

Great deal  
of statements  
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to support -

91

How Might the Shape of Soviet History Have Been Different  
if Trotsky, Rather than Stalin, had Succeeded Lenin?

Keon

Young

How did  
Programs  
USSR

5 year  
change

what concepts  
about military  
strength

Could Trotsky  
have "Ruined"  
the Party?

Daniel Silverman  
May 1, 1979  
Social Studies 10B  
Mr. Leahy  
Period 5

Armed the  
area of  
industrialization  
VS

See -  
some points

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## Introduction

If someone were to compile a list of the most important events of the twentieth century, certainly Russia's Bolshevik Revolution would be near the top of it. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the overwhelming majority of people in the world has been influenced by the historical course of post-revolutionary Russia.

After the death of the leader of the revolution, Lenin, there was a struggle between two men-- Josef Stalin and Leon Trotsky-- for his succession. Stalin eventually did succeed Lenin, but the ideology of Trotsky is still studied in today's world. This paper will compare some of the basic differences between Stalin's and Trotsky's philosophies, and apply them to the world of today. How might the shape of Soviet history have been different if Trotsky had succeeded Lenin rather than Stalin?

Unlike Marx, it is the belief of this author that history is not only the result of economic circumstances, but that men, their personalities, and their ideas have influence in the events of history. Certainly, this paper's speculations must be based on Trotsky's own writings to envision one of the possible futures that Russian history might have taken out of the infinite number of conceivable futures.

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In the year 1917 in Russia a revolution took place which was known as the Bolshevik Revolution. (2nd Revolution)

Now  
The working class of Russia was outraged at the way their government was handling internal and foreign problems. These radicals wanted Russia to withdraw from the war in Europe because they considered it a war started by, fought by, and in the interests of capitalists. They also wanted to completely overthrow capitalism inside Russia, because they were dissatisfied with their position in the social structure and felt that they could nationalize the economy by forming a government of the working class. But the Russian government had different ideas. It was determined to live up to its agreements with its allies and to continue fighting in the war.

One of the dissatisfied factions was successful in overthrowing the monarchy and taking power from the Czar. A provisional government was formed with Alexander Kerensky at its head. (when?)

But the working class was still dissatisfied with the way the country was being run. The working class started demonstrating and rioting within Russia. One

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man, Nicolai Ilych Ulyanov, known as Lenin, who was one of the most important leaders of the Bolsheviks (revolutionary workers) and who had been banished from Russia, said that he would take over Russia with the support of the working class.

where did he get this?

As the Russian government persisted in its refusal to hear the voice of the workers, laborers began to strike and factories began to close down. At this point, Lenin decided the time was right to seize the government by violence. But he could not argue his point effectively because of his absence from Russia at this time.

16-  
In April, 1917 Lenin secretly returned to Russia for what was to become a historic meeting. For twenty hours he and his men debated whether to start the overthrow or not. Finally, Lenin convinced the others that the time was right since the government was terribly weakened by economic problems resulting from factory closings.

source of information

At a meeting of the Bolsheviks leaders in August, 1917, in which the revolutionaries planned the future of Bolshevism, another leader, Joseph Stalin, said that the party should perfect Bolshevism in Russia before going on to conquer the world, as the Bolsheviks were hoping to do. But most of the other leaders believed that Bolshevism should devote its efforts toward taking over the whole world.

who?

From November 6th to November 7th, the Bolsheviks seized all the government's essential operations -- railroads, bridges, banks and post offices. When the revolt subsided and the Bolsheviks were victorious, the number of fatalities on both sides was very low. \*

Lenin was the obvious choice for the leader of the new regime. Lenin believed in the philosophies of Karl Marx, who believed that:

Social classes were determined by their relationship to the means of production. Feudal society, with its lords and vassals had been succeeded in Western Europe by Bourgeois society with its capitalists and workers. But Bourgeois society... contained the seeds of its own destruction. The number of capitalists would diminish while the ranks of the impoverished proletariat would grow, until finally there would be a breakdown and a socialist revolution in which the overwhelming majority, the proletariat, would dispossess the small minority of capitalist exploiters.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin agreed with Marx and foresaw a dictatorship of the proletariat and a withering away of the state. He wanted to do away with all anti-Bolsheviks who were placed in Russia to try to instigate a counter-revolution.

Although a world take-over was his ultimate goal, he wanted to settle internal problems first. He wanted to remedy the discontentments of the peasants, and needed

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<sup>1</sup>"Communism," Encyclopaedia Britannica (1978 ed.), vol. 4, p. 1020.

to boost Russia's ailing economy.

