



STALIN'S RISE TO POWER

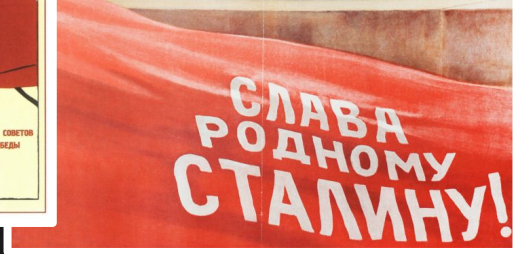
(THE POLITBURO, THE STRUGGLE TO SUCCEED LENIN, KEY HISTORICAL
PERSPECTIVE)



ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. **What** was the **historical context** of Stalin's struggle for power? *(Politburo)*
2. **What** were the **key stages** of the power struggle? *(Struggle of succeeding Lenin)*
3. **Why** did Stalin **emerge** as leader of the Soviet Union? *(key historical perspectives)*

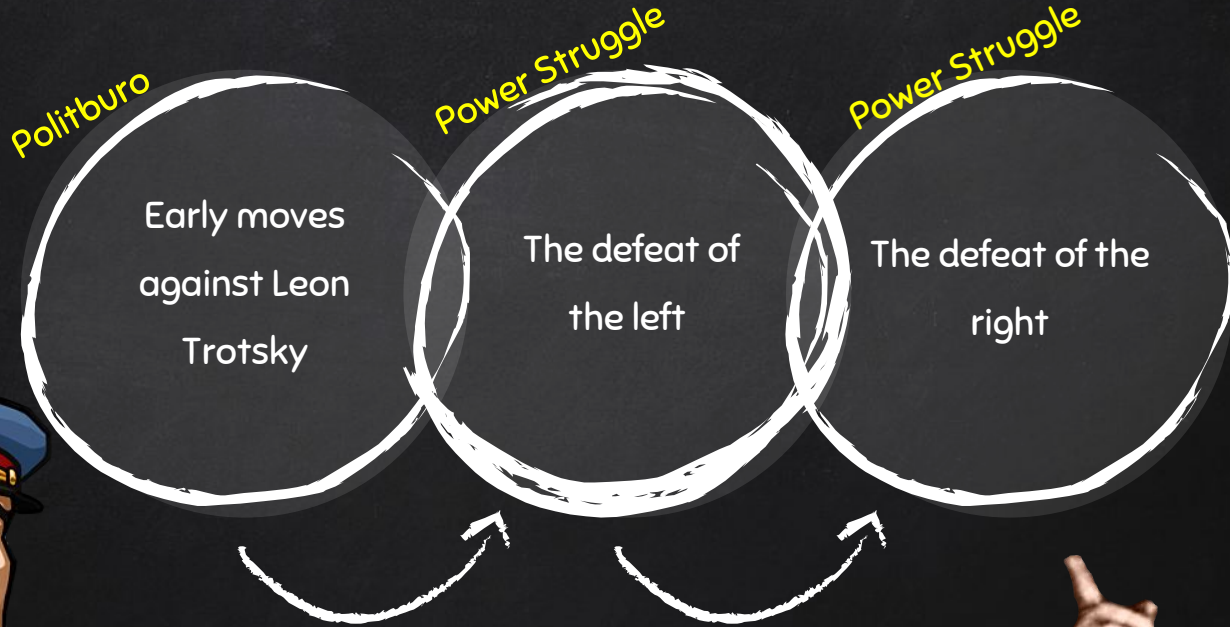
CONTEXT TO STALIN



- x Lenin's death: January 1924
 - o Soviet Russia = one party state (3 yrs)
- x Stalin's rise to power:
 - o Unexpected
 - o Struggle to succeed = 1922 NOT 1924
- x Not an articulate speech maker/intellectual



WHAT FACTORS LED TO STALIN'S RISE TO POWER?



