

BALMUN'26

CABINET

STUDY GUIDE

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BALMUN'26 CABINET:HOUSE OF ROMANOV STUDY GUIDE

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1. Letter From the Secretary-General

Esteemed Participants of BALMUN'26,

It is my utmost pleasure to welcome you to this year's annual session of BALMUN. It is truly an honour to host a platform where passionate minds gather to engage in a meaningful debate, diplomacy, and cooperation. BALMUN is not merely a conference; it is a created space where ideas are challenged, and perspectives are broadened.

My journey in this club began on the day that I stepped into this school. I started as a bot delegate, continued as an academic assistant, and now stand proudly as the Secretary General of this year's annual session. Our team has been working meticulously to ensure that this MUN offers not only a rigorous academic experience but also an inspiring and memorable one. We have overcome plenty of different challenges, but all of them have made us stronger than ever to mark our target. We have poured relentless effort into this conference.

With a highly dedicated academic and organizational team, we proudly present twelve committees, including two General Assembly committees, six Special committees, and four Crisis committees. Each committee is carefully designed to encourage critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. Over the course of three days, you will be able to defend your ideas, listen to opposing views, and seek compromise in the pursuit of meaningful solutions.

I hope that BALMUN'26 serves as a reminder that true leadership lies not in dominance, but in dialogue and not in certainty, but in openness to learning. As the academic and organizational team of BALMUN, we eagerly look forward to witnessing the ideas you will bring to life and the impact you will create throughout the conference.

Your Sincerely,

Kerem Kılıç

Secretary General of BALMUN'26

2. Letter From the Under-Secretaries General

Dear Delegates,

I hope you are doing well and have an amazing day. I and my academic assistant, Emir Can Çicek, tried to make you a not-long study guide in order for you to understand the basics of the Romanovs and the situation of Russia in the start of the 20th century. We started from the first Russian States and finished with the Russian Empire.

I strongly recommend you to see this guide as an introduction to the topic and do further research upon it. Youtube can be a great source for you, videos on there can also help you to understand the concept of trench warfare which was used in World War I. Don't settle for what's given to you. Always be hungry for more. Always look for better. Get out of your apartment. Start a fight and prove you're alive. If you don't claim your humanity, you will become a statistic.

Before beginning the study guide, please make sure to carefully read the "Disclaimer" section. This section is particularly important, as it explains the nature of the committee and clarifies that certain developments may differ from historical reality depending on the actions and decisions taken by delegates during the simulation. Reading this part first will help you approach the guide with the correct perspective.

For these three days, don't just be a delegate. Be a leader, be the hope for our world that has plunged into darkness. I hope you are going to have a great time and make friends that you will tell your grandchildren. Take a deep breath, good luck.

Do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail or phone. Here is my contact information:

E-mail: furkan.t.kutlu@gmail.com

Phone Number: +90 555 149 67 90

Sincerely,

Furkan Talha Kutlu

Under Secretary General of Cabinet: House of Romanovs

3. Introduction to the Committee

In our conference, Cabinet: House of Romanov is a realistic warfare and political crisis simulation. Delegates will be controlling historical figures that had an impact on the lives of millions. You will have the chance to change history through your decisions. Plus, none of history is pre-determined here, since our committee starts in 1914, before the Great War, everything that happened after that date can change based on your actions. Maybe Russia will be victorious in the Battle of Tannenberg or Russia will not participate in WW1. We will see.

In 1914, new ideologies were rising in the world, and the Russian Empire also had its share from this. Libertarian and conservative ideas clashed for years, resulting in things like assassination attempts and the 1905 revolution. With several conflicts Russia got themselves in, anti-Tsarist ideas grew stronger, eventually leading to the Russian Revolution in 1917. Because this didn't happen yet in the committee, you have the chance to have different approaches as the leading dynasty of Russia. People expect bread and peace from you. Enemies to the state are making preparations for a big revolution in Russia. Trade unions and syndicates are ready to make collaborations with enemies. Russia needs a hero, a saviour. God bless you and mother Russia.

