

Your Analysis of Stalin's Rise to Power [[print](#)]



Use these findings to answer the following questions:

What was Stalin's greatest strength?

What was the biggest mistake of each of Stalin's rivals?

In what respects can Stalin's rise to power be attributed to luck?

Was Stalin's rise to power due to opposition weaknesses, Stalin's strengths, or chance? Explain your answer by referring to all three factors.

The complete scheme of work relating to Stalin's Rise to Power can be found at www.activehistory.co.uk

Trotsky	Kamenev	Stalin	Zinoviev	Bukharin

March 1923: XII Party Congress: Lenin asked Trotsky to launch an attack upon Stalin at the forthcoming XII Party Congress. However, Stalin persuaded Trotsky not to do so by allowing Trotsky an extended slot to talk about his own economic plans for the country. Shortly afterwards, Lenin suffered another stroke which left him unable to talk, walk or read.

Trotsky	Kamenev	Stalin	Zinoviev	Bukharin

January 1924: Death of Lenin: Stalin informs Trotsky that Lenin has died, and tells him that there is no need to hurry to Moscow because the funeral would take place in a fortnight. In reality, the funeral is scheduled for within the week: Stalin just wants Trotsky to appear disrespectful when he fails to attend.

Trotsky	Kamenev	Stalin	Zinoviev	Bukharin

27th January 1924: Funeral: Lenin's funeral took place in freezing conditions: the trumpeters had to smear vodka on their instruments to prevent their lips sticking to them. Stalin took the role of chief mourner and announced that 'we swear to you, Comrade Lenin, that we shall not spare our lives in strengthening the union of the working people of the world'.

Trotsky	Kamenev	Stalin	Zinoviev	Bukharin

February 1924: Embalming: Stalin, against the known wishes of Lenin himself and of Krupskaya persuades the Central Committee to have Lenin's body embalmed and placed on permanent public display as a 'beacon' of future inspiration. It remains there to this day.

Trotsky	Kamenev	Stalin	Zinoviev	Bukharin

March 1924: Testament: The Central Committee reads Lenin's Final Testament. Because they are all criticised in the document to some extent, they decide not to carry out Lenin's wishes: Stalin is not fired, and neither is the Testament read out to the whole Congress. Instead, it is read once to regional assemblies and no notes are allowed to be taken. Any future mention of the document is a criminal offence.

Spring 1924: Troika: Inside the Politburo, Stalin formed a three man team (known as the 'Triumvirate' or the 'Troika') with Zinoviev and Kamenev. These three were 'old Bolsheviks' - in other words, they had been behind Lenin and the Bolshevik cause right from the very start. Trotsky, in contrast, had been a Menshevik before 1917.

May 1924: XIII Party Congress: Trotsky delivered a series of speeches expressing concern that the party was becoming less democratic. However his proposals were voted down because the congress was packed with Stalin's supporters.

March 1925: XIV Party Congress: The Troika accused Trotsky of being 'Bonapartist' and betraying the spirit of Leninism. With their control of the media and the party apparatus Trotsky (ill anyway, possibly with malaria) was unable to respond. Stalin and his allies forced Trotsky to resign as Minister of War.

1926: Stalin then allied himself with Bukharin and other right-wing members of the Politburo and attacked his former allies on all questions of policy. Kamenev and Zinoviev, calling themselves the "United Opposition" patched up their differences with Trotsky in 1926.

1927: In late 1927, Stalin then turned against the Right, dismissing local officials who were known supporters of Bukharin and rejecting the NEP in favour of a programme of agricultural collectivisation and massive industrialisation. Bukharin secretly attempted to form an alliance with Kamenev and Zinoviev, stating '[Stalin is] an unprincipled intriguer who subordinates everything to his appetite for power'.

1929: By this time Stalin had appointed so many supporters to senior positions in the party that his position was unassailable. Bukharin - accused of "factionalism" and "Rightist Deviationism" - was deprived of the chairmanship of the Politburo and expelled from the Politburo along with Rykov and Tomsky. Stalin celebrated his 50th birthday as undisputed leader of the USSR. By this time the Politburo was now packed with how loyal supporters, including Kirov, Kaganovich, Ordzhonikidze, Mikoyan, Molotov and Voroshilov.
