar Nicholas II, who was taken by surprise by the events, mixed his anger with bewilderment. He wrote to his mother after months of disorder: Nothing but strikes in schools and factories, murdered policemen, Cossacks and soldiers, riots, disorder, mutinies. But the ministers, instead of acting with quick decision, only assemble in council like a lot of frightened hens and cackle about providing united ministerial action One had the same feeling, as before a thunderstorm in summer! Everybody was on edge and extremely nervous and of course, that sort of strain could not go on for long We are in the midst of a revolution with an administrative apparatus entirely disorganized, and in this lies the main danger. On the evening before, on Saturday, 8 21, the ministers convened to consider the situation. There was never any thought that the Czar, who had left the capital for Tsarskoye Selo on the advice of the ministers would actually be asked to meet Gapon; the suggestion that some other member of the Imperial family receive the petition was rejected. Finally informed by the Prefect of Police that he lacked the men to pluck Gapon from among his followers and place him under arrest, the newly appointed Minister of the Interior, Prince Sviatopolk-Mirsky, and his colleagues decided to bring additional troops into the city for control. That evening Nicholas wrote in his diary, "Troops have been brought from the outskirts to reinforce the garrison. Up to now the workers have been calm. Their number is estimated at , At the head of their union is a kind of socialist priest named Gapon. Mirsky came this evening to present his report on the measures taken. He wrote in his diary: Serious disorders took place in Petersburg when the workers tried to come to the Winter Palace. The troops have been forced to fire in several parts of the city and there are many killed and wounded. Lord, how painful and sad this is. Locking arms, the workers marched peacefully through the streets. Some carried religious icons and banners, as well as national flags and portraits of the Czar. At 2PM all of the converging processions were scheduled to arrive at the Winter Palace. There was no single confrontation with the troops. Throughout the city, at bridges on strategic boulevards, the marchers found their way blocked by lines of infantry, backed by Cossacks and Hussars; and the soldiers opened fire on the crowd. The official number of victims was ninety-two dead and several hundred wounded. Gapon vanished and the other leaders of the march were seized. Expelled from the capital, they circulated through the empire, increasing the casualties, possibly into thousands. That day, which became known as "Bloody Sunday", was a turning point in Russian history. It shattered the ancient, legendary belief that the Tsar and the people were one. As bullets riddled their icons, their banners and their portraits of Nicholas, the people shrieked, "The Tsar will not help us! That Saturday he telephoned my mother at the Anitchkov and said that she and I were to leave for Gatchina at once. He and Alicky went to Tsarskoye Selo. Insofar as I

remember, my Uncles Vladimir and Nicholas were the only members of the family left in St. Petersburg, but there may have been others. I felt at the time that all those arrangements were hideously wrong. My mother and I wanted him to stay in St. Petersburg and to face the crowd. They would have presented their petition and gone back to their homes. But that wretched Epiphany incident had left all the senior officials in a state of panic. They kept on telling Nicky that he had no right to run such a risk, that he owed it to the country to leave the capital, that even with the utmost precautions taken there might always be some loophole left. He stated, "Nicholas Romanov, formerly Tsar and at present soul-murderer of the Russian empire. The innocent blood of workers, their wives and children lies forever between you and the Russian people May all the blood which must be spilled fall upon you, you Hangman. I call upon all the socialist parties of Russia to come to an immediate agreement among themselves and bring an armed uprising against Czarism. I did not understand anything about politics. I just felt everything was going wrong with the country and all of us.

## 4: World War I | NICHOLAS II

*Nicholas II or Nikolai II (Russian: Никола́й II Александрович Романов, tr. Nikolai II Aleksandrovich; 18 May [O.S. 6 May] - 17 July ), known as Saint Nicholas the Passion-Bearer in the Russian Orthodox Church, was the last Emperor of Russia, ruling from 1 November until his forced abdication on 2 March*