In 1922 Lenin suffered a stroke from which he never fully recovered. He died near Moscow on January 21, 1924. His embalmed body was placed on permanent public display.

Josef Stalin and Leon Trotsky were the two men who struggled to succeed Lenin as leader of the party. Lenin, in his testament written while he was dying, said, "Stalin...did not always know how to use (his) power with sufficient caution. (He was) too rude (and) not to be trusted."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin said Trotsky "was distinguished by exceptional abilities, but his too far reaching self-confidence and disposition to be too much attracted by the purely administrative side of affairs made him not fully qualified to be leader."<sup>3</sup>

After Lenin died it appeared that Trotsky would emerge as the new leader. However, Stalin got a head start in the struggle for succession when he managed to get his followers into important governmental positions, and expanded the power his men controlled. Trotsky struck back when he addressed a letter to the Russian Politburo saying that Stalin should not be the man to succeed Lenin. Stalin's men were making too many decisions that the entire party

<sup>2</sup>Lenin, Testament, quoted by Basyl Dmytryshyn in USSR, A Concise History (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 137.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 138.

had to comply with. He said Stalin was "silencing all valid criticisms."<sup>4</sup> of his policies.

Stalin then labeled Trotsky as one who threatened party unity. Although Trotsky wanted intra-party democracy, he was himself dictatorial. This hypocrisy was resented and worked in Stalin's favor. On January 24, 1924, Trotsky left the country. This gave Stalin a chance to speak unopposed. He said that he was to be the rightful successor to Lenin. Stalin said he would "hold high, to guard and to strengthen the purity of the party membership, the unity of the party, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the worker peasant alliance."<sup>5</sup>

Stalin got 220,000 of his new supporters to join the party. At this point Trotsky admitted defeat when he said, "My party, right or wrong."<sup>6</sup>

It seemed at this point that Trotsky had lost the struggle for succession, but still might retain an important position in the Bolshevik regime. However, Trotsky made a grave mistake when he criticized Zinoviev and Kamenev (two other possible candidates for succession), and as a result, they sided with Stalin. Stalin took advantage of this fact and totally denounced Trotsky. He said that Trotsky went against Bolshevik philosophy, and expelled him from the party.

<sup>4</sup>Basil Dmytryshyn, USSR, a Concise History (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 139.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

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After he left Russia, Trotsky could criticize Stalin without any danger to himself. He criticized Stalin for not instigating revolutions in other European nations, saying that this was essential to the fight against capitalism.

Stalin dismissed his criticism by calling it a "lack of faith in the strength and capabilities of the Russian Revolution, and as a negation and repudiation of Lenin's theory of the proletariat revolution."<sup>7</sup> Stalin had his own theory on world takeover, known as "socialism in one country," which will be discussed later.

Trotsky persisted in criticizing Stalin's policies, such as the party's lack of democracy, or factionalism, and its lack of development of industry for the proletariat. Eventually Trotsky was axed to death in Mexico while on a world tour in 1940.

1940  
After Trotsky's death, Stalin was the unchallenged leader in Russia. He controlled Russia as a dictator, believing in inducing fear and terror to achieve his goals. He deviated greatly from Lenin's original Socialist principles. Stalin believed in a monolithic party rule, which means he did not tolerate liberalism, new ideas and new policies. People who

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 141

arguing stating that Stalin was challenged until 1940

disagreed with his ideology were accused of treason. Stalin was also an absolutist -- the sole infallible interpreter of Marxist ideology. Stalin believed that the world revolution should be postponed until communism was perfected in Russia. This concept of concentrating on developing socialism in only Russia before going on to socialize the world is known as "socialism in one country."

Stalin decided that the industrialization of Russia was needed to help the proletariat boost its economy. This would also free <sup>USSR</sup> ~~Russia~~ from dependence on capitalistic nations. He developed a series of <sup>5</sup> five year plans to achieve this industrialization. These were fairly successful, but an increase in agricultural efficiency was also needed. Stalin decided that the most efficient method for this would be to start collective farms, which were the pooling of individual peasant farms into large state farms. Although the farmers objected strongly to this, Stalin, in 1930, forced it on them. Going against socialist ideology, he increased the power of the government by forcing the farmers to produce what he desired.