World War I, which was known as "the Great War" during its time, will be one of the main themes in our committee. With the rising tensions and forming alliances in Europe at the time, a massive conflict was almost unavoidable. During the committee, you can have different and unique approaches for this war, because it didn't even happen yet. You have the right to attack, defend or communicate with who you want, and when you want. You must navigate warfare, economy, diplomacy and internal politics at the same time. Success will not only depend on military, but also economic, strategic and political decisions. Be excited, you have a lot to do.

4. Disclaimer

While reading this, don't come into the conclusion that all of these events happened in the committee. Our year in the committee is 1914, during the July Crisis. This means that events specifically told as happened after or during the war did not happen, and can change based on your actions. In this simulation, history doesn't have to follow its historical path. Results of major conflicts and revolutions may change based on delegate actions.

To explain further, Russia may win battles it lost historically, or form unexpected alliances. External powers or minorities may intervene in unexpected ways. It would be a big mistake to think of any event that happened after the Great

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War as pre-determined. Even though history is a great teacher, it will not tell you what to do, or change your actions. In conclusion, history will not determine your destiny, it will only guide you for the better. You must be prepared for unexpected scenarios and different outcomes. **You're warned.**

5. Key Terms and Definitions

July Crisis: The period of intense diplomatic tension in late July 1914 following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, during which the major European powers escalated toward full-scale war through ultimatums, mobilizations, and declarations of war.

Autocracy: A system of government where a single ruler holds absolute, unchecked power. In Russia, the Tsar ruled by divine right with no obligation to share power with any elected body.

Duma: Russia's legislative assembly, created as a result of the 1905 Revolution. It had very limited real power, as Nicholas II consistently refused to allow it meaningful authority over government decisions.

Russification: The imperial policy of imposing Russian language, culture, and Orthodox Christianity on non-Russian minorities within the empire, suppressing their native cultures and languages.

Nationalism: The political ideology that people sharing a common ethnicity, language, or culture should form their own independent state. In 1914 Europe, rising nationalism, especially in the Balkans was a major driver of instability.

Militarism: The policy of building up and glorifying military power as a central instrument of national strength and foreign policy. By 1914, most European great powers had been engaged in an arms race for decades.

Ultimatum: A final set of demands issued to another party, with the threat of serious consequences if not met. Austria-Hungary's ultimatum to Serbia after the assassination was deliberately designed to be rejected, providing a pretext for war.

Mobilization: The process of assembling and organizing a nation's military forces for active war service. In 1914, mobilization was considered nearly irreversible, once started, stopping it was seen as dangerously destabilizing.

Constitutional Monarchy: A system of government where a monarch's powers are limited by a constitution and shared with an elected legislature. Nicholas II resisted this, making Russia's version only partially functional.

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Mysticism: A belief in accessing spiritual truths or powers beyond ordinary human understanding, often through personal experience or ritual. Rasputin's reputation was built largely on his perceived mystical healing abilities.

6. Historical Background

This part will include the historical background of the committee to help you understand what led to the current political grounds in the Russian Empire. It is highly recommended for you to read and do further research about this part. You can use this information in the committee.

a. First Russian States

The traditional ancestor of Russian/Ukrainian history is first known to be the establishment of the Rus' state. This happened shortly after vikings sailed and settled in eastern Europe, such as what is now Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. In the year 882, Prince Oleg of Novgorod seized Kiev, which later led to the state being known as Kievan Rus'. Eventually, the state strengthened its relationship with the Byzantine Empire, and adopted Christianity in 988. At its greatest extent, Kievan Rus' stretched from White Sea in the north to the Black Sea in the south, uniting the East Slavic Tribes. From then and forward, Russian culture became a synthesis of Byzantine, Slavic and Scandinavian cultures.