When it finally did, around the turn of the 20th century, it brought with it immense social and political changes. Between 1890 and 1910, for example, the population of major Russian cities such as St. Petersburg and Moscow nearly doubled, resulting in overcrowding and destitute living conditions for a new class of Russian industrial workers. Large protests by Russian workers against the monarchy led to the Bloody Sunday massacre of 1905. The massacre sparked the Russian revolution of 1905, during which angry workers responded with a series of crippling strikes throughout the country. Nicholas II After the bloodshed of 1905, Czar Nicholas II promised the formation of a series of representative assemblies, or Dumas, to work toward reform. Their involvement in the war would soon prove disastrous for the Russian Empire. Militarily, imperial Russia was no match for industrialized Germany, and Russian casualties were greater than those sustained by any nation in any previous war. Food and fuel shortages plagued Russia as inflation mounted. The economy was hopelessly disrupted by the costly war effort. Czar Nicholas left the Russian capital of Petrograd St. Petersburg in 1917 to take command of the Russian Army front. During this time, her controversial advisor, Grigory Rasputin, increased his influence over Russian politics and the royal Romanov family. By then, most Russians had lost faith in the failed leadership of the czar. Government corruption was rampant, the Russian economy remained backward and Nicholas repeatedly dissolved the Duma, the toothless Russian parliament established after the revolution, when it opposed his will. Moderates soon joined Russian radical elements in calling for an overthrow of the hapless czar. Demonstrators clamoring for bread took to the streets of Petrograd. Supported by huge crowds of striking industrial workers, the protesters clashed with police but refused to leave the streets. On March 11, the troops of the Petrograd army garrison were called out to quell the uprising. In some encounters, the regiments opened fire, killing demonstrators, but the protesters kept to the streets and the troops began to waver. The Duma formed a provisional government on March 15. A few days later, Czar Nicholas abdicated the throne, ending centuries of Russian Romanov rule. The leaders of the provisional government, including young Russian lawyer Alexander Kerensky, established a liberal program of rights such as freedom of speech, equality before the law, and the right of unions to organize and strike. They opposed violent social revolution. As minister of war, Kerensky continued the Russian war effort, even though Russian involvement in World War I was enormously unpopular. Unrest continued to grow as peasants looted farms and food riots erupted in the cities. Lenin instead called for a Soviet government that would be ruled directly by councils of soldiers, peasants and workers. The Bolsheviks and their allies occupied government buildings and other strategic locations in Petrograd, and soon formed a new government with Lenin as its head. The warring factions included the Red and White Armies. The White Army represented a large group of loosely allied forces, including monarchists, capitalists and supporters of democratic socialism.

## 5: Russian Revolution - HISTORY

*The outbreak of World War I temporarily strengthened the monarchy, but Nicholas did little to maintain his people's confidence. The Duma was slighted, and voluntary patriotic organizations were hampered in their efforts; the gulf between the ruling group and public opinion grew steadily wider.*

Although the politics of the day had laid the foundation of the war, the whole thing came to a head after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife, Sophie, by a Serbian nationalist. However, prior to the assassination, several countries and empires had been seeking means of expanding their territories, countering the expansion of other empires, and avenging their losses from past wars. This made most of them form alliances. By the time that the archduke was assassinated, their alliances dragged them into a war that was none of their business. However, she discouraged any relationship between the duo and never wanted them together. She even stopped the two from visiting her at the same time. The cousins maintained the rivalry and alliance by the time they became emperors. Although the trio never believed that the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria would lead to war between Serbia and Austria-Hungary, they knew it could. And such a war would definitely drag them in because Austria-Hungary was allied with Germany and Serbia was allied with Russia. At the same time, Russia was allied with France and France was allied with Britain. The telegram was partly informal, and Nicholas II even signed it with his nickname, Nicky. Nicholas II explained that a war against Serbia would lead to the involvement of Russia, which was something he did not want. Wilhelm replied that the impending war had no political undertone and was merely to deal with the people who had assassinated the archduke. He added that he was doing his best to ensure that Austria-Hungary reached an agreement with Russia. He also signed the telegram with his nickname, Willy. The cousins continued exchanging telegrams. However, they failed to reach an agreement even though neither wanted the war. At one point, Wilhelm suggested that Austria-Hungary troops marched into Belgrade, Serbia, without attacking the Serbians and waited while Serbia destroyed the Black Hand terrorist group that had assassinated the archduke. Neither did they do anything to delay the war. On August 1, a few days after the first telegram was sent, Germany declared war on Russia. The war took its toll on the Russian economy. It was longer than expected, and there was no hope that Russia would win. After a series of defeats, Tsar Nicholas II fired his inexperienced cousin, whom Nicholas II had appointed as general, and took control of the army himself. This was going to be his undoing. In the past, the empire had blamed military failures on the generals, but now, it would be blamed on the tsar himself. Nicholas II committed another blunder when he handed control of the empire to his wife, Alexandra, instead of a prime minister. First, Alexandra was German, something that did not resonate well because Russia was fighting Germany. Then, Alexandra became too involved with Grigori Rasputin, a controversial faith healer whom she hoped would cure her son of hemophilia. However, Rasputin had other intentions and soon started meddling in national issues. In December, some concerned Russians murdered Rasputin. At the same time, the prolonged war had taken a toll on the Russian economy. In February, inflation and food shortages caused widespread protests that quickly turned into a revolution. Nicholas left the front lines to return home. But he never made it to his palace before he was forced to abdicate. A provisional government took over but did little to solve the grievances that had caused the revolution. It toppled the provisional government and swept Lenin into power. In exchange, Germany retreated from Russia. It led to the fall of three empires and the creation of several countries. The German, Ottoman, and Russian empires collapsed at the end of the war. Austria ceded land to Italy and Czechoslovakia and became landlocked. Bulgaria relinquished its coastline in the Mediterranean Sea to Greece. Hungary lost most of its land to Czechoslovakia, though it also lost part to Romania. The Ottoman Empire was the worst of the lot. Its land was split between Britain and France. Before the declaration of war, German was the second most spoken language in the US after English. However, anti-German sentiments that followed the declaration of war quickly led to a ban on German. The language was removed from the curriculum of many US schools, and German books became outlawed. Music dealers also refused to sell German songs. The anti-German sentiment extended to food when German fried potatoes were renamed American fries and sauerkraut was renamed

