himself in the limelight. In addition, with the Tsar’s efforts being completely focused on the war, he left room for disaster and discontent to spread among the home front. Further issues at the home front spiraled from vicious rumors about the Tsarina, and her suspicious relationship the extremely controversial figure Rasputin. Rasputin had no political or academic qualifications, but began dismissing and appointing government ministers, on the basis of his personal relationship with them or any financial “donations” he was to receive; resulting in incompetent ministers gaining power but above all, further weakening the unstable government. This of course, outraged the Russian people, their hatred towards Rasputin only to become even more intensified as more rumors of an affair between the Tsarina and Rasputin surfaced. The effect of these rumors was that they made the Tsar seem weak, and ignorant. Historian Orlando Figes states “Nicholas was the source of all the problems. If there was a vacuum of power at the centre of the ruling system, then he was the empty space. In a sense, Russia gained in him the worst of both worlds: a Tsar determined to rule from the throne yet quite incapable of exercising power”. However, Fige’s interpretation to place all the blame on the Tsar can be seen as too simplistic. With hindsight we can see that the Tsar’s decisions regarding the duma and the war were poor but we can understand his intentions. He had inherited a flawed and broken system and felt pressure to preserve it. In summation, while the Tsar can not be blamed too severely for his judgments but he was powerless to believe he could maintain a backwards system and halt a changing world. Therefore, the Tsar’s poor military and political decisions can be seen as instrumental in his own downfall as he isolated himself from the people and the army, both of which could have saved him.

Another factor, which some historians have argued was important in causing the revolution, was the rise of an increasingly agitated and politicised working class and peasantry. After the 1905 Revolution it was evident that the discontent of the working class and the peasantry, who made up the bulk of the population, posed a serious threat to the Tsarist regime. The industrial revolution came to Russia largely in the 1890’s, with ironworks, factories but also the problems of an industrial society. Russia’s cities began to expand and large numbers of peasants moved to the cities to take up new jobs. By the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth centuries, millions were in these tightly packed and expanding urban areas, experiencing problems like poor and cramped housing, bad wages, and a lack of rights in their jobs. These appalling living and working conditions and lack of reform to address them gave urban workers plenty of reasons for protest. In addition, this growing urban workforce was becoming increasingly politicized and radical as socialist revolutionaries who moved between cities and exile in Siberia influenced them. This meant the proletariat was bigger and more radical than in 1905. During the first six months of 1914, almost half of the industrial workforce partook in strikes and in July there was a general strike in the capital. This collapsed only on the outbreak of WW1 when there was a flush of patriotic enthusiasm. This shows the threat of the working class and that many dissidents of 1905 were still alive. Historian A. Woods argues that: “Despite the disaffection of the military, however, it was neither the high command nor the Duma politicians, still less the revolutionary parties, which