In 1891 and 1892 Russia experienced bad harvests, this was catastrophic for the peasants, the Volga region had huge famines; 20M people living in 900,000m² of Russia’s most productive land were affected by food shortages that lead to death of over 1.5M people. This lead to widespread liberal opposition and the government were oblivious, this lack of regard for social well-being caused Vyshnegradsky his job.

Repression continued through the Russian Orthodox Church and encouraging re-education to prevent revolution. By 1894 there was a huge increase in the clergy and the number pupils attending church schools had increased nine fold to just under 1M. Pobedonostsev saw that each year 250 new churches were built and they were built in traditional Russian style, these policies were most evident on the edges of the empire through the expansion of the Russification policy.

Alexander III reintroduced the old policy of Russification at its most intense. He believed all cultures and nationalities should be wiped out and that the people should all become ‘Great Russians’. This required that all the minority groups must drop their traditional values, language and culture in favour of Russian tradition, language and culture. It was particularly intense due to the huge discrimination against Jews, the particularly harsh anti-semitic policies were largely due to Pobedonostsev’s input.

Following the failure of Russification Pobedonostsev’s influence decreased. The government instead introduced measures to preserve traditional peasant life through the Mir and peasant communes. In Mar 1883 the power of the bolshak (commune leader) was increased, this made it harder for peasants to leave the Mir, until in 1893 they were banned from leaving the Mir. Land captains were also introduced and they could override peasant decisions, remove peasant officials and use corporal punishment. These reforms were so repressive that some believed serfdom was being restored. Alex III also introduced reforms that affected the gentry such as the introduction in 1882 of the Gentry Lending Bank to give favourable loans to nobles and therefore increase their power.

Two groups which had been emerging since the 1840s had a more prominent impact on Russia during Alexander III’s reign, the Slavophiles and the Westerners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarities</th>
<th>Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influenced by European</td>
<td>Slavophiles regarded themselves as non-political but had a conservative outlook. Had Slavic values in the unity of the Tsar, were devout Christians and opposed individualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>philosophers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loved Russia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feared the incompetence of</td>
<td>Westerners believed in development through class struggle, valued western urbanisation and industrialisation, did not believe in religion and valued individual democracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>the existing Russia</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Defended the Mir</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pressed for reform</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

They emerged from a rising middle class of intelligentsia which had grown through Alex II’s more liberal rein. The influence of these groups was enormous, despite lack of political effect, their ideas spread through universities and possibly lead to the rise of more radical groups in future generations.

There were very radical plans for counter-reform especially across state powers, the independence of the Zemstva was greatly reduced in 1890 although their autonomy was never taken away. The numbers of eligible votes greatly dropped due to reform in the duma’s, by 1892 it was estimated that just 0.7% of Moscow’s population were eligible to vote.

After Alex II’s assassination the August 1881 Statute of State Security had been passed, this had increased state powers in pursuit of revolutionaries. Gatherings of more than 12 people could be prohibited, schools could be
• **Witte’s economic policy** — from 1900 to 1902 there was a poor harvest and starvation. The world economic slump of 1902 lead to social tension which did not improve the economic policy. The high taxes he imposed helped the economy but led to anger.

• **Russo-Japanese war** — Japan seized Port Arthur which was humiliating for Russia as the bigger nation. The disaster of the defeat of the Russian fleet in the battle of Tsushima and the Treaty of Portsmouth led to little support from the people. The war showed the Tsar to be incompetent, it caused food shortage, high prices and unemployment.

• **Bloody Sunday** — SPARK. A peaceful march on 22nd January 1905 with 150,000 workers. Cossack troops fired on the protesters trying to hand a petition to the Tsar, they killed 1000 people.

The Road to Revolution:

**Russo-Japanese War** was unpopular

The Union of Liberation wanted a representative government

Assassination of Plehve (Minister for the Interior)

9th January 1905 Father Gapon leads the peaceful protests on **Bloody Sunday**

Troops fire on St Petersburg

**General Strike** in St Petersburg

Assassination of officials including Grand Duke Sergei (member of the imperial family)

18th February Tsar attempts to win liberals by allowing **consultative assembly** (this holds no real power)

Revolts begin in provinces

Social revolutionaries exploit the situation by organizing a National Peasant Council

Zemstvo movement writes draft constitution

**8th October Railway strike** and general strike

13th October St Petersburg Soviet (Council) of workers deputies is formed

Soviet press for the 8hr day, Trotsky is the vice-president

Union of liberation (Kadet) Party advocate the constitutional monarchy

The Russians were left completely **unprepared and surprised by the 1905 revolution** and they did very little. However as the victors write history, in 1917 when Lenin and the left took power they claimed that the left were responsible for the 1905 revolution. The Soviets were the urban councils who were used by the left as a political tool. Again, they were important but they were given much more credit by the left in 1917; the **politically conscious workers in the Soviets were most commonly Mensheviks in reality**.

Bloody Sunday was an **unarmed protest led by Father Gapon**, this lead to **100 to 1000 deaths**; as a direct response to this massacre around **400,000 workers went on strike**. A strike is when workers refuse to work and
The new state and government was created by Lenin, all national, regional and local governments became soviets and the country was renamed Soviet Russian and then the Soviet Union in 1922. The state was governed by the Bolsheviks – later renamed the Communist Party – and the hierarchal structure controlled all aspects of the country. Lenin destroyed the middle classes, brought the workers under control and tamed the peasants through forced collective farms. National minorities were given their own language but were strictly monitored by the communists.

Lenin died in January 1924 after suffering a series of strokes, in the USSR he is regarded as one of the greatest leaders of the twentieth century. He was replaced by Stalin.