liberty cabbage. Dogs were not left out, either. German shepherds were renamed Alsations after the Alsace region of France where they were first bred. There were also accounts that some dachshunds were stoned to death in Britain, although that could not be verified. To protect themselves, soldiers quickly learned to fire from holes dug into the ground. These holes were soon connected and became miles-long trenches. As the war progressed, up to three extra trenches were dug behind the initial trench. That way, an enemy would still have to deal with about three more trenches even if it managed to defeat the front trench. The longest trench was at the Western Front where it ran from Belgium into France and down to Switzerland. It was impossible to go around the trench, so the only option was frontal assaults. These were suicide missions because both sides protected their front trenches with barbed wire and machine guns. The attacking infantry was usually backed with heavy artillery, which itself quickly became a problem and even contributed to the failure of the assaults. An artillery barrage signaled to the enemy that an assault was underway, causing the enemy to quickly reinforce its positions. Ernest Brooks Trench warfare quickly led to a stalemate. No one was winning, and no one was losing. Both sides just continued hiding in their trenches and launching frontal assaults that almost always ended in disaster. Then the tanks showed up. Before the war, proposals to build tanks in England, France, and Germany had been rejected. However, during the war, England and France secretly and independently worked on building a tank, hoping to use it to break the stalemate. England was the first to build a practical tank, which it deployed to the Battle of the Somme on September 15, 1916. The Germans fled at the sight of the tanks, which broke through two of the three German trenches. But the tanks had to retreat because of command-and-control problems. They were not perfect, either. Heat and toxic fumes were a big problem for their crews, and the tanks often broke down. Of the 50 deployed, half broke down before the assault. However, it was not enough to stop the thousands of tanks deployed by the Allies. By contrast, Germany deployed only 16 tanks. Allied tanks breached the German trenches, forcing them to surrender. In essence, machine guns drove soldiers into the trenches and tanks drove them out. Tanks were originally called land ships. Obviously, no one knew that a World War II was in the works. It was believed to be the war that would end the evil of the German state and, consequently, every other war. How wrong they were. The war destroyed the industries and economies of Germany, Russia, Britain, and France. With the exception of Germany, the other three depended on the US for supplies. The Allies bought so much from the US that the American economy switched from producing civilian goods to military goods. By the time the war was over, the Allies were heavily indebted to the US and even themselves. For instance, Russia was heavily indebted to France, which was heavily indebted to the US and Britain. France wanted to repay its debts to the US and Britain with the money Russia owed. And the tsar had been overthrown. France tried repaying its debts with the reparations paid by Germany. But Germany had no money and could only make money if it exported goods to the US. However, the US suffered a recession in the 1920s and could not buy goods imported from Germany. Things got so bad that the US loaned money to Germany in so that Germany could pay its reparations to France and Britain. In return, France and Britain used the money to repay their debts to the US. At the same time, most of the belligerents had abandoned the gold standard at the beginning of the war, leading to the devaluation of their currencies by its end. This left the US with the most gold, and thus the country became the custodian of the global gold standard. When the US deflated its currency, it put the other nations in a fix because they either needed to deflate their currencies to a value lower than that of the US or redefine the value of their currencies based on the new gold standard determined by the US. The first option would have led to massive unemployment, while the other would devalue their currencies against the US dollar. Most countries chose the second option, although Britain chose the first. Whichever they chose, the US and the US dollar were still the clear winners.