CONTEXT TO STALIN CONT'D

Stalin = 'Betrayal of Socialism'
- Lenin

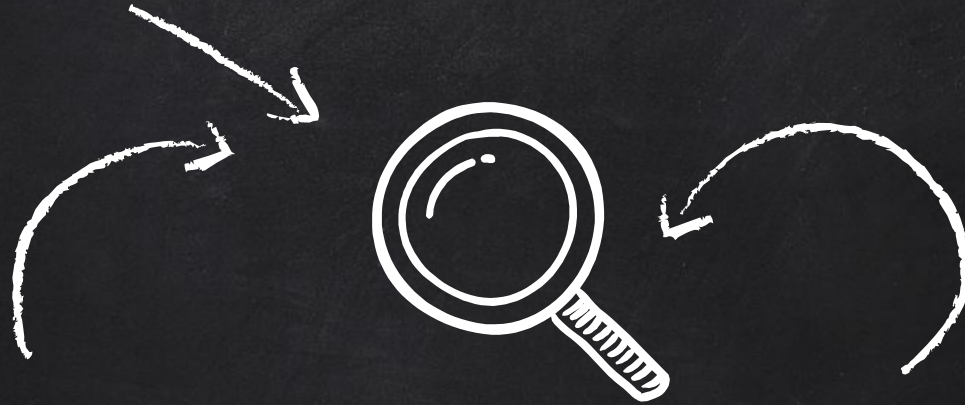


Born in 1878 in Georgia

- Russian => second language

Introduction to Marxism ideology

- Revolutionary Socialist group (Messame Dassy)
- Russian Social Democratic Labour Party
- Organizing Strikes
 - Exile in Siberia
 - Overthrow of Tsardom... RETURN TO PETROGRAD
- Pravda, Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, Commissar for Nationalities.



HOW WAS STALIN ABLE TO SECURE THE LEADERSHIP OF THE
COMMUNIST PARTY?

Emergence

INTRO TO THE POLITBURO

✘ Stalin was a member of the Politburo + Orgburo

- Politburo => Political Bureau
- Communist Party's body : political decisions.

✘ Orgburo *(not as significant as Politburo for Rise to Power)*

- Organisational Bureau
- Key decisions about organizational work

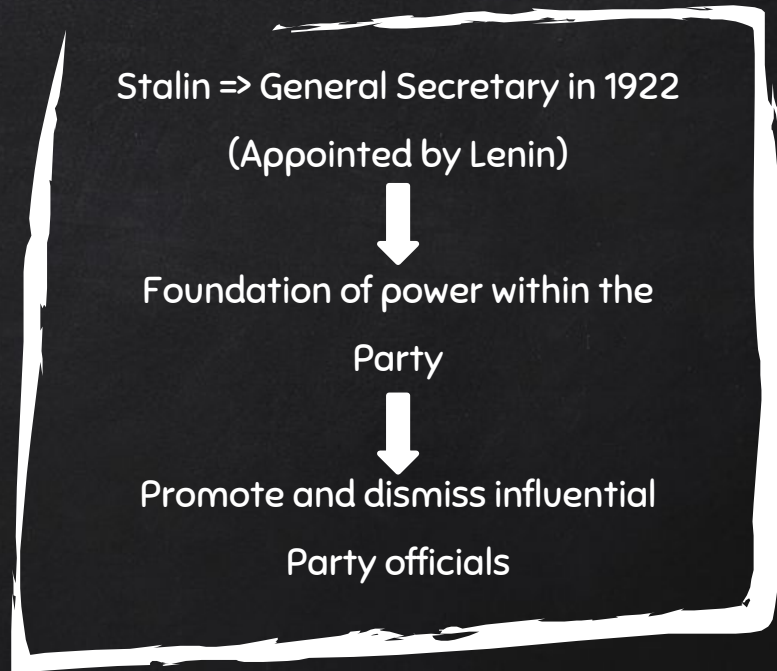
- Seven officials elected from the Central Committee
- Met regularly and was chaired by Lenin
- After his death, it formed a 'collective leadership'

INFLUENTIAL MEMBERS OF THE POLITBURO

- ✗ Grigory Zinoviev
- ✗ Lev Kamenev
- ✗ Leon Trotsky
- ✗ Nikolai Bukharin
- ✗ Mikhail Tomsky

And of course...

