Stalin's rise to power 1924-28

Stalin's strengths

- Personality: ruthless and opportunistic / seemed 'boring' - a 'grey blur' - so underestimated by others in the Party
- Lenin's Testament: Stalin too rude - not made public
- Bugged Lenin's home
- Had access to 26,000 personal files
- Had close contact with Head of Secret Police
- Could appoint own supporters to key positions in the party
- Lenin's Testament: Constant references to Lenin's ideas in his speeches
- Used Lenin Enrolment to his advantage: 1.2 million workers recruited (poorly educated and politically naive)
- Used ban on factionalism ('On Party Unity 1921') - to his advantage
- Used alliances to out-maneuver Trotsky e.g. used Zinoviev and Kamenev against Trotsky, then turned against them
- Used ideological differences to his advantages

Stalin's weaknesses

- Background: Jewish / wealthy background / intellectual / ex-Menshevik
- Personal: seen as arrogant
- Not popular in the Party
- Isolated in party / not interested in building up alliances / rarely attended meetings
- Head of Red Army: perceived by some as a threat (a new 'Napoleon')
- Did not attend Lenin's funeral
- Lenin's Testament: Collected some of Lenin's policies e.g. NEP
- Trotsky's legacy: attack on growth of Party bureaucracy (1924) was unpopular within the Party

Typical questions

8 markers

- How did Stalin emerge as leader of the Soviet Union between 1924 and 1929?
- How did Stalin defeat his political rivals by 1929?
- For what reasons did Stalin succeed Lenin as leader of the Soviet Union by 1929?

22 markers

- How far was Stalin's victory in the power struggle between 1922 and 1928 due to his control over the party?
- To what extent was Stalin's victory in the power struggle between 1922 and 1928 due to the mistakes of his rivals?
- Stalin was fortunate to succeed in the power struggle between 1922 and 1928. How far do you agree with this statement?

Stalin supported the idea of 'Socialism in one country' (supported by many in the party who agreed that the emphasis should be on consolidating their position, modernising and industrialising)