### 6: The Abdication of Nicholas II - World War I Document Archive

*Germany, Russia, and Britain—the three empires at the center stage of World War I—were ruled by cousins. Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany and King George V of England were first cousins, King George V and Tsar Nicholas II of Russia were first cousins, and Tsar Nicholas II and Kaiser Wilhelm II were third cousins.*

The following article was originally published in the July 25th, edition of the Washington Post. The author Graham Allison, owns the copyright presented below. One hundred years ago this week, Tsar Nicholas II of Russia and Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany exchanged a series of telegrams to try to stop the rush to a war that neither of them wanted. The telegrams between them were discovered by an American journalist in the Russian government archives in and caused a sensation when they were first published in The exchange began in the very early morning of July 29, just hours after Austria-Hungary an ally of Germany declared war on Serbia an ally of Russia in retaliation for the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo. Time was short to find a diplomatic solution that would prevent a regional war from becoming a world war. An ignoble war has been declared to a weak country. The indignation in Russia shared fully by me is enormous. I foresee that very soon I shall be overwhelmed by the pressure forced upon me and be forced to take extreme measures which will lead to war. To try and avoid such a calamity as a European war I beg you in the name of our old friendship to do what you can to stop your allies from going too far. In this case politics plays no part at all. On the other hand, I fully understand how difficult it is for you and your Government to face the drift of your public opinion. Therefore, with regard to the hearty and tender friendship which binds us both from long ago with firm ties, I am exerting my utmost influence to induce the Austrians to deal straightly to arrive to a satisfactory understanding with you. I confidently hope that you will help me in my efforts to smooth over difficulties that may still arise. Your very sincere and devoted friend and cousin. And Wilhelm had a particular compromise in mind: Austrian troops would be allowed to advance as far as Belgrade and remain there until Serbia dismantled the Black Hand terrorist group, responsible for the murder of the archduke. The kaiser told the German chancellor to communicate this proposal to Vienna. Instead, he instructed his ambassador in St. Whereas official message presented today by your ambassador to my minister was conveyed in a very different tone. Beg you to explain this divergency! It would be right to give over the Austro-Serbian problem to the Hague conference. Trust in your wisdom and friendship. Instead, he issued an order permitting partial mobilization, hoping that this would be viewed less provocatively in Berlin. Unfortunately, by the next day, both Nicholas and Wilhelm had been overwhelmed by competing views and the momentum of their governments. And the kaiser sent a telegram with strong language drafted by the German chancellor: The whole weight of the decision lies solely on you[r] shoulders now, who have to bear the responsibility for Peace or War. Responsibility for the safety of my empire forces preventive measures of defence upon me. In my endeavours to maintain the peace of the world I have gone to the utmost limit possible. My friendship for you and your empire, transmitted to me by my grandfather on his deathbed has always been sacred to me and I have honestly often backed up Russia when she was in serious trouble especially in her last war. The peace of Europe may still be maintained by you, if Russia will agree to stop the milit[ary] measures which must threaten Germany and Austro-Hungary. I give you my solemn word for this. I put all my trust in Gods mercy and hope in your successful mediation in Vienna for the welfare of our countries and for the peace of Europe. Anxiously, full of confidence await your answer. Germany saw its ultimatum rejected. The exchange between Nicky and Willy ended on Aug. Petersburg handed the Russian foreign minister a declaration of war and then burst into tears. The last-inning efforts of the cousins clearly failed, and today the legacy of their correspondence is one of missed opportunities. Had the kaiser and the tsar started sooner and been better statesmen, they might have prevented a world war that in the end both of them would lose.

