

1917: Russia's year of revolution



A century ago the Russian Revolution – an attempt to create a more just nation – sealed the fate of the Romanov dynasty, formed the Soviet Union and led to more than 70 years of communist rule. Today, Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin's embalmed body lies in a Moscow mausoleum

FEBRUARY REVOLUTION	BOLSHEVIK RISE	OCTOBER REVOLUTION
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► **Jan-Feb:** Food riots and protests in capital Petrograd (St Petersburg) demand end of autocracy and of Russian participation in World War I

► **Feb 26-27:** Soldiers mutiny after Tsar orders use of force to quell riots

Duma (parliament) refuses Tsar's order to disband, setting up Provisional Government led by liberals and moderate socialists

Petrograd Soviet (elected council of workers and soldiers) created

► **Mar 2:** Tsar forced to abdicate – ending 300-year-old Romanov dynasty

► **Mar-Apr:** Revolution gives rise to short-lived national unity across Russia

► **Apr:** Lenin returns from exile, galvanizing small Bolshevik party into action with demands for bread, land, worker control and end to war

► **Jun:** New government war offensive against Germany fails – troops desert en masse to join revolution

► **Aug:** Army chief **General Kornilov** mounts coup to restore order and crush radicals in government

Coup put down after **Red Guards** (Bolshevik militia) come to aid of government led by Prime Minister **Alexander Kerensky** (right)

► **Sep:** Bolsheviks gain majority in ruling committees of Petrograd and Moscow Soviets – **Lenin** urges Bolsheviks to seize power

► **Oct 24-25:** Bolshevik forces stage coup engineered by **Leon Trotsky** (right), chairman of Petrograd Soviet

Signalled by blank shot from cruiser Aurora, Bolsheviks assault Winter Palace – seat of government – with little resistance. Kerensky flees

► **Oct 26:** **Council of People's Commissars** set up with Lenin as chairman, Trotsky as foreign commissar and **Joseph Stalin** (right) as commissar of nationalities

AFTERMATH

► **1918:** Russia exits World War I, giving up vast tracts of territory under humiliating **Treaty of Brest-Litovsk**

Treaty unleashes civil war between outraged anti-Bolshevik "White" Russians – backed by Western Allies – and Red Army. Bolsheviks execute Tsar and his family (left), fearing they will be liberated by insurgents

► **1922:** Bolshevik victory brings end to civil war – conflict, disease and starvation claim around 10 million lives. Soviet Union declared

Winter Palace

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin



Note: All dates old style – Russia switched to Gregorian calendar in 1918.
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Cruiser Aurora