After the Mongol invasion of Kievan Rus', "Grand Principality of Moscow", also known as "Grand Duchy of Moscow", became a vassal state of the Golden Horde in late 13th century. Even though the declaring of independence from the Mongols was a long process that took decades, it is estimated that the state was independent around the end of 15th century. Through powerful monarchs, the duchy increased its power and land, eventually gathering most of the Russian lands together.

b. Tsardom of Russia(1547-1721)

After Ivan the Terrible was crowned as tsar, he did several reforms, including: revising the legal code, establishing a standing army(the streltsy), and introducing the first printing press to Russia. However, historians generally believe that he murdered his eldest son, which caused a major problem in the dynasty. After his eldest son's death, Feodor I was the only successor of Ivan the Terrible from the Rurik dynasty. The problem was that Feodor I died without any surviving children. This started the "Time of Troubles", a 15 year period of political crisis with numerous imposters and assassinations. Along with the political crisis, Russia experienced the worst famine in its history, the famine of 1601-1603. During this famine, almost 2 million people died in Russia. Polish-Russian war and civil wars pushed the country back in terms of social,



economic and political life. After the devastating period “Time of Troubles”, Zemsky Sobor (parliament) chose Mikhail Romanov as Tsar of all Russia. This started the 300 year reign of Romanovs in the Tsardom of Russia and the Russian Empire.

c. The Great Northern War(1700) and Peter the Great

After the power changes in the 17th century, Sweden became a major threat for most of Europe. Sweden had most of the Baltic Sea controlled and had a very professional army. With the death of Charles XI(1697), 15 year old Charles XII got



the throne. Many enemies of Sweden saw this as an opportunity to form a secret alliance and attack Sweden. Russia saw this as a chance to take back control of the Baltic Sea and modernize their army.

The Great Northern War broke out in 1700 and it lasted until 1721. The war resulted in Sweden losing most of its power in the Baltic Sea, and Russia gaining territory in Baltics, St. Petersburg and north of Lake Ladoga. This war created opportunities for Russia to further modernize their army, strengthen their economy and become even stronger. Before the war, Peter the Great was travelling around Western Europe to find ideas. He brought many reforms, recruited several hundred specialists for the Russian military, negotiated deals

and made contracts with other countries.

d. Assassination of Alexander II(1881)

On 13 March 1881, Alexander II was assassinated by revolutionary socialist political organization Narodnaya Volya, also known as “People’s Will”. The organization thought that political violence was necessary for a revolution, because Alexander refused to give up autocratic power. That day, when he was in his carriage, a bomb was thrown on him. The carriage and the people with him were injured, but he was fine. After he left the vehicle, another terrorist closed-in on him, and landed a bomb in his feet.

This assassination showed that revolutionaries were willing to do anything to end the autocratic regime. This move led to continuous political violence, on the events leading to a revolution. Ironically, he accepted a proposal of a reform plan on the morning of that day, this plan would have given a voice for local representatives to take part in discussing new laws. His assassination arguably slowed down, rather than step up, the move for a parliamentary democracy. This is because his son, Alexander III, rejected these reforms and moved for an even stricter autocratic rule.

e. Throne of Nicholas II(1894)

After ascending to the throne and becoming an emperor, Nicholas II followed the strict autocratic rule of Alexander III. He saw the emperor as “chosen by God”, and he felt a parliament demanded by the people would be the betrayal of God's trust. His absolute monarchist views disappointed libertarian people. He was a very stubborn ruler that refused parliamentary involvement in any way. His internal politics were one of the reasons for the 1905 revolution.

f. Russo-Japanese War(1904-1905)

In 1904, a war with the Japanese was almost unavoidable in the east. Japan emerged as a powerful new empire that wanted to gain strength, and Russia wanted to expand their territory to the east. This conflict of interest made Japan declare war on Russia, and attack Port Arthur even before the declaration reached the Russian government. During the war, Russia was severely inferior in navy, so much that they sent their main navy from the Baltics all the way to the area, which was a 9 month journey. The fleet was damaged and tired from the journey, and it was attacked by Japanese forces before it could reach its destination, resulting in a clear Japanese win in the sea.