- ✗ Stalin
- ✗ Lenin



Stalin's power within the Politburo

POLITBURO

- ✗ Key to power = Party organisation ≠ state institutions
- ✗ The Party grew rapidly, numbering **800,000** members by **1925** and over **1.5 million** by **1929**
- ✗ Trotsky was Stalin's greatest opposition and rival however Trotsky held no significant position
- ✗ Stalin lacked charisma
- ✗ Trotsky saw Stalin as a "Grey Blur"
 - Trotsky was 'supposed' to be the successor to Lenin



Stalin's rivals underestimated him...

Centralised Control → Increased membership → Increase in Stalin's Power

FIRST SIGHT @ BUREAUCRACY...

- ✘ Manipulation of different factions within the Party leadership against each other
- ✘ What side was Stalin's side? ... Whichever was popular (pragmatist)
- ✘ Personal Rivalry:
 - Kamenev and Zinoviev resented Trotsky
 - 1922–1925: Triumvirate (to be further discussed) : Kamenev + Zinoviev + Stalin
 - **Common goal:** Trotsky to resign



FIRST SIGHT @ BUREAUCRACY...

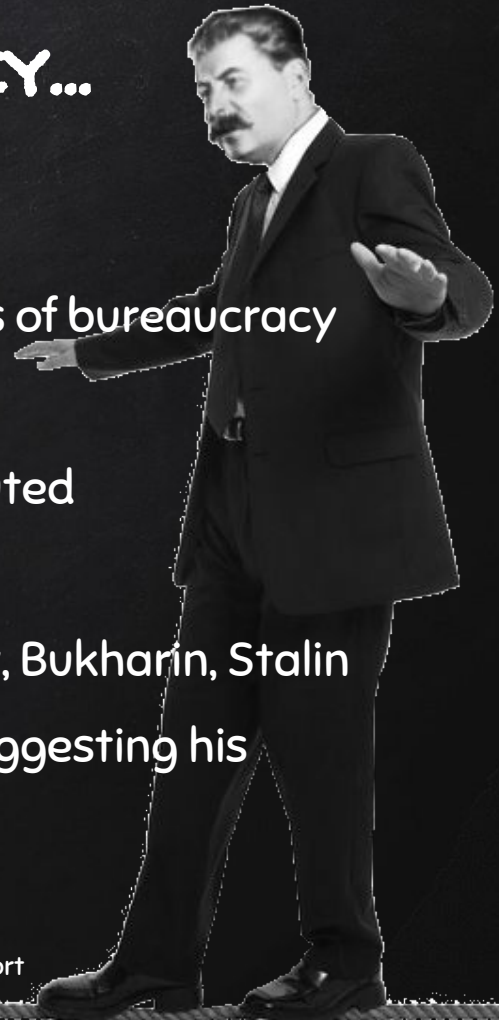
- ✗ Growing tensions concerned Lenin
- ✗ Solution 1: 'Joint Bloc for Democracy' against growing signs of bureaucracy with Trotsky

Lenin became too sick... solution 1 was not executed

✗ Testament:

- 5 possible successors: Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Stalin
- Lenin resented Stalin calling him 'too rude' and suggesting his dismissal from the Politburo

Stalin on a tightrope: Lenin's resentment had the power to bring down his growing support



DID LUCK HAVE A MINOR ROLE IN THE RISE TO POWER?

