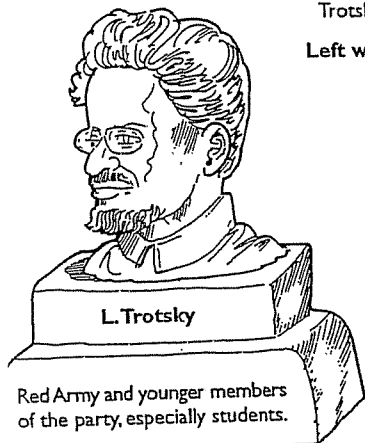
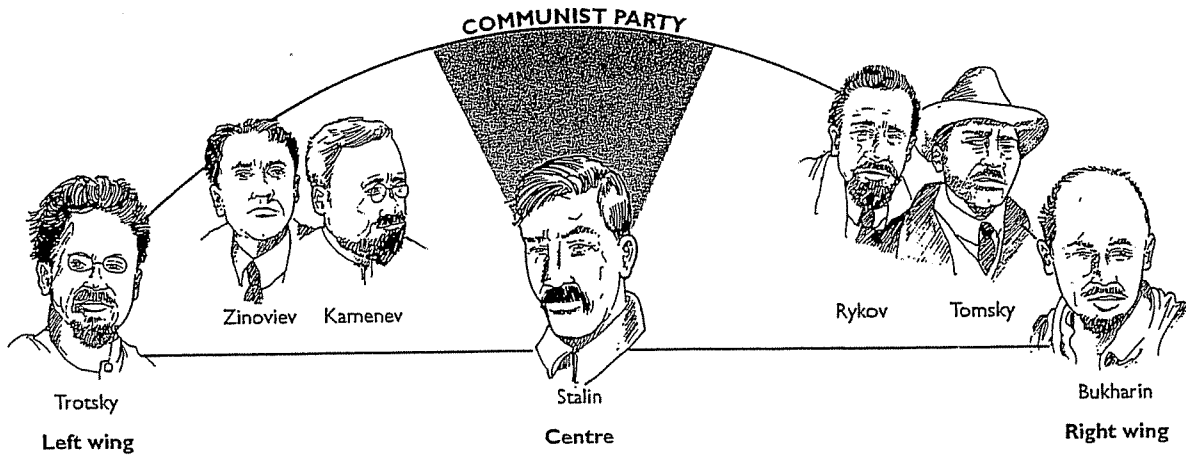
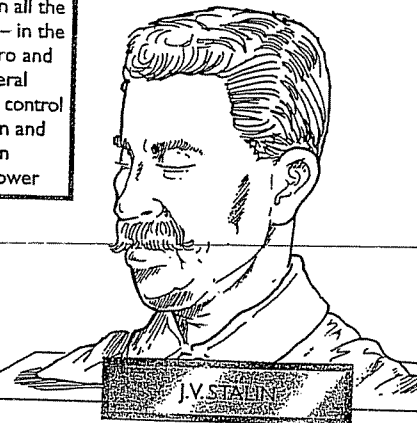


9A Contenders for leadership of the Communist Party



9C How did Stalin build up his power base?

It was Stalin's position in all the key party organisations – in the Politburo, in the Orgburo and Secretariat, and as General Secretary – that gave him control of the party organisation and membership and such an enormous amount of power



Party Secretary

This position gave him control, to some extent, of the business of the Politburo. For example, drawing up agendas and papers for the Politburo meetings gave him control over what was discussed and what information other members received.

Positions in Orgburo and the Secretariat

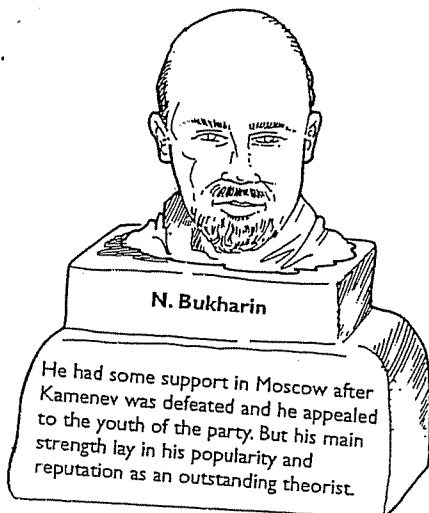
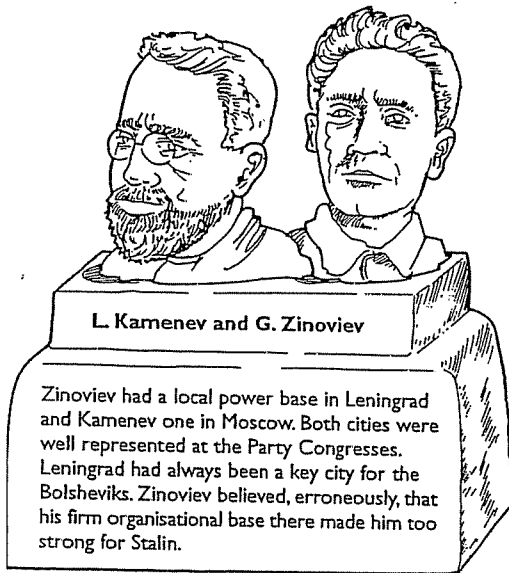
These gave him control of appointments to positions of responsibility in the party structure. He could put his supporters in key positions. In particular, the party secretaries from regional to local party level were increasingly Stalin's men: party secretaries of regions like the Ukraine were very powerful and at lower levels could virtually decide how party members voted.

