

Stalin vs trotsky



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The weaknesses and failures of Stalin's opponents were not the main reason why Stalin rose to power over Trotsky. However, it did slightly affect the outcome of the power struggle. In some historians' point of view, such as E. H Carr and I. Deutscher, they hold the conviction that Trotsky had "no talent for leadership among equals".[1] On the similar side of the debate, G. Hosking, a Scottish historian, described Stalin's opponents to be rather incautious. "They were content to leave him to assemble and classify the personnel files, not yet realizing what power were accumulating therein." [2] However, I do not totally agree with these historians because Stalin's personality is dangerously strong since no one could have possibly stopped him. Deutscher who agreed with this point of view wrote, "It seemed to Trotsky almost a bad joke that Stalin, the willful and sly but shabby and inarticulate man in the background, should be his rival." [3] Deutscher's work could be interpreted in two ways. He could be saying that Trotsky was foolish enough to not target Stalin as his rival but in a more logical sense, it should be interpreted as Stalin's sly personality that made Trotsky not able to his is true intentions.

Trotsky was not weak since he commanded the Red Army and Lenin disagreed with the historians' point of view because in 1924, Trotsky was recommended and claimed the most capable man in the present Communist Party. In Lenin's Testament, he wrote, "Comrade Trotsky, on the other hand is distinguished not only by his outstanding ability. He is personally perhaps the most capable man in the present Central Committee." [4] The evidences state that Trotsky was a great intellectual and he was one of the best orators in the Soviet Union and he was able to work crowds to bring them around his

point of view. His position as Commissar for War also gave him a strong base in the Politburo. E. H. Carr wrote, “ He (Trotsky) could not establish his authority among colleagues by the modest arts of persuasion or by sympathetic attention to the views of men of lesser intellectual caliber than himself”.^[5] This analysis is accurate because in the 1900’s, most families were from the working class or they were peasants whom were mostly illiterate.

Trotsky had a great advantage because as commander of the Red Army, he was in a strong position to crush his opposition. However, Trotsky did show some weaknesses and his arrogant manner convinced the Politburo members’ fears. In Lenin’s view, “ He has displayed excessive self-assurance”.^[6] Trotsky had also openly disagreed with Lenin on policies at times and “ Trotsky bombarded Lenin with long memoranda, explaining why so much was wrong in Soviet Russia and how to correct it.”^[7] His acts did not give Lenin a good impression since he was questioning the decisions themselves. By fate, Trotsky was a former Menshevik and he had a Jewish origin which halted his progressive promotions in the party. The Bolshevik Party was heavily founded on heavy bureaucracy and Trotsky was dull enough to criticize the party for becoming too bureaucratic and less democratic.^[8] His attack on bureaucratization was a contradiction with the nature of the Bolshevik Party. On the other side, Robert Conquest wrote “ Trotsky had no clear political tactics” and E. H Carr added, “ He had made major mistakes that affected the outcome of the power struggle”.^[9] Both of these points are very logical and clear because in 1925, to reassure his innocence, he relinquished his position as Commissar for Military Affairs.

Trotsky could fire masses of men to acclaim and follow him but historian Chris Corin wrote, “ He had no intention of becoming a dictator and had always been aware of the tendency for a power struggle after the revolution”.^[10]History has shown that Trotsky had not attempted to use the Red Army to secure his position. But Deutscher argued, “ The truth is that Trotsky refrained from attacking Stalin because he felt secure”.

^[11]Nevertheless, Trotsky had major flaws in his attitude, argument and his political tactics since he was determined that he would be Lenin’s successor. Trotsky should have voiced over the debate on censoring the Lenin’s Testament to prove his innocence. However, we can see that Stalin’s political skills are overwhelmingly important in the struggle for power.

Stalin’s strategies were powerful and his opponents had no clear thoughts before they acted. The party members were all focusing on defeating Trotsky because he was a commander of the Red Army.^[12]The Politburo leaders were very incautious because if they had noticed Stalin’s moves on setting up loyalists in the Central Committee, they would be in an alliance with Trotsky. With the same point of view, G. Hosking said, “ Most of them, being well read in the history of past revolutions, were obsessed by a very different danger: that of finding the revolutions hijacked by another Bonaparte.”^[13]What G. Hosking said is very true; they have never seen anything like Stalin’s “ Administrative Approach” in history therefore the significance of Stalin’s tactics consumed most of the reasons to his uprising. Stalin’s opponents took the wrong move in the event of Lenin’s testament.

Lenin wrote a testament in December 1922 called “ Letter to Party Congress” and presented to congress in 1924. Lenin wrote, “ Comrade Stalin

has enormous power. I am not sure that he always knows how to exercise that power with sufficient caution”.[14]In this situation, we can see the weaknesses of his opponents that led to Trotsky’s downfall. This, Testament was censored because Stalin’s opponents Zinoviev, Kamenev and the others were criticized and they were afraid that Trotsky would soon become the leader. Lenin’s testament recognized Trotsky as the most capable man. Lenin wrote, “ He is personally perhaps the most capable man in the present C. C.” Stalin’s opponents did not listen to the advice of Lenin because if they did, Stalin would have lost his General Secretary position. Lenin wrote, “ Stalin is too rude, and this fault...becomes unacceptable in the office of General Secretary. Therefore, I propose to the comrades that a way be found to remove Stalin from that post and replace him with someone else”.[15]If the letter was to be uncensored by the Politburo members, Stalin would have a harder time succeeding Lenin’s role over Trotsky.

Conclusion

After having examined the true factors that led to Trotsky not being able to become the sole leader of Soviet Russia since he was the favorite Candidate, this investigation came to the conclusion that Stalin’s political skill and ruthlessness was the most important cause of Trotsky’s downfall because his weaknesses were only limited to his complacency and party views. When Stalin took control of the General Secretary position, it was nearly impossible to stop him from becoming the sole leader of Soviet Russia. Through Stalin’s administrative approach, he had won his perceived survival game. Trotsky’s weaknesses were circumstances that existed as a benefit to Stalin but it was ultimately his cunning personality that allowed him to take full advantage of

them. It is, evident that the use of Stalin's own skills played a major role in the events in Soviet Russia from 1924-1929. Therefore in history, we see that Stalin is ruthless and skilled in his journey for power.