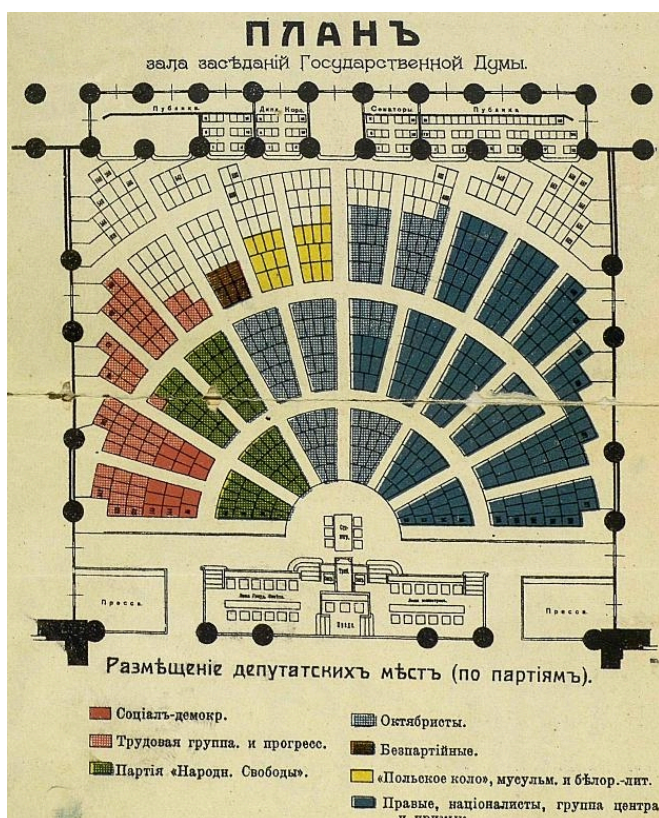


Russia had the advantage of manpower on the land, which allowed them to not be exhausted from the war unlike Japanese soldiers. However, the Japanese had twice as many machine guns as Russians, and they were able to bait Russians with misleading tactics. Even though Japan lost manpower, they were able to have a strong hand in peace negotiations. In conclusion, Russia gave the southern half of Sakhalin island to Japan, left Manchuria and recognized Korea as part of the Japanese sphere of influence.

g. 1905 Revolutions and State Dumas

Nicholas had a lot of problems to solve. People were hungry, liberals were angry and the economy was not-cooly. In the start of the 20th century, huge amounts of strikes started to happen all around the Russian Empire. Caucasus, yes. Big cities, yes. Siberia, probably yes. After the brutal suppression of peaceful protest of 1905, left-wing support among Russia skyrocketed. After all of these things, Russia lost the war against the Japanese. Many blamed Nicholas II and his government for the failure to modernize the military and for engaging in a war they could not win. In 1904, massive strike waves broke out in Odessa in the spring, in Kyiv in July, and in Baku in December. This all set the stage for the strikes in St. Petersburg in December 1904 to January 1905 was seen as the first step in the 1905 revolution. People were tired, the economy crushed, national pride was tarnished, so they started the big step for their freedom.

With these reactions from people, Tsar Nicholas II agreed to a creation of the State Duma of the Russian Empire (Basically abolishing absolutist monarchy) but with great limits to Duma. People didn't like it and strikes continued. Nicholas II issued what became known as the October Manifesto, promising certain civil rights and an elected parliament called the Duma but with a few limits. People liked it and strikes were lowered. There will be elections for the first Duma in Russia. Democracy. While the Russian liberals were satisfied by the October Manifesto and prepared for upcoming Duma elections, radical socialists and revolutionaries denounced the elections and called for an armed uprising to destroy the Empire. Workers tried to take over Moscow and Sevastopol but got crushed by government forces. It was obvious the revolution was not ready.



The First Duma was established without universality and equality. The most radical leftist parties like the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party had boycotted the election, leaving for centrist or center-left parties with the most deputies. The Duma ran for 73 days until 8 July 1906, and it didn't have much success. This was mostly because the monarchy was reluctant to share power and the Duma wanted reforms.

The Second Duma lasted 103 days. Mensheviks and Bolsheviks abandoned their policies of boycotting the elections, and

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consequently won a number of seats. The election was a success for leftist parties. Prime minister Stolypin accused 55 delegates of plotting against the Emperor's family. This led to the Coup of June 1907, and the dissolution of the Second Duma.

The Third(November 1907 - July 1912) and Fourth Duma's(November 1912 - October 1917) had limited political influence and had poor representation of peasants and workers. After the dissolution of the Second Duma, land owners, businessmen and nobles gained influence in the Duma. In short, the Duma didn't have much influence over the empire because it was always under the influence of the monarchy. The Tsar, Nicholas II did not want to share his powers with the Duma, resulting in a semi-successful try at constitutional monarchy.