### 7: Nicholas II of Russia - Wikipedia

*The Tsar was the ruler of Russia during World War One (from the beginning of the war in August to his deposition in ). He was one of the main influences on the crisis of July that precipitated the war.*

Nicholas II had neither the imposing physical presence nor the strong will of his father. He had all the virtues of a country gentleman and would have had a happy and useful life as a private landowner. He had little taste for the splendours of monarchy and even less ability to handle the cumbrous, complex, and antiquated mechanism of Russian government. Moreover, unfortunately, he had little aptitude for choosing good subordinates or delegating authority to them. Merriweather Post, Hillwood, Washington, D. Courtesy of Hillwood, Washington, D. His personal charm at first captured those who came into contact with him. However, his tendency to change his mind, agreeing with the last person he had been talking to, was the cause of many disappointments and won him a reputation for bad faith. Alexandra, empress of Russia, c. Nicholas indeed, under the influence of Pobedonostsev, believed the maintenance of autocracy to be a sacred obligation toward God himself. This view was consistently supported by the empress, who, since her official conversion to Orthodoxy before marriage to Nicholas, had become a devoted believer in the doctrines of the Russian church. When in a male heir, Grand Duke Alexis , was born, the emperor felt that it was his duty to maintain the imperial heritage unimpairedâ€”that is, with autocracy unchangedâ€”for his son. The precarious health of the prince, who had inherited hemophilia , strengthened this conviction. The lack of any central direction of governmentâ€”particularly the absence of a prime ministerâ€”was more seriously felt under the weak Nicholas than under Alexander III. Uncoordinated by the emperor, the several departments of government pursued separate and even contradictory policies. The Ministry of Interior stood for paternalist principles. The improvement of agriculture and the protection of the peasants were its concern: If the ministry was unwilling to introduce changes, nobody else must do so. The result of this mentality was that the zemstvos, several of which had plans for valuable nonpolitical reforms that could be carried out by their own personnel locally, found themselves deprived of sufficient revenue, and their initiative obstructed, by the jealousy of the Ministry of Interior. The agricultural policy of the ministry was based on the maintenance of the village commune , which it regarded as a stronghold of peasant conservatism. The Ministry of Finance, on the other hand, objected to the commune as a source of inefficiency, preventing the development of the initiative of the most enterprising farmers and consequent improvement of agricultural output. The Ministry of Finance may be said to have approximately reflected the aspirations of the rising Russian business class, the Interior those of the bureaucratic and landowning classes. The most able minister of finance of this period was Sergey Yulyevich, Count Witte â€” In his time in office, the metallurgical industry of Ukraine made rapid progress. He was able to introduce the gold standard in , and this proved an incentive for a substantial influx of foreign capital into Russian industry. In these years, too, the industrial working class grew rapidly. There were several large strikes in St. From to Russian industry suffered a depression , and unemployment grew. In these conditions the workers were unable to obtain further economic concessions from employers, but there were numerous short political strikes and street demonstrations, in some cases accompanied by violence. Sergey Yulyevich Witte, Russification policy The policy of Russification of the non-Russian peoples of the empire , which had been a characteristic of the reign of Alexander III, continued. Nicholas II held anti-Semitic views and favoured the continued discrimination , in economic and cultural life, against the Jews. Russification of the German schools in the Baltic provinces continued, and the old university of Tartu now in Estonia , which had been closed in , was reopened as the Russian University of Yuryev. In the central provinces of European Russia, Orthodox missionaries continued their efforts to compete with Muslim Tatar missionaries for the conversion of the small, still partly shamanistic , Finno-Ugric population of this area. In Armenia , an imperial decree of June 25, , transferred to Russian administration the national fund of the Armenian Apostolic Church , which was formed by the individual subscriptions of Armenian Christians and had been used for the social and educational needs of the Armenian community. By this action the government turned against itself the most loyal of all the non-Russian peoples, whose hatred of Turkey had long bound it devotedly to the cause of the

