

Why did stalin
become leader after
lenin, not trotsky?
essay sample



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In the beginning, as Lenin end grew nearer, there were five potential leaders, Bukharin, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Trotsky and Stalin. It seemed so obvious that there only was one man to take over Lenin's reign – Trotsky. He was Lenin's right hand man, but a close second was Stalin. People saw him as the one who came second, that's all he was; there was no way that he would beat Trotsky in the race for leadership, but what they didn't know that Stalin's cunning would overtake then all and he would end up being the leader of Russia.

Stalin knew he would have to worry about the other three, as separate candidates. Trotsky was his main rival. Stalin made Lenin's funeral the centre stage for his plotting. First he tricked Trotsky into turning up to Lenin's funeral on a wrong later date. By not turning up, Trotsky's reputation was damaged. Stalin also used Lenin's funeral to make himself look better by organising the actually funeral, making it look like he should be the one to carry on Lenin's work.

Krupskaya gave Lenin's secret testament to the Central Committee, but Zinoviev and Kamenev didn't let it become public knowledge as not only did it show Stalin as a bad leader, but also Zinoviev and Kamenev didn't look too good in the testament. In addition, they didn't see Stalin as much of a threat and thought they could use him to help defeat Trotsky, who was seen as very good in Lenin's testament.

Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin were at the height of the race at the moment. At this moment Trotsky criticised the party calling it too bureaucratic and less democratic. In 1924, Zinoviev and Kamenev built up a ferocious

campaign against Trotsky, which questioned his loyalty to Lenin and criticised him about the 1917 revolution, in which he was a bit unwilling to support Lenin's actions. During this time, Stalin thought wisely and stayed in the background.

It wasn't until 1925, when Stalin introduced his "Socialism in One Country" policy, where he wanted to concentrate on Russia and its people. This attracted party members because it seemed to fit in with the NEP.

Zinoviev and Kamenev, the following year, attacked Stalin, but because of Stalin's control over the party, they gave him no trouble.

In 1926, Zinoviev and Kamenev formed with Trotsky to form a 'United Opposition'. They made direct appeals to the party masses and workers, and were accused of 'factionalism'. The result of this was that they all lost power and were expelled from the party.

The final piece of the jigsaw was Stalin turning against the NEP policy. He now supported rapid industrialisation. Bukharin mounted a strong defence of the NEP, but he found Stalin's followers out voted him. Bukharin and other right-wing leaders were chucked out, thus leaving Stalin as the leader of Russia.

From above you can see Stalin knew exactly what he was doing. He fooled everyone to see Trotsky as one not to be trusted - Stalin got none of the blame, even though it was him who told Trotsky the wrong date, deliberately. One of Stalin's strengths was his cunning and crafty ways. Like in 1924, when Zinoviev and Kamenev launched an attack onto Trotsky -

Stalin stayed in the background and waited for his moment and the timing to announce his work and his policy for Socialism in one country.

Out of his opposition, Trotsky was the only real threat. He managed to get rid of him pretty easily. Trotsky's ideas for Russia weren't just for Russia. He wanted to turn the world into a communist place, but Stalin got the favour, because he wanted to improve Russia - it showed he wanted to make Russia a better place, for the Russian people.

Though at this point his position was assured, but to secure his absolute control over the party, however, Stalin began to purge from party ranks those leaders and their followers whose loyalty he doubted. Thus the purges began. This is where Stalin's stability is questioned, and if he was such a popular and good leader why would he need to be doing this? Not to forget he only got to be ruler of Russia, not by being voted, but by eliminating the opposition some way or another.