7. Path to World War I

This part will explain the long-term reasons and major events leading to the First World War. Let me remind you that World War I did not start in our committee, yet. You will decide to get in the war or stay out of the war.

a. Rising Tensions Due to Militarism and Colonialism



For centuries, European countries were in a constant race of colonising and asserting power outside of Europe. Because of this, countries like Britain and Germany formed big armies and fleets. Expansionism was a common policy for European empires. Over time, this competition led to big alliances, signaling that a great war might break out. At the start of the 20th century, two major alliances were formed. Russia, France and Great Britain formed the Triple Entente, while Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy formed the Triple Alliance.

b. Rise of Nationalist Ideas in Europe

In the 19th century, nationalist ideas were emerging in the Balkans. This mainly affected states like Austria-Hungary and the Ottomans and were the main reason for Balkan wars. For our content, Serbian nationalism was the main reason for the spark of the Great War. This idea threatened Austria-Hungary's policies. Serbian nationalists wanted to unite all Slavic people in the balkan region, including those in Austria-Hungary. The Russian

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Empire supported Serbia, because it was another slavic nation in the balkan region. This opposed Entente Powers with the Allied Powers.

c. Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand



After the rising tensions and nationalist ideas in Europe, Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28, 1914. **This was the last major event that occurred before the committee started, and the events will continue from here.** He was chosen as a target because he was to be the heir of the

Austro-Hungarian Empire. After the incident, Austria-Hungary issued an ultimatum to Serbia, using

the assassination as an excuse to settle its dispute with Serbia. This was the spark of the Great War, and started the war in the Balkan region because the Serbians rejected the ultimatum. Soon, Russia declared war on Austria-Hungary and the whole of Europe was at war.

8. Rise of the Red Threat

At the beginning of the 20th century, revolutionary movements in the Russian Empire were becoming increasingly active as dissatisfaction with the autocratic rule of the Tsar grew among workers, peasants, and intellectuals. One of the most important revolutionary groups was the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party (RSDLP), a Marxist political party founded in 1898 that aimed to overthrow the Tsarist regime and establish a socialist system.

In 1903, the party held its second congress, during which a major ideological and organizational dispute emerged. Vladimir Lenin argued that the party should be composed of a small, disciplined group of professional revolutionaries who would lead the working class in a revolutionary struggle. Others in the party, particularly those led by Julius Martov, believed that the party should have broader and more open



membership, allowing a larger number of supporters to participate in the political movement.

During the voting at the congress, Lenin's faction gained a temporary majority in several key decisions, including positions on the party's central committee and editorial board of its newspaper. Because of this majority, Lenin's supporters adopted the name "Bolsheviks," derived from the Russian word *bolshinstvo*, meaning "majority." Their opponents became known as the "Mensheviks," from *meshinstvo*, meaning "minority." However, these names did not always accurately reflect the real balance of power within the party, as the two factions frequently shifted in size and influence over time.

In the years following the split, Bolshevism remained relatively unpopular within the broader political landscape of Russia. Many political activists and workers viewed the Bolsheviks as too radical due to their strict party discipline and their willingness to pursue revolutionary methods to achieve a socialist state. Meanwhile, other socialist groups, liberals, and reformists advocated more gradual political change.

The situation changed dramatically during the First World War. Russia faced severe military defeats, economic collapse, and widespread social unrest. These crises weakened the authority of the Tsarist government and intensified demands for political reform. By 1917, revolutionary sentiment had grown across Russian society. The Bolsheviks began to gain significant support among workers, soldiers, and sections of the urban population by promoting slogans such as "Peace, Land, and Bread," which directly addressed the immediate concerns of the population.

Through their strong organizational structure and clear political messaging, the Bolsheviks were able to position themselves as one of the most influential revolutionary movements during the upheavals of 1917. Their growing support ultimately allowed them to play a decisive role in the Russian Revolution later that year.

9. Influences Outside of the Cabinet

a. Rasputin

Grigori Rasputin was a Siberian peasant and mystic. He was famous for his charming and hypnotising personality, and quickly gained popularity in the Russian Empire. His wanderings eventually led him to St. Petersburg, where he was welcomed by the inspector of the religious academy of St. Petersburg. Rasputin was warmly welcomed in St. Petersburg, because of his entertaining mysticism and allegedly extraordinary healing powers.