- ✗ Central Committee decided **not** to publish Lenin's Political Testament
 - Some historians question Stalin's ability to gain power had they published the testament...
- ✗ Stalin's influence and blossoming power remained intact
- ✗ Outmanoeuvre Trotsky:
 - Stalin provided Trotsky with the wrong date for Lenin's funeral
 - Trotsky's reputation was in decline



POLICY DISAGREEMENTS

- NEP should be replaced
- Rapid Industrialisation
- Collectivisation of agriculture

'Permanent Revolution'

LEFT

- NEP works and should be maintained especially for the wellbeing of the peasants

"Socialism in One Country"

RIGHT



THE POLITBURO: 1924-1926

'Left Communists'

Trotsky

Zinoviev

Kamenev



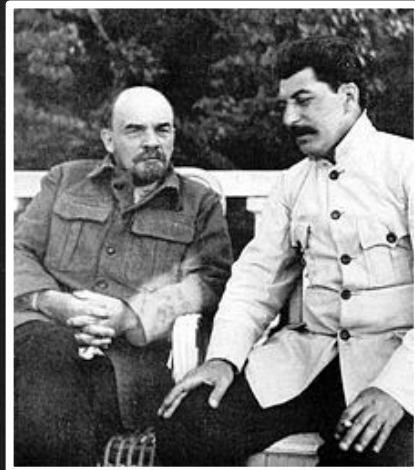
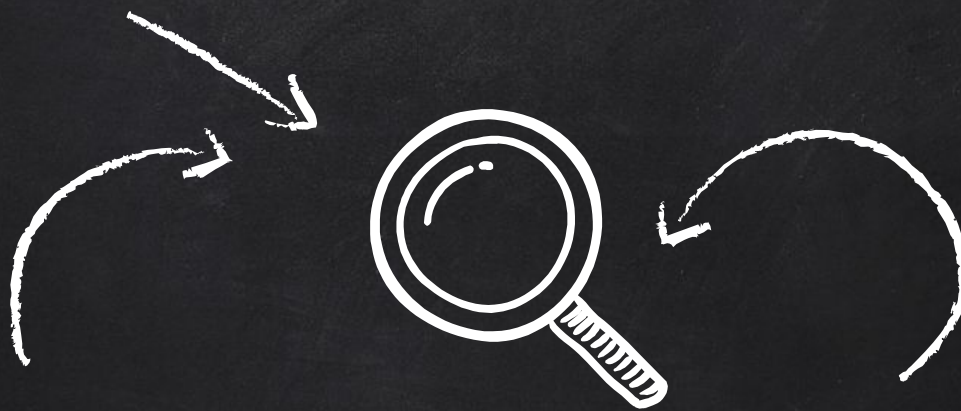
'Right Communists'

Bukharin

Tomsky

Rykov

← Stalin moved his position between the two factions →



FACTORS: IN DEPTH...



ВЫШЕ ЗНАМЯ МАРКСА, ЭНГЕЛЬСА, ЛЕНИНА И СТАЛИНА!



1

EARLY MOVES AGAINST LEON TROTSKY

Triumvirate campaign against Trotsky:

April 1923 @ the 12th Congress

✗ Congress re-elected Stalin as general secretary

Stalin began to replace Trotsky's supporters with supporters of the triumvirate!

1921 Lenin introduced a faction ban within the Communist Party

THE DEFEAT OF THE LEFT OPPOSITION, 1924-27

July 1926: Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev formed the *United Opposition*

- ✗ Breaking the 1921 ban on factions
 - Stalin had enough power to remove Zinoviev + Kamenev
 - Trotsky = only opposition
- ✗ Stalin expels Trotsky after Lenin's Testament is published

10 December 1927 the United Opposition was over

... ISOLATIONIST TACTICS!!

