1890

Boris Pasternak,
author of Doctor Zhivago, is born.

1905

Hundreds of unarmed demonstrators are killed
by imperial troops after marching on the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. "Bloody Sunday" sets off a series of protests and strikes that pressure Tsar Nicholas II to grant a constitution and establish a parliament (Duma).

1914

World War I erupts
after a Serbian radical assassinates Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo. Russia allies with Serbia, Britain, France and the United States to fight against Austria-Hungary and Germany.

1915

Tsar Nicholas II
assumes command of the Russian army in a city hundreds of miles from Petrograd, leaving his unpopular wife Alexandra and her less popular spiritual advisor Grigorii Rasputin to make political decisions in his absence.

1916

Rasputin is murdered
by Felix Yusupov, a member of the Russian nobility. Though Rasputin's death provides a temporary balm, public morale is still at an all-time low – the war is taking a financial and spiritual toll on the country.

1917

The Romanov dynasty ends its 300-year reign
when Tsar Nicholas II abdicates the throne after the February Revolution. The Provisional Government is overthrown in October by the communist Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Ilych Lenin and Leon Trotsky, who promise "Peace, Bread and Land" to the workers.

1918

Lenin transfers the center of government
to Russia's ancient capital Moscow. Bolsheviks execute Nicholas II, Alexandra and their five children. A Civil War rages between Bolshevik supporters ("Reds") and a collection of former officials, Cossacks, moderates and nobles who favor a return to the monarchy ("Whites"). Despite financial support from the U.S., France and Britain, the Whites are defeated by 1920. Millions die from famine and disease.

1922

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
(U.S.S.R.) is established and includes Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia (Belarus) and Transcaucasia (now Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan).

1924

Lenin dies and Petrograd is renamed Leningrad.
After a power struggle, Joseph Stalin emerges victorious as his successor. Stalin collectivizes agriculture and industrializes the nation, but widespread famine returns. Stalin kills millions of perceived political and ideological enemies over the next ten years in a series of purges.

1932

The doctrine of Socialist Realism
is established, forcing artists to integrate the propaganda of socialism into their work or face poverty, imprisonment, and/or death.

1939

Germany invades Poland,
setting off World War II.

1941

Germany invades the Soviet Union,
which in turn allies with Britain, France, and later the U.S. Russia suffers the most casualties – approximately 27 million soldiers and civilians.

1945

World War II ends;
Russia occupies parts of Eastern Europe formerly held by Axis powers and establishes puppet governments. The Cold War begins between the U.S.S.R. and the West.

1953

Stalin dies
and is succeeded by Nikita Khrushchev, who later denounces Stalin and his despotism.

1957

Doctor Zhivago is published
in Milan due to the Russian government's distaste with the novel's criticism of the Revolution.

1958

Boris Pasternak is awarded the Nobel Prize
for literature. After mounting pressure from the government, Pasternak declines the award.

October 31st

Despite declining the Nobel Prize,
the Union of Soviet Writers expels Pasternak, who then lives in "official disgrace."

1960

Boris Pasternak dies at the age of 70.

1965

Doctor Zhivago is adapted
into a film by David Lean, winning five Academy Awards.

April 21, 2015

Doctor Zhivago the musical opens
on Broadway at the Broadway Theatre.

1890
1905
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