He was introduced to the royal family in 1905, and summoned in 1908 to heal Aleksey Nikolayevich, heir of the Russian throne. Rasputin succeeded in easing the boy's suffering, and he warned the parents that the destiny of both the child and the dynasty were irrevocably linked to him. After this, Rasputin was always close with the royal family.

Historically, Rasputin became the personal adviser of Tsarina Alexandra in 1915, and was assassinated by nobles in 1916 because his strong influence as a peasant was seen as dangerous. His death made workers and peasants more furious, and sped up the Russian Revolution. However, this did not happen in our committee and may change based on delegate actions.

b. Foreign Influence and International Pressure

In addition to domestic figures such as Rasputin, the Russian Empire was also affected by the influence of foreign powers. During the early twentieth century, Russia was deeply connected to the broader European political system, where alliances, rivalries, and economic relations often shaped internal developments.

One major example was Russia's alliance with France. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the French government provided large financial loans and investments to the Russian Empire in order to strengthen the Franco-Russian Alliance against Germany and Austria-Hungary. These loans supported Russian industrialization and military expansion, but they also created economic dependence on foreign capital and tied Russia more closely to European geopolitical rivalries.

Another important influence came from Germany. During the First World War, German leadership recognized that internal instability in Russia could weaken their enemy. In 1917, the German government allowed Vladimir Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders who had been living in exile in Switzerland to travel across Germany in a sealed train back to Russia. German officials hoped that Lenin's revolutionary movement would destabilize Russia and force it to withdraw from the war, which ultimately occurred after the Bolsheviks came to power.

At the same time, political ideas and revolutionary movements circulated widely across Europe. Socialist, anarchist, and nationalist ideologies spread through intellectual networks, workers' movements, and exile communities. Russian revolutionaries often operated from cities such as Geneva, Paris, and London, where they published newspapers, organized political groups, and developed strategies for revolutionary change within the Russian Empire.

10.Minorities and Political Groups in Russia

a. Nationalist Movements



While the state and monarchist groups like Black Hundreds were known for their ultra-nationalist Russification policies, many minorities were joining nationalist movements and sought independence. All around the empire Poles, Ukrainians, Finns, Baltic, Caucasus and Central Asian people wanted their independent state free from Russian autocracy. Most nationalist groups were willing to declare their independence in a situation where the empire is not strong.

b. Political Groups



Even though they were both from the same Russian Social-Democratic Workers Party, Mensheviks and Bolsheviks showed significant differences. Bolsheviks were radical Marxists led by Vladimir Lenin. They wanted a violent revolution to create a socialist state. Differently, Mensheviks were less extreme Marxists, and they believed that Russia needed to go through an industrial capitalist phase if they wanted to become a strong socialist state. During the World War, Bolshevism became more popular because they wanted Russia to leave the Great War and make peace. Political parties in Russia are:

- Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP): founded in 1898 in Minsk. The RSDLP split in 1903 into Bolshevik ("majority") and Menshevik ("minority") factions, with the Bolshevik faction

eventually becoming the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

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- The Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries (SRs): founded in 1902. SRs also known as the Socialist Revolutionary Party, was a major political party in the late Russian Empire, during both phases of the Russian Revolution, and in early Soviet Russia. The SRs were agrarian socialists and supporters of a democratic socialist Russian republic.
- Trudoviks (Labour Group): founded in 1906. Trudoviks were a democratic socialist political party of Russia in the early 20th century. The Trudoviks are best known for winning seats in the State Duma.
- Progressive Party: founded in 1912. They were in coalition with Kadets mostly. After the State Duma's fall, they participated in a provisional government. Liberals of Russia
- Constitutionalist Democratic Party (Kadets): founded on 12 October 1905. This party promoted Western constitutional monarchy and attracted a base ranging from moderate conservatives to mild socialists.
- Octobrist Party: founded in 1905. The Octobrist Party was a liberal-reformist constitutional monarchist political party in late Imperial Russia. It represented moderately right-wing, anti-revolutionary, and constitutionalist views.

