Timeline of Russia in World War I

In July 1914 Russia mobilized to go to the aid of her ally, Serbia. Within a few weeks war was declared against Germany and Austria. At the outbreak of war, the Russian people put aside their long-standing grievances and supported their government. Nicholas II had welcomed the war to turn away the people's attention from the country's internal problems. On the other hand, Lenin and the Bolsheviks were against the entry of Russia into the war. Lenin viewed that the First World War was a war among the capitalist countries for markets and colonies.

August 1	Germany declared war on Russia. Wave of support for the Tsar.
August 4 - 23	Russia swiftly advanced into Germany through East Prussia
August 26 - Sept 13	Russia was defeated by Germany at Masurian Lakes and Tannenberg. There were over one million Russian casualties.
December 1914	Russia defeats Austria and occupied Galicia
August 1915	Tsar Nicholas II left St Petersburg to take control of the armies on the Eastern Front. He left the running of Russia to his wife Alexandra.
October 1915	Germans attacked the Russians and drove them out of Poland. Russians lost over 750,000 men
June -Sept 1916	Russia, under General Brusilov launched a major offensive against Austria. The Austrian army was driven back but Russia lost another one million men.
March 1917	Russian army demoralised and nearing collapse.

Question: Which two of these events do you think were the most important turning-points for the Tsarist regime? Explain your answer.

Impact of WW1 on Russia

	Impact at the Front	Impact at Home
The Top	**The Tsar** • As trouble in Russia mounted the Tsar unwisely decided to take over Supreme Command of the army in 1915. • He had no military training and he was now blamed personally for the poor showing of the army – in particular, after the initial successes of the Brusilov Offensive. • The support of the army ebbed away and even the peasants, who made up the majority of the soldiers turned against their Tsar. • The Tsar compounded the problem by ignoring all requests from the Duma to form a 'Ministry of National Confidence' and restrict the influence of the Tsarina and Rasputin in the decision-making process.	**Tsarina, Rasputin and the Duma** • When the Tsar left for the front he left the running of the country to his wife Alexandra. She was to be his "eyes and ears". • Alexandra was German by birth and in the climate of the war the people hated all things German. To make things worse she turned to the disreputable monk, Rasputin for advice. • The rumours of an affair between the Tsar's wife and the mad monk again began to circulate and other rumours that they were both German spies. • Even when members of the Duma condemned Rasputin's scandalous behaviour the Tsarina continued to support him. Eventually in 1916 Rasputin was murdered by a group of noblemen.
The Bottom	**The soldiers** • The railway system in the western provinces and Poland proved to be inadequate and Russia had only a limited railway link with the interior. • The low level of technical and economic development produced an army suffering from the shortage of equipment – even boots - and trained personnel. Many soldiers often had no weapons at all; they were expected to arm themselves from the discarded weapons of the killed and wounded. • The offensive of 1914 and 1915 produced staggering casualties, 2 million deaths in 1915 alone. As the army retreated, a refugee problem was created, for 3 million civilians retreated with the soldiers. • Inadequate equipment and shortage of materials gradually undermined the morale of the army and caused many soldiers to desert.	**The workers** • Throughout much of the war the people in the cities faced severe food shortages. This was due to a number of factors, including bad harvests, poor transport systems and the loss of large areas of fertile farming land to the Germans. • The food shortages meant that prices for food prices got higher and higher but workers wages did not keep pace with these rises. At the start of 1917 many workers and their families were facing starvation. • The government tried to alleviate the situation by printing more money but this merely produced an inflationary spiral which merely encouraged peasants to resort to subsistence farming rather than waste time trying to make a profit; this in turn exacerbated the food shortages in the cities.

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