empire. The confiscation of the fund was followed by large-scale passive resistance by the Armenians, who boycotted the Russian law courts, schools, and administrative authorities. Similar resistance was provoked in Finland by the military conscription law of 1901 and by the imperial manifesto of February 1902, which stated that imperial decrees should have precedence in Finland over Finnish laws, and thus threatened to reduce the Finnish diet to the status of a provincial assembly. The Finnish people as a whole met these actions with passive resistance, but terrorism was also used, and in June the Russian governor-general, Nikolay Bobrikov, was assassinated by a Finn, Eugene Shauman. Resurgence of revolutionary activity Among the Russian people political opposition revived in the late 1890s. Its most visible expressions were student demonstrations, which were especially violent in 1901 and 1902, and in some of which factory workers joined. Cossacks charged the demonstrators, many were arrested, and some were conscripted into the army where they only spread their political ideas or merely expelled from the university. The assassins of the minister of education, Nikolay Bogolepov, in February 1902, and of the minister of interior, Dmitry Sipyagin, in April 1902, were both students. Its leaders, however, were almost immediately arrested by the police, and the Social Democratic movement took political shape among Russian exiles in western Europe. In 1903, at its second congress, held partly in Brussels and partly in London, a rift appeared between the followers of Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov Lenin and the rest. In fact, in the following decade the factions within the movement were extremely fluid, and no single group for any length of time had clear majority support among the party membership. The various illegal Populist groups in Russia also made efforts to unite, and at a conference held in Switzerland they formed the Socialist Revolutionary Party. Its aim was to appeal above all to the peasants, whereas the Social Democrats laid the main emphasis on the industrial working class. In practice it was hard to establish contact with peasants, because of their scattered distribution and the comparative ease with which the police could observe the entry of strangers into villages. Consequently the Socialist Revolutionaries no less than the Social Democrats found their mass support in the cities. Neither party had a monopoly of proletarian support. Other political movements Russian liberalism also became organized in this period. Two trends may be roughly distinguished—a cautious, limited constitutionalism favoured mainly by enlightened conservatives among the landed gentry and officers of the zemstvos, and a radical liberalism which insisted on full parliamentary and responsible government and drew its support mainly from the urban professional classes. Political parties also appeared among the non-Russian nationalities. Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian nationalist movements took form, led by middle-class professional people and supported by peasants. In Poland there were two main parties, the National Democratic Party, which stood for moderate democracy, and the Polish Socialist Party. Both wished self-government for Poland, and independence if possible. In Ukraine, the first political party to advance the view that there was a separate Ukrainian nation, and to claim autonomy for it, was the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party, founded in 1901. It split soon into socialist, radical, and conservative nationalist sections. Both the Polish and the Ukrainian movements received help from their allies in Austrian Galicia. Among Russian Jews, the main trends in these years were on the one hand various forms of socialism, on the other the new international movement of Zionism. In Georgia by far the strongest group was social democracy, of the Menshevik branch. Finally, among the Muslims of Russia a democratic movement was growing, in favour of secularism, modernization, emancipation of women, and political liberty. Its main centre was Kazan, its social leadership came from Tatar merchants and school teachers. Foreign policy and the Russo-Japanese War Russian foreign policy in the 1890s was concerned above all with the Far East. The inability of Nicholas II to decide between contradictory policies urged by different advisers was a major factor in the drift toward war with Japan. Russia refused to make a bargain with Japan, leaving it Korea in return for Russian dominance in northern Manchuria, or even in all Manchuria. By insisting on having all Manchuria and all Korea, it forced Japan first to ally itself with Britain and then to go to war with Russia. It was fortunate for Russia that Japan too was exhausted by its efforts, so that peace could be obtained on fairly favourable terms. However, it was able to retain its position in northern Manchuria and its control of the Chinese Eastern Railway, so essential for communication between Siberia and Vladivostok. Russia also kept the northern half of Sakhalin and did not have to pay an indemnity. The Tsushima Strait at the lower right of the Korean peninsula was the site of the first great naval battle in the 20th century. The engagement took place on May 27–29, 1905, with Japan

inflicting a crushing defeat on the Russian navy. Theodore Roosevelt centre with peace envoys from Russia and Japan at the signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth, On January 22 January 9, Old Style , , more than workers were killed and hundreds were wounded when police fired on a peaceful demonstration in front of the Winter Palace in St. The massacre became known as Bloody Sunday , and it was followed by a wave of strikes and uprisings throughout Russia. During the spring and summer the zemstvo constitutionalists became more outspoken in their political demands, strikes increased, and there were agrarian riots in many provinces. At the end of October a general strike , more political than economic, paralyzed the communications system of the empire. Delegates of strike committees in St. Drafted by Witte, the October Manifesto promised to set up an elected legislature *duma* and to grant political and civil liberties. The emperor also instituted a Council of Ministers, with a president the equivalent of a prime minister , and entrusted this office to Witte. This was much less than the constituent assembly which the liberation movement had demanded. The liberals, frightened by the scope of the revolution, decided to operate within the new system, while the Marxists and Populists decided to boycott it. In the election to the First Duma the largest number of votes went to the Constitutional Democrats *Kadets* , as the liberals of the Union of Liberation now called themselves. The second most numerous group in the Duma were the Labour Group *Trudoviki* , Populists who had stood for election despite an official boycott by the Socialist Revolutionary Party. The Social Democrats had also boycotted the election except in Georgia, where they swept the board. The left-wing majority of the First Duma naturally wished to pass a mass of radical legislation. In particular, it wished to divide up the large landed estates among the peasants subject to compensation ; to ensure equal civic rights for Jews, dissenters, members of religious sects, and minorities; and to grant a complete amnesty to all political prisoners. The emperor would not consider such things. In May, before the Duma met, he dismissed Witte and appointed as minister of interior a former provincial governor who had impressed him by his firmness of character, Pyotr Arkadyevich Stolypin. In July he made Stolypin prime minister , and on July 22 dissolved the Duma. During the summer he restored order by ruthless measures. However, instead of introducing permanent dictatorial government, the emperor and Stolypin decided to hold elections for a Second Duma. The extreme left parties—Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries—now took part and won seats out of The *Trudoviki* saw their numbers slightly reduced, from in the First Duma to 98; the *Kadets* declined from to 99; and the parties of the right increased their representation from 43 to The Second Duma was thus more radical than the First. Cooperation between it and the government remained impossible. It met on March 5, , but was dissolved on June At the same time though under the October Manifesto the electoral rules could be changed only with the consent of the Duma a new electoral law was issued by decree, which greatly restricted the franchise. It was especially designed to strengthen the representation of the propertied classes in town and country and to reduce greatly the representation of the non-Russian nationalities.