11. Situation of the Economy and Resources

a. Triple Entente

The Russian Empire gained most of their economic strength from the land, population and raw materials. However, underdeveloped industries, insufficient railways and debt are limiting them from economic success. The army is mobilizing slowly, and military logistics are limiting them. Manpower is never a problem in Russia, having the largest army in Europe. The main problem for this large army is failing to modernize and improve infrastructure in the country. The main income for the Russian government is agriculture and state monopolies. Raw materials like coal and iron are also helpful.

The French Republic had a strong economy and was able to give loans to allies. However, their slow population growth and the loss of Alsace-Lorraine's iron fields made them lag behind Germany. Main income for France is rich Gold reserves and colonial powers. They have an army that lacks manpower but great in defensive skills.

Great Britain is the world's largest economy and has the strongest navy ever assembled. Their global empire makes them a financial powerhouse, allowing them to

have access to raw materials. Main problems for Great Britain are their small standing army and the Irish Home Rule crisis.

b. Triple Alliance

The German Empire is highly industrialised and most of their income comes from high amounts of steel and gold reserves. They own a fast and professional army. Their problem is being dependent on imported food and being vulnerable to naval blockade. Also, Germans may struggle geographically because of having to fight a two-front war.

The Austro-Hungarian Empire is struggling with internal politics and nationalists. They can help by their industry and agriculture. Major problems for Austria-Hungary is underfunded military and heavy debt.

The Kingdom of Italy is still carrying debt from the Libyan War(1911-1912). Italy had basically no raw materials and a still developing industry. They are not capable of fighting a big war at all.

c. Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire is struggling economically and politically, often being referred to as the “Sick Man of Europe.” Much of the empire’s economy is based on agriculture, and industrial development remains limited compared to the major European powers. Although the empire possesses valuable strategic territory controlling the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits, financial instability and external debt significantly weaken its economic independence.

Militarily, the Ottoman army has undergone reforms, particularly after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. German military advisers have helped modernize parts of the army. However, the empire still suffers from outdated infrastructure, limited industrial capacity and difficulties supplying and coordinating forces across its vast territories. The navy remains weak compared to the major European naval powers.

The Ottoman Empire also faces serious internal challenges. Nationalist movements among various ethnic groups create political instability and threaten the unity of the state. Recent conflicts such as the Italo-Turkish War (1911–1912) and the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) have resulted in major territorial losses and weakened the empire further. Despite these difficulties, the empire’s strategic location between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East makes it an important factor in the balance of power leading up to the First World War

12.Cabinet Members

Nicholas II

He was the Emperor of Russia from 1 November 1894 to 1917. He was a constitutional monarch that resisted political reforms and retained autocratic control. He was not prepared for ruling a big empire, probably because of this, his rule was marked by domestic unrest and military defeats. He was the last monarch of Russia before the Russian Revolution, and oversaw the Russian Empire's participation in World War I. In 1918, the Romanovs were murdered, putting an end to the dynasty.

Tsarina Alexandra(Alexandra Feodorovna)

Married to Nicholas II, she was a German-born princess(born Princess Alix of Hesse and by Rhine), which made her unpopular in wartime Russia. She is most known for her religious and politically conservative personality that pushed Nicholas II for a firm and autocratic rule. She was heavily influenced by Rasputin, she believed that he could cure her son Alexei's hemophilia.

Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich

He was the brother of Nicholas II and was seen as heir presumptive since Nicholas II's son Alexei was ill. He was considered more charming and social than Nicholas, but was largely kept away from political power. He was designated Emperor of Russia after his brother abdicated in 1917 and proclaimed him "Emperor Michael II", but Michael declined to take power a day later.

Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich

He was a senior Romanov and a respected military man. He was effectively the most senior military figure outside of the Tsar. He was commander-in-chief of the Imperial Russian Army units on the main front in the first year of the war, during the reign of his first cousin once removed, Emperor Nicholas II.

Mikhail Alekseyev – Field Marshal

Known for his successful operations, he was one of Russia's most capable and respected staff officers. He was commander of the Kiev Military District before the war broke out. Between 1915 and 1917 he served as Tsar Nicholas II's Chief of Staff of the Stavka (name of the high command of the armed forces)

Nikolai Ruzsky – Field Marshal

He was a capable but cautious commander that commanded the 3rd Army. He later became commander of the Northern Front, and was known for being politically cautious. He was a member of the state and military councils, best known for his role in World War I and the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II.