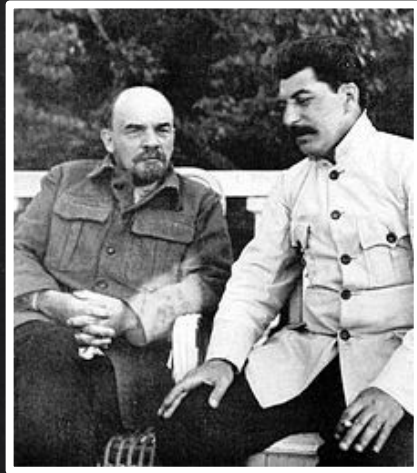
THE DEFEAT OF THE RIGHT OPPOSITION

- ✗ 1927, bread shortages and high food prices led Stalin to adopt a new 'left' course for industry and agriculture
- ✗ Oppositions to Stalin were removed from positions of power
- ✗ Bukharin began to see the emergence of Stalin's power
- ✗ Further isolationist policies
- ✗ The Right surrendered to Stalin



WHY DID STALIN EMERGE AS LEADER OF THE SOVIET UNION?

KEY HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES





POWER POLITICS



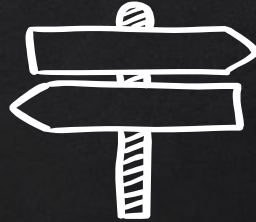
- ✗ Manipulation of genuine political and ideological differences amongst the Bolshevik leaders
- **Robert Conquest:** Stalin's aim was simply to **gain supreme power by crushing all other factions**
- **Tucker:** Stalin's aim was to make himself into a **revolutionary hero** as important and famous as **Lenin**
- **Edward Carl:** Zinoviev and Kamenev ⇒ weak willed according
- **Isaac Deutscher:** Lenin was virtually **isolated** at the top of the party from the beginning

2

STRUCTURALIST EXPLANATIONS

Common theme: Stalin = **product of Russian history** and the administrative system set up after 1917

Robert Daniels: 'circular flow of power'



Administrative apparatus grew \Rightarrow Stalin's power to appoint grew \Rightarrow Bureaucracy increased \Rightarrow Enabling Stalin to control party congresses

3

SOCIO-CULTURAL EXPLANATIONS

Closely linked to structural explanations

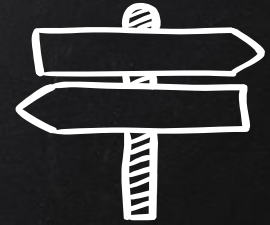
- ✗ impact of the **social structure on politics and development** of the Communist Party

Sheila Fitzpatrick: During Civil War, the Bolsheviks attracted Russian patriots who resented the foreign intervention used by the Whites

- ✗ Manipulated by the party leadership.



4



IDEOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS

- x Genuine political differences among the communist leaders of the 1920s (NEP)
- x **E. H. Carr, Alexander Erlich and Moshe Lewin** : ideological positions as more important than mere facades of Stalin

Stalin's rise: political response by the centre to steer a midway policy course by adapting to majority opinion

Trotsky: Stalin's victory was the result of unforeseen historical and cultural developments after 1917 rather than the mistakes of his opponents

Perspective	Interpretation
Structuralist Approach: Richard Pipes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Regards Stalin as a product of Russia's circumstances: a strong ruler was required because the country was just emerging from nearly a decade of war and civil war.● Stalin was the natural successor to Lenin because of the way the Party had become increasingly bureaucratized
Continuity between Leninism: Robert Conquest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Lenin created the single party dictatorship and system of terror, which Stalin continued. So, Stalin was the heir to the Leninist tradition.
Stalinism viewed as a deviation of Leninism: Stephen Cohen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Stalin distorted Lenin's legacy. Lenin used terror during the Civil War only as a temporary, emergency measure; Lenin allowed dissent within the Party; Lenin was hostile to a cult of the leader. Stalin, by contrast, used terror as a normal feature of government when the USSR was at peace; he suppressed debate within the Party; he created a personality cult of monstrous proportions.● Historians like Cohen argue that communism could have developed in a very different, less brutal way if another leader, such as Bukharin had succeeded Lenin.