### 8: Trenches on the Web - Bio: Czar Nicholas II of Russia

*At the start of the First World War, Tsar Nicholas II was NOT the commander of the Russian Army, his uncle was. This was by design, to distance the Tsar from political blame if the war went badly and to allow him to maintain political control in St. Petersburg.*

The fate of tsarist Russia and its ruling family was bound up in the tragedy of World War I. Russia was drawn into the war by the same follies and errors of judgement that affected the other great powers of Europe: But while Russia entered the war for similar reasons to her European neighbours, she did not do so on an equal footing. Three years of total war would exhaust the Russian economy and leave its people starving, freezing and miserable. From this soil, the February Revolution would spring. Though Russo-German tensions dated back decades, Nicholas II believed that family ties precluded any chance of a war between the two empires. Nicholas thought it highly unlikely that the kaiser would declare war on the kingdom of his own relative. The alliance system demanded that nations support their allies if one was attacked. This placed the tsar in a perilous position between the Balkan nation of Serbia – a nation with close political, ethnic and religious ties to Russia – and Austria-Hungary and Germany. By August, Serbia had been invaded by Austria-Hungary and Russia had declared war in response, prompting the German kaiser to declare war on his Russian cousin. A postcard showing a crowd greeting the tsar outside the Winter Palace, August As well as the growing international crisis, Nicholas II also had pressing domestic concerns. Anti-government sentiment and unrest had been building since , when tsarist troops butchered hundreds of striking miners at Lena River. By mid the number and intensity of industrial strikes was approaching levels. Fed up with low wages and dangerous conditions, workers at the remote Baku oil field walked out in June. When news of this reached St Petersburg it triggered worker unrest there; the capital was hit by strikes in June alone. It took the outbreak of war in early August to douse this militancy. For a few weeks at least, the grievances of workers were doused by a rousing wave of patriotism. The tsar, who weeks before had been jeered and despised, became the subject of nationalistic affection. As one observer put it, to hate the Germans was easy but to hate the tsar became an act of national betrayal. Days after the Russian declaration of war, Nicholas II and Alexandra – ironically of German birth herself – appeared on the balcony of the Winter Palace, to be greeted by thousands of people on bended knees. When conscription orders were distributed in the capital, more than 95 per cent of conscripts reported willingly for duty. The tsar too was changed by the events of August In the months prior he had shown little interest in the affairs of state, but both the war and the revival of public affection reinvigorated Nicholas, who threw himself into his duties. It was strictly defensive and in my opinion ill-conceived from many points of view, but it was not put into execution because the circumstances forced us into an offensive campaign for which we had no preparations. What was this new plan? It was a dead secret to me. It is quite possible that no new plan was ever established at all, and that we followed the policy determined by our needs at any given moment. Thousands of Russian infantrymen left for the front without critical equipment, including weapons, ammunition, boots or bedding. Some historical accounts suggest as many as one-third of Russian soldiers were not issued with a rifle; their standing orders were to pick one up from a dead colleague when the opportunity arose. Soldiers were better armed with prayers and penitentials, as Russian Orthodox bishops and priests worked busily to bless those about to go into battle. Russian prisoners of war after the Battle of Tannenberg, The Tannenberg campaign was riddled with tactical blunders. Russian officers sent out battle plans uncoded over radio, while the Russian generals leading the offensive Samsonov and von Rennekampf despised each other and refused to communicate. The Russian army suffered 30, casualties at Tannenberg while another , soldiers were taken prisoner. A week later the Russians suffered even heavier losses , casualties at the Battle of the Masurian Lakes, which forced them to retreat from German territory. Public morale and support for the war was dwindling; Russians became more receptive to anti-war rhetoric and propaganda, much of it disseminated by the growing Bolshevik movement. In August the Russians were forced to order a massive retreat from Galicia and Poland. They reminded the tsar that his military experience was confined to cavalry training; he had no practical experience of strategic warfare or commanding infantry

