

Reassessing Trotsky's biography of Stalin

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The much-awaited comprehensive edition of Trotsky's unfinished biography of Stalin, edited by Alan Woods and published last year by Well Read Books, presents significant previously unavailable writings by Trotsky on the Russian revolution's degeneration under Stalin. The book thus invites a reassessment of a thesis proposed some decades ago: that Trotsky's assessment of the USSR changed significantly near the end of his life. To form an opinion on this question, we must compare the newly published material in this book with Trotsky's other writings on the USSR in the year of his life.

A different challenge is posed in the book's first half, the text of which has been available for 70 years. Trotsky presents here his final judgment of the Bolshevik party in the years prior to the October revolution. Given current scholarly controversy on this topic, Trotsky's assessment deserves to be revisited.