Stalin had become a paranoid leader, and was terrified by the thought of a democratic takeover, so in the 1930's he launched a mass execution of "possible" enemies of the state. When Stalin was through murdering, the number

*The development of the  
5 year plan & industrial  
growth is essential to  
this paper*

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of dead was in the millions. Stalin ruled Russia until  
his death in March, 1952.

source  
figures needed to support statement  
March 5, 1953

Leon Trotsky's ideology differed tremendously from Stalin's during the struggle for succession. Trotsky believed in Marxist Ideology--the theory of permanent world revolution. Regarding economic development Trotsky felt that:

An economic system had to be seen as a world system rather than a national one. All national economic development was affected by the laws of the world market, even though such regional factors as location, population, available resources and pressure from surrounding countries make the rate of development different in each country.<sup>8</sup>

In other words, in order for the Bolshevik revolution to be totally and permanently successful, it would be necessary to incorporate other countries, and the power of the working class would have to be amplified because of its knowledge of economic priorities.

In 1924, Trotsky demanded more democracy in social and governmental structures. This idea, called factionalism, would give even more power to the working class. He also believed that new ideas and trends should be permitted if they did not deviate from Bolshevik ideology. These ideas are almost opposite those of Josef Stalin.

After Trotsky was expelled from Russia, he attacked Stalin's policies even more vigorously. He called the

<sup>8</sup>"Trotskyism," Encyclopaedia Britannica (1978 ed.) vol. 10. p. 143.

Soviet Bureaucracy a dictatorship by one man--Stalin. He also labeled it a "degenerated workers' state"<sup>9</sup>--a state in which the means of production had been nationalized, but in which a bureaucratic regime ruled.

*Waste of space*

One of the major conflicts between Stalin and Trotsky was the "world revolution." This conflict took place in the 1920's. However, in the present day it might be interesting to speculate whose ideology would have had the most effect on the world.

The Bolshevik desire for world domination has yet to be fulfilled. However, when Leonid Brezhnev, the current Russian leader, was asked about a world takeover he said, "Hardly a corner of the globe lies outside Soviet influence."<sup>10</sup>

*Waste of space*

Russian arms are continually being shipped to third world nations, Russia's navy is getting bigger and stronger. Treaties, economic aid and active diplomacy strengthen Russia's influence over third world nations; Russia's empire is larger than any Czar's; and the morale of the people lead some analysts to believe that it is possible for Russia to takeover.

*facts  
figures  
to  
prove  
this*

*more - 000000*

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>10</sup>"The Kremlin's Unending Quest For World Domination," US News And World Report, LXXXIII (Oct. 24, 1977) p. 54.

Source of  
this information

what about  
Poland

11

Today, Russia's satellite countries are not permitted nationalistic beliefs. Satellite governments that were politically opposed to Soviet policy have in the past had their insubordination subdued by force, as occurred in Czechoslovakia in 1968. (10 years ago)

How  
about  
Tito?

An example of Russian power is Russia's relations with Somalia. Russia sent aid to Somalia because she was fighting a war with Ethiopia, which is an ally of the United States. In just five years, Soviet aid turned Somalia into, militarily, one of the strongest countries in Africa. A simbiotic relationship formed when Somalia granted Russia permission to store arms and military facilities in Somalia. However, in the recent past and in years to come Russia's extranational control has had to, and will probably continue to have to, slow down. The Soviets continually underestimate other countries' strengths and nationalism, and overestimate its own ability to control other nations. Russia will undoubtedly continue to strive to win countries over to Communism in years to come, with the hope of ultimately attaining complete world domination.

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Much of Russia's world power today comes from the ruthlessness of Josef Stalin. Without his presence during World War II, Russia may never have gotten as far as it has in its quest for world domination.

The best and the only way possible to discover how Trotsky would have operated in his desire for world domination is in his own writings. Trotsky wrote, "To us, internationalism is not an abstract idea existing only to be betrayed on every opportune occasion...but is a real guiding and wholly practical principle. A lasting, decisive success is inconceivable for us without a revolution in Europe."<sup>11</sup>

Whereas Josef Stalin implied that the people of Russia wanted peaceful coexistence, Leon Trotsky believed that the goals of Marx had been eliminated by the Stalinists and peaceful coexistence would be a betrayal of one of the fundamental philosophical beliefs of the Bolsheviks. By practicing socialism in one country, and peaceful coexistence, Trotsky believed that Russia was giving up its main goal of world revolution. If Russia did not attack, soon it would become a victim of capitalistic imperialism.

*where did Stalin state Peaceful Co-Existence (Source)*

Trotsky said that if he had taken over Russia, he would have continued the Bolshevik policy of world domination. He realized however, that countries could not be overthrown by revolutionaries alone. He would have brought his army into the struggle as well.

Unfortunately, Trotsky was murdered before the end of World War II and before Russia had expanded its power so greatly, so it is unknown how he would have reacted to this new found Russian power.