and artillery in combat. But the tsar, bolstered by encouragement from his wife, proceeded to the front. What it did do was to link the tsar with his generals, making him responsible for any and every military failure. Inadequate maintenance and replacement of this infrastructure caused it to fail. Short of reserves to fund the war effort, the government resorted to printing excess paper currency, which in turn led to inflation. By late inflation had reached almost per cent. The war doused anti-government sentiment which had peaked with a general strike in St Petersburg in July. In September the tsar took command of the army, a move that associated him with future defeats and losses. By mid, two years of war had decimated the Russian economy, triggered downturns in agrarian production, problems in the transportation network, currency inflation and food and fuel shortages in the cities. Content on this page may not be republished or distributed without permission. For more information please refer to our Terms of Use. To reference this page, use the following citation:

### 9: What did Czar Nicholas the II do in World War 1

*World War I began in 1914, after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and lasted until 1918. During the conflict, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire (the Central*

May 18, in Saint Petersburg, Russia Died: July 17, in Yekaterinburg, Russia Best known for: Where did Nicholas II grow up? His full given name was Nikolai Aleksandrovich Romanov. Since he was the eldest son of the Tsar, Nicholas was heir to the throne of Russia. He was close to his parents and had five younger brothers and sisters. Growing up, Nicholas was taught by private tutors. He enjoyed studying foreign languages and history. Nicholas traveled quite a bit and then joined the army when he was nineteen. This lack of on the job training would become an issue when his father died young and an unprepared Nicholas became Tsar of Russia. Nicholas was now the all powerful Tsar of Russia. Since the Tsar needed to be married and produce heirs to the throne, Nicholas quickly married the daughter of a German Archduke named Princess Alexandra. He was officially crowned Tsar of Russia on May 26, This included financial reforms, an alliance with France, and the completion of the Trans-Siberian Railroad in 1916. Nicholas also proposed the Hague Peace Conference of 1899 in order to help promote peace in Europe. War with Japan Nicholas was determined to expand his empire in Asia. However, his efforts provoked Japan who attacked Russia in 1904. The Russian army was defeated and humiliated by the Japanese and Nicholas was forced into peace negotiations. Bloody Sunday In the early 1900s, the peasants and lower class workers in Russia lived lives of poverty. They had little food, worked long hours, and had dangerous working conditions. They believed that the government was at fault, but that the Tsar was still on their side. As the marchers peacefully advanced, soldiers from the army stood guard and tried to block a bridge approaching the palace. The soldiers fired into the crowd killing many of the marchers. This day is now known as Bloody Sunday. Nicholas was forced to create a new government with an elected legislature, called the Duma, which would help him rule. Millions of peasants and workers were forced to join the army. They were forced to fight even though they had little training, no shoes, and little food. Some were even told to fight without weapons. The army was soundly defeated by Germany at the Battle of Tannenberg. Nicholas II took over the command of the army, but things only got worse. Millions of peasant men died due to the incompetence of the Russian leaders. Russian Revolution In 1917, the Russian Revolution occurred. First, was the February Revolution. After this revolt, Nicholas was forced to give up his crown and abdicate the throne. He was the last of the Russian Tsars. Later that year, the Bolsheviks, under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin, took total control in the October Revolution. Death Nicholas and his family, including his wife and children, were being held prisoner in Yekaterinburg, Russia. On July 17, they were all executed by the Bolsheviks. However, the real life Anastasia did not escape and was assassinated by the Bolsheviks along with her family. A religious mystic by the name of Rasputin had great influence over both Nicholas II and his wife Alexandra. Activities Take a ten question quiz about this page. Listen to a recorded reading of this page: Your browser does not support the audio element. Learn More about World War I:

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