

# COUNTING THE DAYS TO REVOLUTION

3 MARCH 1861



Tsar Alexander II passes the Emancipation Edict, ending serfdom in Russia (but keeps peasants tied to the land through continuing labour obligations).

17 FEBRUARY 1880



Failed attempt (number five) to assassinate Tsar Alexander II by blowing up his palace dining room kills 11 and wounds 56. The Tsar survives through being late to dinner.

13 MARCH 1881



Tsar Alexander II is assassinated by a member of the radical group People's Will. He is succeeded by his son, Alexander III, who curb civil rights and freedom of the press.

1882



Pogroms against Jews spread across the Russian Empire, leading to mass emigration of the Jewish population.

1891–1892



Famine in Russia kills between 375,000 and 400,000 and affects millions more.

1 NOVEMBER 1894



Tsar Alexander III dies after a sudden illness; his son Nicholas II assumes the throne.

20 DECEMBER 1895



Lenin, future leader of the Bolsheviks, is arrested to be kept in solitary confinement for 13 months and then exiled to Siberia.

30 MAY 1896



The Khodynka Tragedy: A stampede in Moscow occurs after Nicholas II's coronation, as crowds rush for the stalls for free souvenirs, resulting in the deaths of over 1,300 people.

22 JANUARY 1905



Bloody Sunday: Troops and police open fire on a peaceful demonstration outside the Winter Palace and elsewhere in St Petersburg, killing and injuring over 1,000. The liberal press blames Nicholas II.

JUNE 1905



Sailors mutiny on the battleship Potemkin, part of the Black Sea Fleet. The mutiny triggers riots in Odessa, which are quashed by troops on the Tsar's orders.

30 OCTOBER 1905



Nicholas II issues the October Manifesto, promising civil liberties and an elected parliament, resulting in restrictions on the absolute power of the monarch and a de facto constitution (Fundamental Laws of 1906).

16 JUNE 1907



Coup of June 1907 leads to the dissolution of the Second State Duma, the arrest of some its members and a fundamental change in the Russian electoral law.

From the unjust Emancipation Edict of 1861 to the many broken promises of peace and liberty thereafter, the years leading up to the Russian Revolution were full of tumult and violence. We look back at the major events that culminated in the October Revolution of 1917, an uprising of the common man and woman the likes of which the world had never seen before.

1 AUGUST 1914



Germany declares war on Russia, with Russia entering the First World War.

30 DECEMBER 1916



Grigori Rasputin, the controversial 'holy man' and close friend of Tsar Nicholas II's family, is murdered after several failed attempts.

8 MARCH 1917



On International Women's Day, demonstrators and workers—many of whom are women—take to the streets protesting against food shortages and the war. The strikes soon spread across Petrograd.

15 MARCH 1917



Nicholas II abdicates and removes his son from succession. His brother Mikhail announces his refusal to accept the throne. A Provisional Government is set up with Prince Lvov the leader.

APRIL 1917



Lenin returns from exile, travelling to Petrograd in a sealed train from Switzerland via Germany and Finland.

MAY 1917



A note sent to the Allies by Minister Milyukov stating the intention to continue the war is leaked, resulting in support for Bolsheviks and Milyukov's resignation. Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks join the govt.

1 JULY 1917



Russia launches an offensive against Austria-Hungary forces in Galicia, but low morale caused by the Revolution leads men to disobey officers and many return home, collapsing the offensive.

16–20 JULY 1917



Armed anti-govt demonstrations begin in Petrograd. Lvov resigns, Kerensky takes control and crushes demonstrations. Death penalty is reintroduced and Kerensky issues the arrest of Lenin. Pravda's offices are raided, and many Bolshevik leaders arrested.

9 SEPTEMBER 1917



A failed coup by Kornilov, commander of the Russian army, takes place, when he orders troops towards Petrograd to counter the Bolsheviks. It secures power for the Bolsheviks and crushes the credibility of a coalition between socialists and liberals.

14 SEPTEMBER 1917



Russia is officially declared a republic.

7–9 NOVEMBER 1917



Bolsheviks seize control of Petrograd and the Winter Palace. Decrees on Land and Peace are issued by the new govt, as well as decrees for an eight-hour work day, minimum wage, etc. The death penalty is abolished once again, as is the bourgeois press.

25 NOVEMBER 1917



Elections to the Constituent Assembly take place. The Socialist Revolutionaries win the largest number of seats, while the Bolsheviks win less than one-quarter of the vote.