*Beginning of 1940*

*This is purpose of your paper*

<sup>11</sup> Leon Trotsky, My Life (New York, Pathfinder Press, 1970), p. 332.

Trotsky probably would have attempted to incite other revolutions immediately after he organized Russia into a Marxist society. Russia possibly could have gained control of more countries than she did during World War II and might even be a greater power today.

13  
Stalin  
attempted  
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1926-  
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The power of bureaucracy was another area in which Stalin and Trotsky differed. Stalin believed the entire country should be ruled by the Communist Party. He believed that the Party should work hard at keeping its power. The Party should assign work to its workers and then sit back and wait for the work to be completed. If the Party were dissatisfied with the efficiency of the workers, it would interfere with the workers. In short, the Party acts as a brain, and the workers are simply hands which do what the brain says.

Trotsky had his own opinions of the power of the bureaucracy. In a paper written in 1934 he said that Stalin considered Russia a classless society, but he believed that Russia had many changes to make before it was truly classless. He objected to the complete power of the bureaucracy. Classes in Russia were equal socially, at least in name, but they were certainly not equal economically. Trotsky believed that if some people were continually economically inferior to others, socialism would collapse and capitalism would result due to class conflicts between the rich and the poor. Trotsky would

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use of Trotsky's writing &  
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have attempted to stabilize everyone's income so the desire for appropriations would cease. He indicated this when he wrote: "The satisfaction of the essential elementary needs is always boundup with a bitter struggle of each against all, illegal appropriation, evasion of laws, cheating of the state, favoritism, and thievery on a mass scale."<sup>12</sup> The Bureaucracy should use its "administrative pressure to compensate for the deficiency in economic power."<sup>13</sup>

Trotsky believed that Stalin's collective farms were a perfect example of the power of the bureaucracy, because a rural community contains the ultimate interface between the producer and the consumer--food. The bureaucracy controls the collective farms harshly simply because they know the farmers are displeased, so the bureaucracy must guard against an uprising. Leon Trotsky believed that the reason for the dictatorship of the bureaucracy was to suppress economic class conflicts. Trotsky would have destroyed the power of the bureaucracy in order to develop economic equality, and in order to start Soviet Democracy. The destruction of the bureaucracy would start a unity among the workers again, and would help them in starting the world revolution.

*Trotsky  
fanned  
collective  
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Stalin's lack of attention to the disparity in the distribution of wealth in Russia is particularly ironic,

<sup>12</sup> Leon Trotsky, Writings 1934-1935 (New York, Pathfinder Press, 1971), p. 118.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 118.



for he ignored the very thing that Marx, whose ideology he supposedly followed, believed to be the basis of social classes -- material wealth. Trotsky, in pointing out that social and political equality is meaningless without economic equality as well, stays much closer to the original ideology of the Marxist revolutionaries.

*This is just a statement w/ 0 quote to back it up -*

Another area in which there is a difference between Stalin and Trotsky is in their attitude toward Jews. Russia had a long history of anti-Semitism before the revolution and there is still a great amount that exists today. In the ideology of the revolution it is possible that this anti-Semitism stems directly from Lenin. In a paper he wrote entitled "The National Question" he said, "Jewish national culture is the slogan of rabbis and bourgeoisie ... whoever proclaims ... (this)... is the enemy of the proletariat."<sup>14</sup>

*when I hear Lenin was this nut!*

Even today, when there are two and a half to three million Jews in Russia, they have none of the national rights that are granted to other minorities. <sup>(\*)</sup> Jews have no newspapers or magazines of their own. There are no Jewish social clubs as there are for members of other groups. It is against the law to teach Hebrew in Russia. All Jewish cemeteries are closed --even in Moscow where there

*fontaine needed*

<sup>14</sup> "Racism in Russia: Old Fears, Hates Linger," US News And World Report, LXXXIV (Sep. 11, 1978), p. 40.

are a quarter of a million Jews. There are fewer than one hundred synagogues in all of Russia today, whereas there were three thousand in 1917.<sup>15</sup> It is impossible to find Kosher food in Russia. All attendees of Jewish services are registered with the government. There is often propaganda on television, in books magazines and pamphlets against Jews. Some of the literature implies that the Jews collaborated with Adolf Hitler during World War II, in the killing of Russians in the Ukraine.<sup>16</sup>

Because of their persecution, many Jews would like to emigrate from Russia, but this is very difficult to do. If a Jew applies for emigration, it is very likely that he lose his job, and since it is against the law not to work, he might be sent to prison.

