

# Immediate Cause

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## The Wake of Bloody Sunday

•After Bloody Sunday, the Czar was forced to grant the people of Russia political representation in the form of a *Duma* – or parliament.



•However, the Duma was often ignored by the Czar, or worse, was actually *dissolved* by the Czar. Therefore it had little power, and almost no ability to effect political change.

•The people of Russia continued to have no say in government, and limited freedoms of speech, press and religion.

## Riots and Protests

•At home, inflation skyrocketed as the Russian government printed money in order to finance the war. The cost of products went up, but wages did not, and the people of Russia, who already suffered from terrible conditions, were forced to endure food shortages.

•Peasants began hoarding grain, and using a barter system since they could not get enough money for their harvests. By early 1917, riots broke out in St. Petersburg and Moscow, as food became scarce and residents began starving.



•People broke into *granaries* (storage places for grain) to steal stored food that the government had stockpiled. Police officials sent to stop the riots often ended up joining the rioters, as they, too, were hungry.

•As word of the growing protests spread, thousands soldiers deserted the army *daily* in order to go home and protect their families.

## World War I

•At the start of World War I, Russia had a massive army of 5 million men. However, due to Russia's lack of industrial development and disrupted supply lines, the soldiers were poorly equipped.

•Frequently, soldiers at the front had no weapons or ammunition, and they were encouraged to take whatever weapons they could find off of dead bodies.

•Likewise, Russian soldiers rarely had enough to eat, and were forced to forage for their food.



•As if these conditions weren't bad enough, the Russian army was led by a series of incompetent generals who could not devise an effective way to deal with the better supplied German army.

•By the end of 1916, the Russians had lost 1.6 million men, with 2 million as prisoners of war and another 1 million missing for a staggering total of nearly 5 million.

## Abdication

•By February 1917, the protests were so widespread that the Czar was forced to *abdicate* (give up) his throne. On March 15, 1917 (the ides of March), the Czar signed his letter of abdication.

•This represented the first phase of the revolution, and is commonly referred to as the *February revolution*.



•The Duma assumed ruling duties for the country temporarily until a constitution could be written and a government created. *Alexander Kerensky* led the Duma and headed what would be known as the *Provisional Government*.