

[These Bitesize notes are from 2015 and have been taken down.]

## Stalin's takeover of power

It would be easy to assume that the natural successor to Lenin (who died in 1924) would be Leon Trotsky, often regarded as the second in command. But Joseph Stalin, the secretary of the Communist Party, got the job - why?

### Struggle for power

A **struggle for power** developed between Stalin, the secretary of the Communist Party, and Trotsky, the brilliant Commissar for War. In a way, the struggle was about what the Soviet Union would become, for Trotsky believed in encouraging world revolution, whereas Stalin advocated Communism in one country' and said Russia had to establish its power before there was any attempt to spread revolution.

Stalin was a master of **political trickery**. He used his position as secretary to put his supporters on the Central Committee of the party. He even told Trotsky the wrong date for Lenin's funeral, so Trotsky turned up a day late. And so it was Stalin who became party leader in 1924. Trotsky was dismissed, then exiled and murdered in 1940.



Stalin won the struggle for power



Trotsky was exiled and eventually murdered

### Stalin did not stop with eliminating Trotsky.

- In 1927, he removed the left-wing Communists old Bolsheviks - such as Kamenev and Zinoviev who had opposed the NEP - from the **Politburo**.
- Two years later, he claimed that the NEP was uncommunist, and got right-wing Communists such as Rykov and Tomsky thrown out of the Politburo.