Boris Rabbat, one of the few Jewish ex-government officials who was allowed to emigrate said, "To get a decent job in the ideological field or social sciences and move up in the system, a Jew must not be an orthodox Marxist-Leninist, but an immoral scoundrel."<sup>17</sup>

Leon Trotsky was born Lev Davidovich Bronstein, into a Jewish home. When growing up he was strongly opposed to anti-Semitism. If Trotsky had ruled Russia, he certainly would have deviated from the accepted Russian outlook on

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

*How do  
you  
know  
this?*

Jews. The Soviet Jewry would probably not be persecuted as they are today and they would be considered equal citizens. Since they would be free to practice their religion and follow their own culture, and would be allowed to participate in all aspects of Russian living, they probably would not be so eager to leave the country.

If Trotsky has succeeded Lenin it is also possible that Russia's role in the Middle East might be different. By the very nature of most of the Arab countries' socio-economic structure, they are opposed to communist ideology such as the equal distribution of wealth. Under Trotsky, considering his Jewish background, the Russians might have been more prone to side with Israel on certain current issues, despite the economic advantages that it might gain by supporting the Arabs.

During the struggle for succession, Stalin was opposed to heavy industrialization because he said it would put a strain on the working class. When Stalin defeated Trotsky, he changed his opinion because he realized that heavy industrialization could benefit him politically. After making this decision, he proceeded to change an agricultural society into the second greatest industrial nation in the world. He found this a necessity so the Russian people would keep their faith in the eventuality of the proletarian rule. His five-year-plans were geared

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toward improving the economy, although some criticized him for setting his goals too high. However, he did make Russia strong enough to defend itself in World War II, during which time communism spread greatly.

Stalin became so obsessed with industrialization that he neglected other problems such as housing, hunger and distribution of wealth. After Stalin completed his initial industrialization program, it was apparent that he had not fulfilled his original goal. Instead of giving more power to the proletariat, he got more power for himself. Stalin remained a dictator and used this economic growth solely for his own benefit.

*what type? what was?*

During the struggle for succession Trotsky was all for industrialization, but when he saw how Stalin was industrializing so rapidly and successfully, he admitted that "he could not have carried out this task."<sup>18</sup> So Stalin and Trotsky really reversed roles on this issue.

An unindustrialized Russia would not only have kept it from becoming the super power that it is today, but also would have made it difficult for Trotsky to claim that he had achieved a true communist revolution. Marx was clear in his writings about where and how such a revolution would take place. The most advanced industrial countries would find themselves with the most serious form of capitalist

*what did he say? where?*

<sup>18</sup>Robert C. Tucker, Stalinism (New York, W.W. Norton and Company, 1977) p. 49.

decay and their workers would take over the factories and other industrial achievements that were products of capitalism. For in Marx's theory of historical development, the role of capitalism was to create the condition --high industrialization-- that would make a communist society possible. Without the existence of advanced technological "means of production," as Marx called the tools that created wealth, a workers' state could not be achieved.

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Most of the Bolshevik leaders knew enough about Marxist theory to recognize that their revolution did not fit his description, and had taken place in one of the more backward countries of Europe. Trotsky, after having admitted that he could not have mobilized Russia in the ruthless way that Stalin did to bring about industrial development, saw Russia's greatest hope in the possibility of revolution occurring in other more advanced countries so that Russia might obtain some of the benefits of their new social system as well.

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So both Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country" and Trotsky's theory of "world revolution" were different methods that would achieve the same effect -- industrialization.

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## Conclusion

The fact that Leon Trotsky admitted that he could not have carried out the task of industrializing Russia could be very important. If, as leader of Russia, he were truly unable to industrialize as Stalin had done, it possibly would have changed the whole course of history. The Russians might not have been able to resist the Nazi forces during World War II, which obviously would have had some influence on the outcome of the war. Possibly, the victory of the allies would have been changed to defeat.

In addition to foreign affairs, Trotsky's admission would have affected Russia internally. Trotsky may have found out that he could not fulfill any of his philosophies once he succeeded Lenin. The people of Russia might have become distrusting of Trotsky, and possibly could have started a counter-revolution. This counter-revolution conceivably could have been a capitalistic one, since people unfamiliar with Marx's original communist ideology might have jumped to conclusions and assumed that communism would never work in their favor.

It took a man with Stalin's strength and ruthlessness to make Russia's war machine and dictatorial bureaucracy successful. Without his persistent striving to better his own position, Russia might not have ever become the super power that it is today.

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*Based on  
military  
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*would  
Stalin  
have  
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this?*

*Stalin*

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