Control of the party organisation

This meant that he could influence the selection of delegates who were sent to the annual party congress where major issues of policy were decided and the Central Committee was chosen. He could pack the congress with his supporters. This accounts for the hostile reception Trotsky received at conferences from 1924 onwards and the number of delegates who voted the way Stalin wanted. His ability to deliver votes in the congresses made him a valuable ally. This is why Zinoviev and Kamenev sought his support.

Control of party membership

This allowed him to get rid of the more radical elements – students and soldiers – who were likely to support Trotsky. Stalin supervised the 'Lenin Enrolment' of 1924 and 1925, in which the party almost doubled its membership to one million. The new members tended to be young urban workers, poorly educated ex-peasants who were not interested in ideological debate and were likely to do what their local party organiser told them to do. Stalin's practical policies based on nationalism appealed to them.





Why did Stalin become party leader?

SOURCE 9.3 G. Hosking, *A History of the Soviet Union*, 1985, p. 140

To his comrades in the Party leadership he [Stalin] was known, rather condescendingly, as 'Comrade Card-Index' (*Tovarishch Kartotekov*): they were content to leave him to assemble and classify the personnel files, not yet realising what power was accumulating therein. 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.

[Note: Bolsheviks were very knowledgeable about the French Revolution and expected, after the initial period of violent revolution, that a Napoleon Bonaparte figure would emerge as a dictator in Russia.]

SOURCE 9.9 R. Conquest, *Stalin: Breaker of Nations*, 1991, pp. 129–30

In 1923 Stalin had been on the point of political ruin. In 1924 he was one among equals, but without any outright supporters in the full membership of the Politburo. Six years later he would be in unchallenged power... In six years Stalin outmanoeuvred a series of opponents; first in alliance with the rest of his colleagues, he opposed and demoted Trotsky. Then in alliance with the Bukharin-Rykov 'Right' he defeated the Zinoviev-Kamenev 'Left' bloc... and finally he and his own following attacked their hitherto allies, the 'Rightists'.

SOURCE 9.10 M. McCauley, *Russia 1917–41*, 1997, p. 78

Stalin had luck on his side. Had Lenin not died Stalin would probably have been sent to the provinces to work for the Party. Dzerzhinsky, the head of the Cheka, from its inception to his death in 1926, was never one of Stalin's fans. His death allowed Stalin to infiltrate his supporters into the political police and eventually use them against his opponents.

SOURCE 9.4 I. Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed: Trotsky 1921–29*, 1959, p. 93

The truth is that Trotsky refrained from attacking Stalin because he felt secure. No contemporary, and he least of all, saw in the Stalin of 1923 the menacing and towering figure he was to become. It seemed to Trotsky almost a bad joke that Stalin, the wilful and sly but shabby and inarticulate man in the background, should be his rival.

SOURCE 9.5 E. H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, 1958, p. 151

[Trotsky]... the great intellectual, the great administrator, the great orator lacked one quality essential – at any rate in the conditions of the Russian Revolution – to the great political leader. Trotsky could fire masses of men to acclaim and follow him. But he had no talent for leadership among equals. He 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 calibre than himself.

SOURCE 9.6 Bukharin, at a secret meeting with Kamenev in July 1928

Stalin is a Genghis Khan, an unscrupulous intriguer, who sacrifices everything else to the preservation of power... He changes his theories according to whom he needs to get rid of next.

SOURCE 9.7 I. Deutscher, *Stalin*, rev. edn, 1966, p. 277

In the Politburo, when matters of high policy were under debate, he [Stalin] never seemed to impose his views on his colleagues. He carefully followed the course of debate to see what way the wind was blowing and invariably voted with the majority, unless he had assured his majority beforehand. He was therefore always agreeable to the majority. To Party audiences he appeared as a man without personal grudge and rancour, as a detached Leninist, a guardian of the doctrine who criticised others only for the sake of the cause.

SOURCE 9.8 C. Ward, *Stalin's Russia*, 1993, pp. 35–36

All Bolshevik leaders were trying to find their feet in an unfamiliar and unanticipated world, and the doctrine of socialism in one country at least had the merit of describing things as they really were... The theory evoked a sympathetic response from two groups: the new sub-elites advanced by the crises of the immediate post-evolutionary years and workers sickened by the manifold injustices and inequalities of the NEP. The latter were men and women indifferent to factional squabbles and impatient for socialist reconstruction; the former were people... for whom the Revolution was primarily a Russian achievement – Soviet patriotism set easily with the enjoyment of the fruits of offices. A Stalinist constituency was in the process of formation and Stalin's 'left turn' (rapid industrialisation and collectivisation) brought most of them round to his way of thinking.

History 12
Block: _____

Name: _____

Why did Stalin become party leader?

Undoubtedly you will have formed your own ideas as to why Stalin emerged as the leader of Soviet Russia by 1929. In sources 9.3-9.10 the writers indicate some of the key reasons why they think Stalin won the power struggle.

Read the sources carefully and decide which section they best fit into. State the source number, explain what the meaning of the quote and explain why the quote belongs in the category you chose.

Importance of control of the Communist Party organization
Policies
Stalin's personal characteristics and political skills

Weaknesses of opponents, especially Trotsky

Luck

Assessment Rubric

Categories	Does Not Meet Expectations 1	Approaching Expectations 2	Fully Meets Explanations 3
Plausible Categorization of Sources	Categorization of sources is not plausible	Some of the categorizations of sources are implausible	All of the categorization of sources are plausible
Accurate Interpretation of Sources Meaning	Interpretation of the sources meaning is not accurate	Some of the interpretations of the quote are inaccurate	All of the interpretations of the sources are accurate
Detailed explanations of why the quote fits into the chosen category is provided	Minimal or no explanations of why the quote fits into chosen categories are provided	Some detailed explanations of why the quote fits into chosen categories are provided	Detailed explanations of why the quote fits into the chosen category are provided