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Yakov Zhilinsky – Field Marshal

At the outbreak of war, he was Chief of the Russian General Staff, responsible for coordinating with France. Later in August 1914, He was considered to be one of the main culprits of the failure of the East Prussian Campaign in the early stages of the First World War.

Aleksey Brusilov – Commander

Commander of the 8th Army, considered Russia's more aggressive and talented commanders. He later became famous for the Brusilov Offensive of 1916, arguably the most successful Allied offensive of the entire war. According to the assessment of British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, Brusilov was one of the seven outstanding fighting commanders of World War I, the others being Erich von Falkenhayn (later replaced by Paul von Hindenburg), Erich Ludendorff, Mustafa Kemal, Herbert Plumer, John Monash and Edmund Allenby.

Nikolai Yudenich – Commander

He was a relatively senior but not yet prominent general at the time. At the beginning of World War I, Yudenich was appointed Chief of Staff of the Russian Caucasus Army. He was serving in the Caucasus Military District and defeated the Ottomans in 1914-1916.

Anton Denikin – Commander

At the outbreak of World War I in August 1914, Denikin was a major general on the staff of the Kiev military district. Dissatisfied with staff work, he requested a combat command and was appointed commander of the 4th Rifle Brigade, part of the Eighth Army under General Aleksei Brusilov on the Southwestern Front. The brigade was known as the "Iron Brigade" for its valour in the Russo-Turkish War. Under Denikin's leadership, it became one of the most decorated units in the Russian army

Alexandr Kolchak – Navy Officer

He graduated from the Naval Cadet Corps and went on to become an accomplished oceanographer and Arctic explorer. He was involved in several expeditions to northern Russia, including to the New Siberian Islands, and became the youngest vice admiral in the Imperial Navy. During the July Crisis, he was a distinguished naval officer, serving in the Baltic Fleet. During the war, he commanded the Black Sea Fleet.

Ivan Goremykin – Prime Minister

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An elderly, deeply conservative figure. Appointed by Nicholas II because he was reliably obedient. His appointment reflected Nicholas's preference for obedient ministers. During his time in government, Goremykin pursued conservative policies.

Pyotr Bark – Finance Minister

In 1911, Bark was appointed Assistant Minister of Commerce and Industry; In 1914 he was appointed Minister of Finance, replacing Vladimir Kokovtsov. He served in that position throughout the First World War until the abdication of Nicholas II. Appointed just months before the war, he was a relatively modernizing person in a conservative cabinet. He faced the challenge of financing war and mobilization.

Sergey Sazonov – Foreign Minister

He was a Slavic nationalist who was deeply sympathetic to Serbia. He strongly advocated for Russian mobilization. He was the first senior Russian official to recognize Austria-Hungary's ultimatum as a direct challenge to Russian prestige. The degree of his involvement in the events leading up to the outbreak of World War I is a matter of keen debate, with some historians putting the blame for an early and provocative mobilization squarely on Sazonov's shoulders, and others maintaining that his chief preoccupation was "to reduce the temperature of international relations, especially in the Balkans.

Ivan Grigorovich – Navy Minister

A professional naval administrator rather than a political operator. In 1914, the war was heavily dependent on land, so his role was not as prominent as army leadership. He served as Imperial Russia's last Naval Minister from 1911 until the onset of the 1917 revolution.

Nikolay Maklakov – Internal Affairs Minister

On 21 February 1913, Nikolay Maklakov was appointed as Minister of Interior. In his new position, Maklakov actively supported the monarchist movement. A hardline conservative who was deeply suspicious of any liberal reform. He controlled the police and focused on suppressing domestic dissent.

Vladimir Sukhomlinov – War Minister

A charming personality that cultivated Nicholas II's trust. He was widely regarded by military professionals as incompetent and corrupt. He was an advocate for mobilization during the July Crisis. Sukhomlinov was ousted as Minister of War amid allegations of failure to provide the Imperial Russian Army with necessary armaments and munitions for World War I and accused of responsibility for Russia's defeats in the early Eastern Front.

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